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BACKGROUND PAPER

Data and analysis: Partnering to better understand and address the human development implications of migration

Prepared by UNDESA with contributions from the GMG¹

Introduction

The global number of international migrants is estimated to stand at 214 million people, up from 178 million in 2000, and is expected to keep on rising over the coming years, albeit at a slower pace than earlier in the decade. International migration has long been a feature of population dynamics and, as more countries experience very low or even negative rates of natural population change, international migration is expected to become a very significant component of their population change. That is already the case for a number of developed countries and for several of the most dynamic economies of the developing world, several of which became important receivers of international migrants only two or at most three decades ago as a result of the slowdown of their population growth, the increasing education of their populations and the restructuring of their economies. Consequently, there has been a diversification of migration flows, including both those of low-skilled migrant workers willing to take low-paying jobs that natives find unattractive and those of highly skilled workers moving in response to the forces unleashed by increasing globalization. Countries allowing family reunification have also seen their migrant intake remain significant and, although refugee numbers declined during the 1990s and early part of the 2000-2010 decade, they have begun to rise again.

The increasing relevance of international migration and its emergence as a significant factor for economic growth and population change in several regions of the world has given rise to many initiatives to enhance understanding and cooperation among countries experiencing the effects of international migration, be it as countries of origin, countries of destination or countries of transit. Starting in the mid-1990s, a number of regional processes to discuss the various facets of international migration began operation and today almost every region has at least one such process. In addition, at the global level, the United Nations began discussions of the interrelations between international migration and development in 1996 and saw that process culminate in the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development of the General Assembly in 2006. The Dialogue led to the creation of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, a State-led process for the in-depth consideration of the interlinkages between international migration and development, whose objectives include sharing experience, assessing the evidence and finding ways to maximize the benefits of international migration for development.

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One conclusion that all of these processes have reiterated is that the data and evidence necessary to guide action in regard to international migration and development are insufficient and often deficient. Calls have therefore been made repeatedly to improve the evidence base, including by increasing the availability, timeliness and reliability of data. Since most of the relevant data on international migration are generated by governmental institutions, Governments are ultimately responsible for the attainment of such an objective. Nevertheless, members of the Global Migration Group (GMG) have important mandates in this respect and a number of initiatives by GMG members have contributed and are contributing to improve data and evidence.

This paper reviews the contributions of GMG members to the improvement of migration data and to policy-relevant migration research, discusses the obstacles that still remain to be surmounted and proposes suggestions on how to address them. The GMG may wish to present the suggestions made to the consideration of Governments participating at the fourth meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which will be held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, from 9 to 11 November 2010.

1. Major data sources for the study of international migration

The major sources yielding data relevant for the study of international migration are: (a) administrative sources; (b) surveys, including both specialized surveys and surveys that include migration modules, and (c) population censuses and population registers.

Administrative sources include a wide array of recording systems, usually operating as part of the management or control of international migration. They include visas, work permits, residence permits, border control statistics, and regularization drives. The varied nature of the sources and institutions involved and the different types of data they produce make it especially challenging to ensure comparability of the information they yield. Furthermore, because the data result from administrative processes that are not meant to satisfy statistical demands, only a small part of the information they record is ever processed for statistical purposes.

Surveys, especially when they are based on representative samples of the population of interest, are flexible instruments for the collection of in-depth information on international migration and are best suited to relate international migration to outcomes important for development.

Population censuses and population registers are basic systems for the collection of demographic information and they yield the most comparable data on international migrants. However, perfect comparability is still a distant goal and population censuses have the drawback of being carried out at relatively lengthy intervals. Nevertheless, they remain the best source of information on the evolution of the international migrant stock.

