



Current Crisis and International Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean

Eighth Coordination Meeting on International Migration

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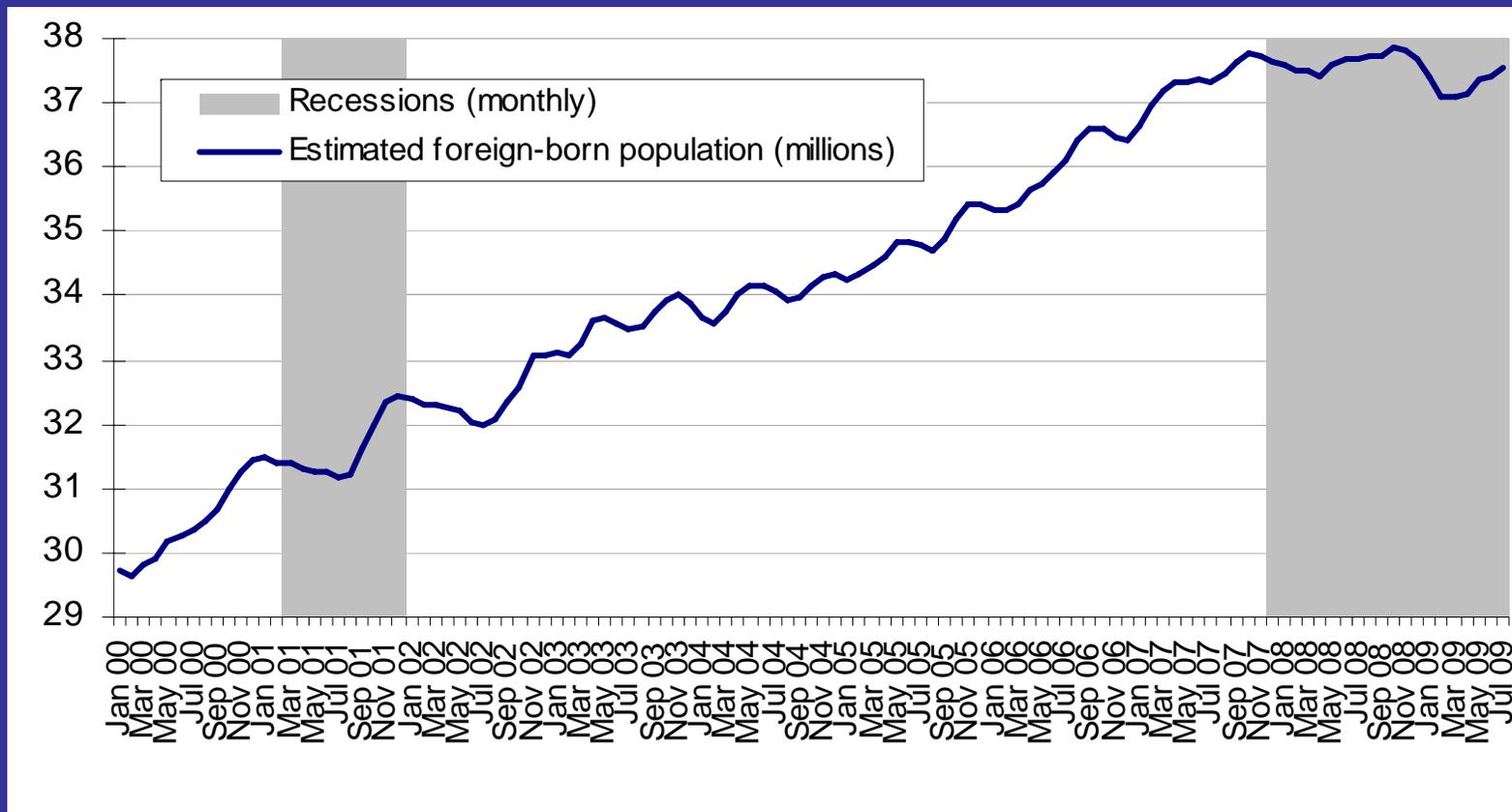
New York, November 16-17, 2009

Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Alarmist views of migration in public opinion do not coincide with the impact known up to now.
2. Remittances have decelerated and fallen but have not collapsed. Incidence of seasonality in fluctuations.
3. Migrant workers' rights have been increasingly eroded, making them become a highly vulnerable population in front of economic crisis.

Flows of immigrants have decelerated, but not disappeared

STABILIZATION OF THE FOREIGN BORN POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE 2007: LESS FLOWS, LESS ENTRIES OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS, PROBABLE UNDER-REGISTRATION OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS



Source: Demetrios G. Papademetriou y Aaron Terrazas (2009), *Immigrants in the United States and the Current Economic Crisis*, Migration Information Source, MPI.

No massive return of migrants

- Consensus: massive return improbable because of
 - High economic costs;
 - Difficulty of returning to destination country;
 - Achieved migratory status;
 - Formation of bonds (family, emotional) in the destination country;
 - Achievement of a certain degree of *integration* ;
 - Higher levels of unemployment in the countries of origin;
 - Economic obligations to family members.

