

FOLLOW-UP TO THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE AND THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

International Labour Office

The High-level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development in its deliberations reiterated and endorsed the initiatives of the various actors—Member States, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector—in examining the relationship and synergies between international migration and development. It underlined the need for embarking on a comprehensive and coherent approach in the overall institutional response to international migration and development and in this regard welcomed the establishment of the Global Migration Group (GMG) and the initiative of the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which was held in Brussels in July 2007.

The GFMD elaborated on the issues under discussion and emphasized many aspects of the migration and development nexus requiring priority attention. Many concerns on promotion of legal migration, longer term vision on realizing the benefits of migration, improving the remittance environment for migrants, sharing of responsibilities between countries and identifying and developing good practices within a prescribed framework were advanced.

These recommendations have, in many ways, affirmed the Plan of Action of the International Labour Office (ILO) to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts of international labour migration. This is an operational mandate endorsed by the ministers of labour of the ILO Member States and the executives of the workers' and employers' organizations.

At the GFMD, ILO contributed to the round tables through the preparation of information notes that emphasized the ILO approach. These notes addressed the following topics: (a) rights, labour migration and development; (b) integrating gender in the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and (c) international labour migration and development: the ILO perspective.

Recently, ILO has assisted in the preparation of a GMG proposal on an international partnership on migration and development, which was submitted to the Chair-in-Office of the second meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. The proposal brings together partners at the operational level but does not intend to be all encompassing in that it includes all the agencies of the GMG. However, it is wide-ranging and goes beyond addressing the implementation of the GFMD outcomes only.

A. ILO ACTIVITIES ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

There is a realization that well-managed migration and development policies should protect vulnerable countries, almost all of which are located in sub-Saharan Africa, from migration-inflicted development constraints. Therefore, there is a need to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to migration and development policies, which have the potential to create win-win situations.

The ILO has conducted and is planning to undertake operational work on various priority issues, including:

- The developmental potential of international migration to achieve relief from poverty and sustain economic development in source countries.

- The development potential of remittances, developing policies for their productive use in the source economies, seeking initiatives in employing remittances as contributed funds for social security support, particularly health insurance, and improving the remittance transfer environment for the benefit of migrants and their households.
- The impact of the emigration of highly-skilled workers and circular migrants, ethical recruitment practices and working towards the creation of a “brain trust” by involving expatriate communities.
- The social protection and protection of rights of migrant workers.
- The promotion of legal migration, in particular by emphasizing regimes of temporary migration.
- The integration of migration and development policies into the immigration and integration policies of host countries and into national development strategies of source countries.

B. ROLE OF SURVEYS AND INFORMATION TOOLS

Statistics on international migration can assist policymakers to develop and implement relevant policies by supplying useful information on issues such as number, origin, sex, reason and duration of stay of international migrants. However, statistical information on international migration is poorly developed in most developing countries and basic data and indicators are often lacking. In addition, countries have not yet developed sufficient experience and capacity to use data on international migration to translate statistical evidence into research and analysis for policy formulation and monitoring.

The ILO has developed a statistical module to be used as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The module is limited to emigration concerns and focuses on households. So far, the module has been tested with a high degree of success in three countries: Armenia, Ecuador and Egypt. A pilot version was also tested in Thailand.

The module approaches the complex task of improving the understanding and management of international labour migration in an innovative way, which promises a high degree of efficiency and sustainability. It is targeted at statistical offices of countries and its objectives are to improve the availability, quality and comparability of statistical data on international migration through a better understanding of international standards on international migration statistics and a better use of existing statistical and administrative sources. Ultimately, it is intended to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and research in the field of international migration through the involvement of key users of statistics on international migration and the promotion of empirical research, including analytical studies by regional teams and the organization of policy-relevant research dialogues.

The ILO is also embarking on field surveys to assist in information gathering in destination countries by addressing the concerns of individual migrants. Surveys providing information on, *inter alia*, conditions of work, social protection, wages and benefits, protection in employment (i.e. security from arbitrary dismissals, retrenchment benefits, severance pay, etc.), skill development and representation will be launched in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 2008.