The Statistics Commission of the United Nations sets standards and adopts recommendations on the definitions and methods for the generation of statistics, including those on international migration (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, 1998). In 1997, the Statistics Commission adopted the most recently revised Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) provides guidance on the implementation of those recommendations and compiles official statistics on international migration flows and stocks, a task it carries out in collaboration with Eurostat and other United Nations entities in order to minimise the reporting burden on national statistical offices.²

(a) Administrative statistics

Evidence

Administrative statistics provide a very useful basis for the study of international migration flows by country of origin and destination. However, only relatively few countries publish systematically data on the admission of international migrants. The United Nations Population Division of DESA compiles time series data on inflows and outflows of international migration as recorded by a number of developed countries. The most recent version of such compilation was issued in 2009

² The United Nations Statistics Division of DESA is in the process of revising the questionnaire on international travel and international migration statistics that it uses to compile data for publication in the United Nations Demographic Yearbook. A handbook for the implementation of the recommendations on international migration statistics is in preparation.

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and contains data for 29 countries (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2009).

The International Labour Office (ILO) has been compiling data on the admission of migrant workers, especially those generated by developing countries and has been disseminating them via the ILO Database on Labour Statistics (LABORSTA).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) compiles and disseminates data on residence permits issued by its member States. Those data are reported in the annual OECD International Migration Outlook (SOPEMI), which is based on reports by national correspondents.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) compiles information on the number of refugees present in each country. Those data are derived from special registration drives of refugees in camps or from administrative records maintained by the countries of asylum. The data are published in the annual *Statistical Yearbook* of UNHCR and in a number of other publications. They are all accessible on UNHCR's website.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) generates statistics from the operational programmes and projects it runs in over 133 countries. Statistics relate to the types of migrants covered by each activity, including resettled refugees, assisted repatriations, return migration of highly skilled persons, victims of trafficking, stranded transit migrants, internally displaced persons and unsuccessful asylum-seekers. IOM has developed a database containing information on the victims of trafficking it assists, which contains data on about 13,500 nationals of more than 80 countries trafficked to over 90 countries.

The World Bank chairs the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Remittance Working Group, one of whose thematic areas is the improvement of remittance data. The World Bank has recently conducted a survey of central banks in 112 countries, focusing on the collection of remittance data and the monitoring of remittance-service providers, such as banks, money transfer companies, post offices and mobile money-transfer operators. The survey revealed significant gaps in data collection on remittances, particularly in low-income countries in Africa, and in data collection from new types of remittance-service providers. To improve data, the World Bank is promoting the use of migration and remittance questions in household surveys and facilitating bilateral exchanges of metadata on remittances in balance-of-payments statistics.

Challenges

The compilation and dissemination of data are just the first steps in assessing trends in the various components of international migration. The task of updating the time series available and ensuring that the data are presented to the user with all the metadata necessary to understand their meaning and limitations is demanding. The organizations compiling information are not always able to maintain the data sets current and in-depth analysis of the data compiled are often lacking. OECD has probably made the greatest progress with respect to data analysis and UNHCR provides a model for the use of statistical information to inform interventions. It is noteworthy that the improvement of the use of statistics in UNHCR responded to the demands of its member States and has their full support, including their involvement in providing UNHCR with special tabulations of the data they collect on refugees and asylum-seekers.

In the cases of both ILO and the United Nations Population Division of DESA, Member States are not so directly involved in transferring relevant data to those institutions. Both the ILO and the United Nations Population Division obtain data from national statistical publications or official Government websites that present the data, generally with limited detail.³ Often, the institutions generating data at the national level are multiple and do not necessarily report those data to national statistical offices. Establishing a direct link with the relevant governmental entities that generate the data would facilitate the work of GMG members in this regard.

(b) Surveys

Evidence

The World Bank has been conducting a number of surveys on international migration and remittances as part of the Africa Migration Project. These surveys use novel methodologies to gather relevant information on both households with migrants abroad and households with migrants. The World Bank has also been promoting the addition of special modules

³ Every two years, the ILO also sends a labour migration questionnaire to national statistical offices and ministries of labour.

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on international migration and remittances in nationally representative household surveys (e.g. in Ghana and Nepal) and is working with other agencies, foundations and Governments to standardize those modules and promote their use in other client countries.