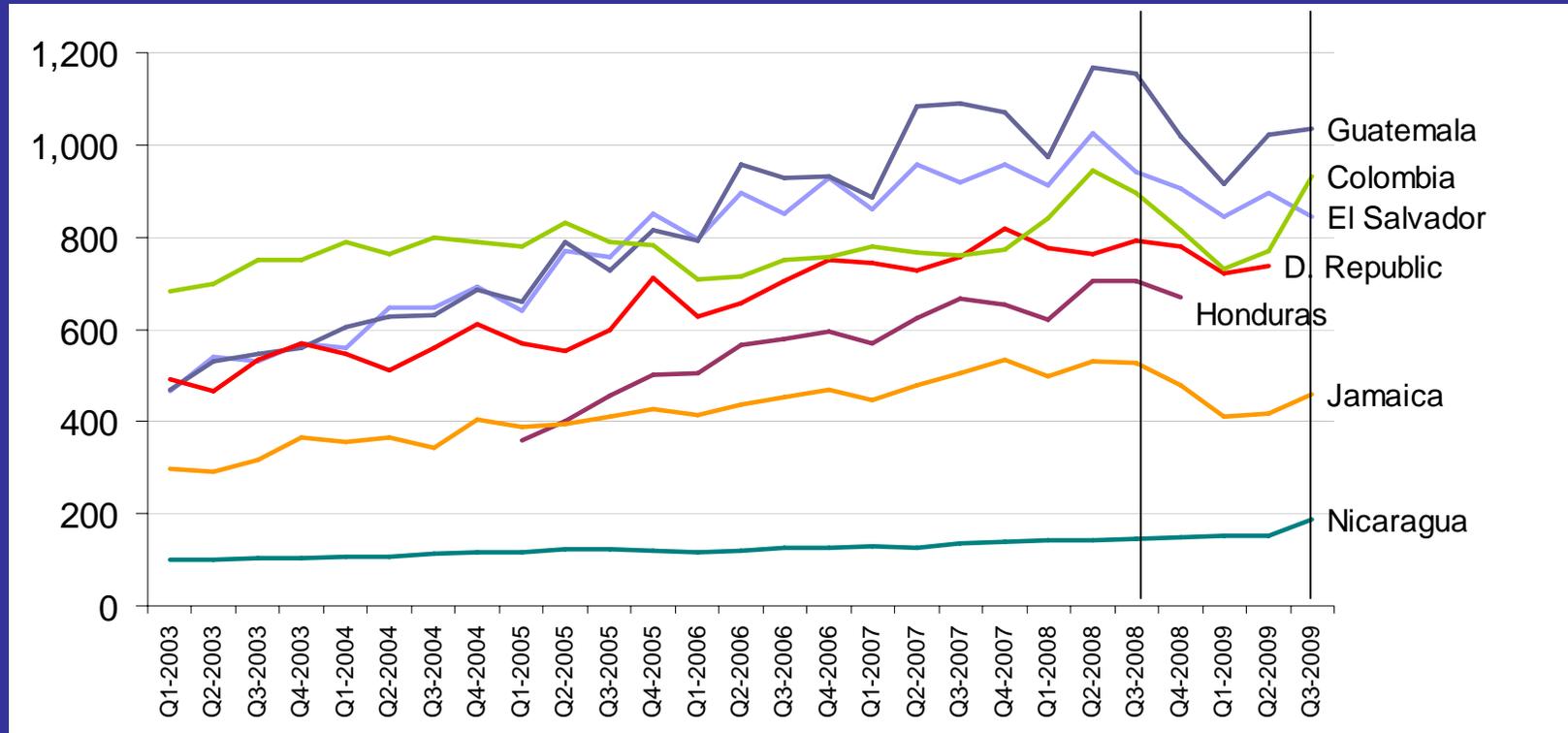
In the context of crisis, revival of some anti-immigrant views

- Increasing discrimination and xenophobia as an impact of the crisis.
- Threat to social cohesion in the countries where these views appear.
- In some cases, reemerges the idea that migrants ***take away jobs from the native population and overburden the social welfare system***.
- Anti-immigrant attitudes in some receiving countries and tightening of policies in destination countries (enforcement of migration controls).