ILO and IOM have also assisted Governments in gathering relevant information through specialized surveys and through the inclusion of questions on international migration in large household surveys, especially in labour force surveys.

For member States of the European Union, labour force surveys, which are carried out routinely, are useful sources of information on the economic activity of international migrants. Eurostat maintains labour force surveys and OECD has proposed developing a user-friendly interface to facilitate the use of those surveys for the comparative analysis of economic activities of international migrants in the European Union.

The Mexican Migration Project and the Latin American Migration Project, both based at Princeton University and the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, are initiatives taken by partnerships between researchers in the United States of America and those in countries of Latin America to carry specialized household surveys (ethnosurveys) and in-depth ethnographic data collection in communities of origin and destination, documenting the experience of international migrants, principally of those moving to the United States. The data gathered over the course of several decades are available online. These projects provide a model for facilitating the dissemination and continued use of survey data by interested researchers.

Using Multiple Indicators Cluster Surveys as basis, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been gathering qualitative and quantitative information on children left-behind, involving social and economic characteristics as well as psychosocial indicators.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and the Global Development Network (GDN) have been implementing the project entitled "Development on the Move" (September 2006 – May 2010). Two of its objectives are to improve the evidence on international migration and to develop methodologies to assess the linkages between migration and development. Surveys gathering the data needed to test those methodologies are being carried out. They focus on (a) immigrants; (b) return migrants, and (c) emigrants still abroad. Migrants are defined as persons who left the household within the previous 10 years and who have lived abroad for more than three months. Country reports discussing the results of each survey are under preparation.

Challenges

Conducting surveys on international migration is challenging because international migrants are usually only a very small proportion of a population and finding them is not straightforward while adhering to the principles of probabilistic sampling. Therefore, surveys focusing on international migrants often do not adhere to probabilistic sampling and are therefore not representative of the population of international migrants. The challenge is developing a sample that includes sufficient areas with high concentrations of migrants and having a large enough sample size to yield reliable estimates.

A second challenge is that, in order to tease out the effects of international migration, it is necessary to determine the right group to compare with international migrants or to be used in modeling the "counterfactual" outcome that would have occurred if international migration had not happened. Most surveys are designed to collect information in one location only; for the study of causes and consequences of international migration, surveys in the destination and origin should be carried out.

A third challenge is that, when surveys are carried out by different researchers or institutions, they often adopt different definitions of migration, ask different questions about common concerns and use different coding schemes, therefore limiting inter-country comparability of the data gathered. Surveys are also often conducted on an ad-hoc basis with extra-budgetary funds. To be used as a regular source of data, migration surveys or migration modules in large-scale surveys need to become a regular activity of the data collection programme of national statistical offices or the responsible institution for such surveys.

Lastly, surveys yield rich sets of data that allow various types of analysis. Yet, often the analysis actually carried out is limited, especially if the data are not accessible to the wider research community. Limiting access to the data gathered or failing to make provisions for sharing data, even on a restricted basis, are practices detrimental to the accumulation of useful evidence.

(c) Population censuses: The 2010 round

The 2010 round of population censuses, which is already far advanced, presents a valuable opportunity to improve the data needed to estimate changes in the number and characteristics of international migrants over time. A number of inter-governmental meetings have stressed the importance of using the 2010 round of population censuses for that purpose, including the 2008 and 2009 meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. In addition, at the initiative of the MacArthur Foundation, the Center for Global Development convened a group of experts to discuss practical steps to improve international migration data. The group included experts from DESA, Eurostat, IOM, OECD, the World Bank and universities. The report of the group, entitled *Migrants Count*, aimed at improving migrant data in the short term with existing institutions and at a low cost (Center for Global Development, 2009). The report put considerable emphasis on the use of censuses and on the necessity of gathering information on three key characteristics of each person enumerated: country of birth, country of citizenship and, for those who lived abroad, country of previous residence.

Evidence

Between 1 January 2005 and 1 April 2010, 78 countries had conducted a population census and about 145 additional censuses will be conducted over the next five years. Among those 78 countries, 59 (76 per cent) have gathered information on country of birth, country of citizenship, year of arrival or a combination of these criteria. However, 13 of those 59 countries have only gathered information on one of those characteristics, seven of which have recorded country of citizenship only. Since the preferred criterion for identifying international migrants is place of birth, already 28 of the 78 countries that have conducted a recent census lack that information. Furthermore, as *Migrants Count* stressed, having information on both country of birth and country of citizenship is critical to answer key policy questions.

Challenges

The first challenge is to ensure that all censuses include the relevant questions regarding country of birth, country of citizenship and country of previous residence and that the corresponding answers are correctly coded and processed. Despite recommendations both by the United Nations Statistics Commission⁴ and the *Migrants Count* report, many countries do not give sufficient priority to the collection of migration-related census data. Competing topics, limited space and financial constraints have all hampered collection of these important data. Further, by the time such efforts as *Migrants Count* began, planning for the 2010 round of censuses was already well under way, and a significant number of countries have included none of the relevant questions in their censuses, as evident in the statistics cited above.

Even when the relevant questions are included and coded properly, ensuring that the data gathered are processed quickly and disseminated in a timely manner presents another hurdle. During both the 1990 and 2000 rounds of censuses, the tabulations on the number of foreign-born by sex and country of birth (and age) or of foreigners by sex and country of nationality (and age) tended to have low priority and be produced at the end of the tabulation process, sometimes several years after the census had been taken. Worse, numerous countries that collect key migration information in their population census do not produce the basic tabulations recommended by the United Nations. Thus, while 72 per cent of the countries conducting a census during the 2000 round (1995-2004) produced information on the total number of foreign-born or foreign persons, only 63 per cent of them reported the data by sex, 54 per cent reported them classified by country of birth or citizenship, and only 50 per cent reported the number of migrants classified by age group. Only 29 per cent produced the key tabulation recommended by the United Nations, namely, the number of international migrants classified by age group, country of birth (or citizenship) and sex.

Another challenge is to promote a wider and more flexible dissemination of census information relevant for the study of international migration, especially through online databases that permit cross-tabulation of different variables. Because censuses cover the whole population and usually gather information on important demographic and socio-economic characteristics, they are ideal vehicles to yield information on the characteristics of international migrants. Thus, use of detailed tabulations from censuses of member States has allowed OECD to carry out important studies on the international migration of health personnel or the characteristics of highly skilled migrants. In addition, OECD, in collaboration with national statistical offices and the World Bank, has compiled comparable tabulations on the foreign-born classified by country of origin and education or economic characteristics (employment status, occupation and sector of economic activity).

⁴ For the full census recommendations, including those regarding international migration, see United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, 2008.

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The Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) disseminates the data and efforts are under way to extend coverage to non-OECD countries.

It is important to bear in mind that the ongoing financial and economic crisis may be detrimental to the 2010 round of censuses if it means that low-income and even some middle-income countries may have to reduce census budgets. Often, such reductions result in long delays in the processing of the data gathered. UNFPA and the World Bank have been providing assistance for census-taking. In most developing countries, UNFPA heads an interagency task force to support census operations. Such task forces can play an important role in prompting Governments to support censuses adequately.

Another concern is that countries currently affected by conflict, recovering from recent conflicts, natural disasters and other humanitarian crises may not have the capacity to carry out a full census, especially if security cannot be assured. In addition, in countries where migrants have been the object of discrimination or xenophobia or where migrants are in an irregular situation, they may avoid being counted or may not provide the right information on their origin.

2. Data dissemination: Examples of good practice

International migration touches all policy domains, including labour markets, education, health and housing. Therefore, once data from various sources are tabulated, they should be made available for analysis and policy formulation. Data should be accessible, well documented and, if possible, harmonized so as to facilitate their use by researchers.