Remittance flows have not collapsed

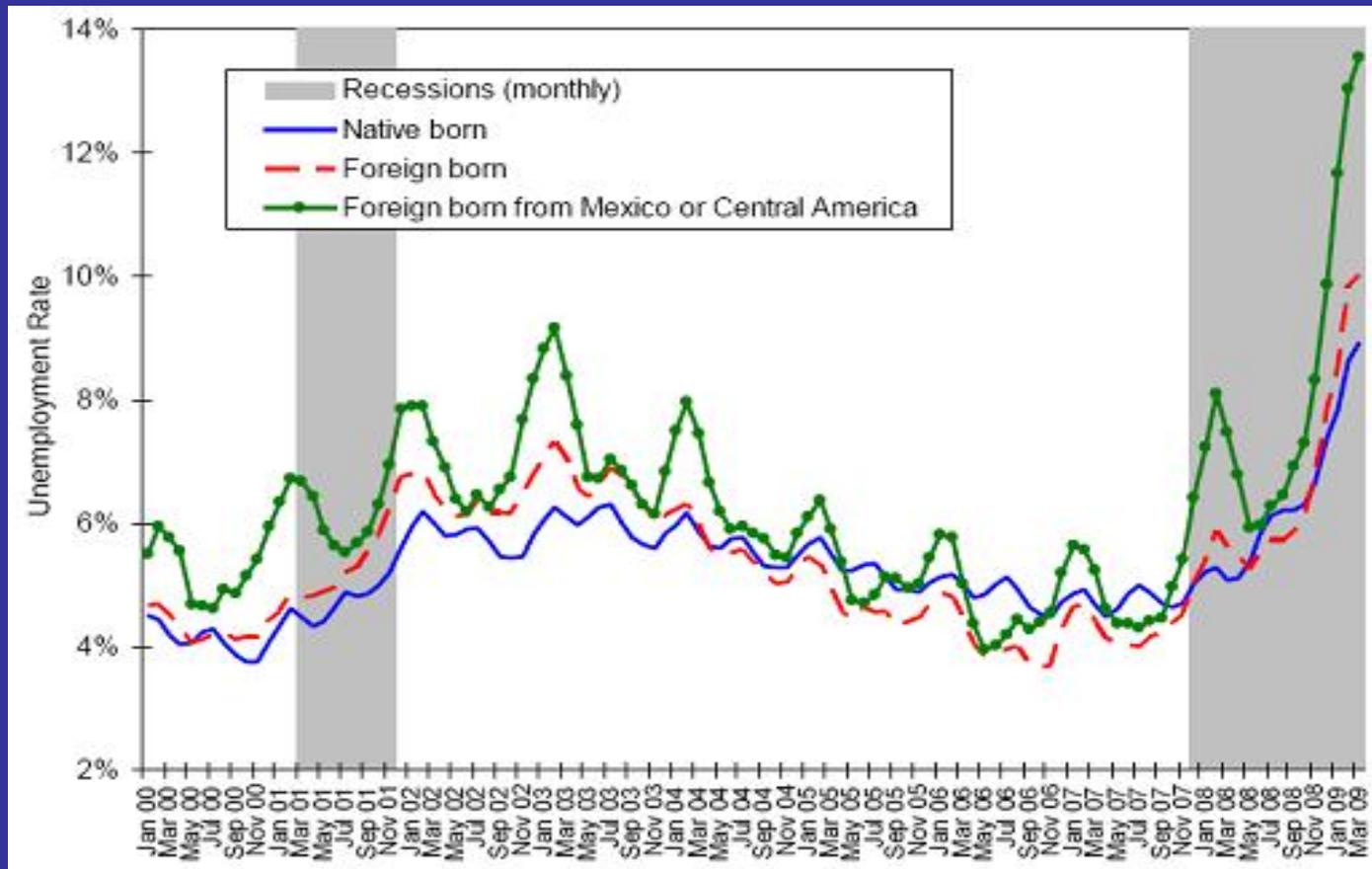
- Remittance behavior towards Latin American countries in the past year: *fluctuating*.

Quarterly evolution of remittances received in selected countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2003-2009 (US\$ thousand)



Source: Compiled by Migration and Remittances Team, Development Prospects Group, World Bank.
<http://www.worldbank.org/prospects/migrationandremittances>, Updated on November 11, 2009

Increased vulnerability: unemployment and drop in salaries in the main employment sectors of immigrants



Source: KathleenNewland (2009), *Are Remittances Still Resilient? Exploring the Impact of the Global Economic Downturn on Migration and Remittances*, Microfinance After Hours Seminar Series, No. 31, United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The most vulnerable among the vulnerable...

- In the United States, the unemployment rate has increased faster among ***less educated*** immigrants. Among the most affected there have also been ***irregular*** migrants (due to the lack of access to social security) and ***young people*** (because of their recent entry into the labor force).
- Far from the possibility of return, migrants are obliged to keep or search for a job, which makes them become more sensitive to infringements of their labor rights.
- ***In order to keep their jobs***, migrants find themselves constrained to accept worse conditions of work, including salary cuts.
- ***Those who are searching for a job*** under the pressure of time might accept dangerous or informal conditions of work.

CHALLENGES AND ECLAC'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

1. To evaluate the impact in terms of flows and return.
2. To study the impacts of the decrease of remittance flows in the receiving households: Does it imply higher levels of poverty? It is necessary to define which of those that were receiving households before are more vulnerable to the fall in remittances.
3. To focus the attention on the vulnerability of migrants and the necessity to guarantee their rights. *“To avoid labor protectionism and the increase of migration restrictions, which are in themselves very strict and in some occasions inhuman”*.
4. To design flexible, coherent, and global migration policies that go beyond economic situations: *“to think about our region in a long-range term, trying to encourage a higher productivity rate that does not imply a necessary export of its labor force”*.
5. To take up and rethink the international migration agenda: Which agenda? ... A new one that approaches the vulnerability of migrants.