Evidence

The Integrated Public Use Microdata Series International (IPUMS-I), developed by the Minnesota Population Center in collaboration with national statistical offices, academic institutions and international organizations, constitutes an example of good practice with respect to data dissemination. The Center preserves, harmonizes and disseminates publicly available census microdata from as many countries as possible. The data are recoded in a consistent manner, metadata documenting differences are included and the data are accessible to researchers via the Internet. As of April 2010, the Center maintained data from 130 censuses conducted in 44 countries.

The United Nations Population Division, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Bank and the University of Sussex and with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF, has created the online Global Migration Database, which allows registered users to access publicly available data on the international migrant stock classified by country of birth or citizenship, sex and age, as enumerated by population censuses, population registers, nationally representative surveys and other statistical sources from more than 200 countries and territories. The World Bank has used these data to produce estimates of the international migrant stock by origin and destination for 1960-2000. In 2010, UNICEF has added the Population Division's estimates of the international migrant stock to MigrantInfo.org,⁵ a web-based tool that can generate tables, graphs and maps. ILO's database LABORSTA provides access to data on the stock of international migrants classified by employment status, occupation and sector of economic activity derived from population censuses and large population surveys.

The Migration Profiles, launched initially by the European Commission (EC), have the objective of bringing together for a given country all policy-relevant data on international migration. The newly extended Migration Profiles will also include information on other processes relevant for policy assessment (e.g. employment, education, etc.). Preparation of the profiles is intended to support policy development and build capacity to assess international migration trends and their impact on development. As of February 2010, IOM and EC delegations have prepared Migration Profiles for almost 70 countries, making extensive use of data and information compiled by GMG members. In several countries in Central and Western Africa, Technical Working Groups, which include representatives of national statistical offices, relevant ministries and non-governmental actors, have been established to promote dialogue between producers and users of data for policy development.

⁵ MigrantInfo.org is an online application adapted from DevInfo, a database system that provides a method to organize, store and display data in a uniform format to facilitate data sharing at the country level across Government departments and United Nations agencies using the same system (http://www.devinfo.org/di_faq.html#1, accessed 13 May 2010).

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The World Bank published the *Migration and Remittances Factbook*, which provides a comprehensive picture of immigration, emigration, skilled migration, emigration of physicians and nurses, and remittance inflows and outflows for 194 countries and 13 regional and income groups. For each country and group, the data on migration are accompanied by information on selected socioeconomic characteristics, including population, labour force, the age-dependency ratio, GNI per capita, and the number of people living in poverty. The publication can be downloaded from the World Bank website.

Other examples of valuable dissemination activities include the website on the statistics compiled and disseminated by UNHCR; census tabulations on the foreign-born produced by the Population Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CELADE) known as IMILA (international migration in Latin America); OECD's compilation of special tabulations of census information on the foreign-born, which are available online (they include the foreign-born population by education and country of birth; by sex, education and country of birth; and by sex and occupation); and the database maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division of DESA on the reports received from national statistical offices on the foreign-born population by country of birth and on the total population by nationality (citizens vs. foreigners). In addition, under the direction of the World Bank, databases containing data from the 1990 and 2000 rounds of censuses on international migrants by level of education, data on high-skilled international migrants by sex, panel data on skilled migrants for selected countries for 1975-2000, and data on the emigration of physicians have been prepared and there are ongoing efforts to extend the database on high-skilled migrants to cover also earlier census rounds.

Challenges

Advances in technology have greatly facilitated the tabulation and dissemination of data but, as usual, personnel specialized in the use of databases and web-based dissemination methods need to be available not just to produce the initial datasets but to maintain the functionality of any web-based dissemination tool. Although an increasing number of countries are posting data online, often through databases capable of generating customized output, there are still delays in the dissemination of data and data are not usually available with sufficient detail. Both capacity to develop and maintain data dissemination services and concerns about confidentiality play a role in determining what type of information is publicly available.

In addition to the challenges faced in making data available, the data produced often have a number of deficiencies, including paucity of metadata to ensure that the meaning and scope of the data presented are clear, dissemination of information only in the local language without translation, lack of adherence to United Nations statistical standards and definitions, and problems related to coverage.

3. Capacity-building

Building a robust, long-term institutional capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate data on international migration, particularly in developing countries, is required.

Evidence

Migrants Count recommends setting up capacity-building taskforces in developing countries. These taskforces would discuss common data interests, set objectives and determine steps required to achieve them. The report has been translated from English into Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish. The GMG as a whole supports its key points and GMG members are using it in their capacity-building efforts. More than ten thousand copies of the report were sent to the headquarters and regional offices of GMG members.

CELADE, the Population Division of ECLAC, is implementing a project on international migration and development in collaboration with all other regional commissions and the Population Division of DESA with the objective of improving the collection and sharing of information relevant to guide action to maximize the benefits of international migration for development. All regional commissions of the United Nations will organize workshops, enhance collaboration between research institutions, and create websites to share and access information. GMG members will participate in the activities planned as part of the project.

Focusing on international labour migration, the International Training Center (ITC) of the ILO in Turin, in collaboration with the ILO Department of Statistics and ILO Migrant Programme, has trained decision-makers, managers and practitioners for 45 years. In 2010, ITC will offer eight courses on different aspects of international migration, including courses con-

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ducted in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. In addition, upon request, the ILO Department of Statistics provides direct technical assistance to national statistical offices and ministries of labour in measuring the economic characteristics of international migrants through the inclusion of recommended questions in censuses and household surveys, particularly labour force surveys.

IOM has long conducted capacity-building projects and programmes on the collection of border statistics and ways of sharing international migration data within and between Governments so as to improve their capacity to manage international migration. In Sri Lanka and Ukraine, for instance, IOM developed the capacity to establish a coordinated system for the collection of international migration statistics. Training is also being carried out in relation to the preparation of Migration Profiles.

Challenges

Capacity-building is a long-term process that requires a sustained effort and commitment of resources. Traditionally, capacity-building on the collection, processing and dissemination of data on international migration has been limited. However, with the increased attention on international migration and development, interest in the development of capacity in this area and resources for it have increased. However, although more funding may be available, the sustainability of the effort is not guaranteed given that, for many countries, building capacity demands a strong commitment to institution-building. Efforts to build capacity via time-limited projects are unlikely to effect the necessary changes.

Another challenge is to ensure that the beneficiaries of capacity-building activities are those who are actually involved in the technical aspects of data collection, processing and dissemination. Often, managers who are not technical experts attend workshops and do not necessarily pass on their newly acquired skills to the persons actually doing the work. The opposite is also true when local staff without technical expertise attend workshops and upon return apply some of their newly acquired skills without the necessary background, yielding poor-quality data and analysis.

A further challenge is to strike the right balance between the use of local and international expertise. Often, costly international consultants are hired instead of local staff and there is little incentive for consultants to pass on their expertise to local workers.

Another important limitation of capacity-building is that it tends to suffer from lack of follow-up and loss of trained personnel over time. Focusing on the development of effective partnerships among stakeholders is a way of overcoming some of the limitations of capacity-building activities.

4. Research and analysis

Improving the availability, reliability and timeliness of data on international migration is a necessary foundation for research activities focusing on the interrelations between international migration and development. Assessments of our current understanding of those interrelations invariably conclude that the evidence, though growing, is thin and that more analytical work is needed to guide policy initiatives in this field. As the discussion above has noted, an important task for the institutions that generate or compile relevant information is to ensure that it becomes accessible to the research community so that it can be subject to rigorous analysis and its full potential to inform and guide policy may be realized.

Evidence

Over the past decade, interest in research on international migration has increased and there are more academic and national research institutes involved in the analysis of international migration, its causes and consequences than there were only a decade or two ago. There have also been important advances in the understanding of the various ways in which international migration can interact with the development process, both in beneficial and detrimental ways. Because data and resources are more abundant in developed countries, much of the available research related to the impact of international migration occurs in countries of destination. However, the number of papers and reports on the implications of international migration for countries of origin has been growing fast and the evidence base for such analyses has been improving, although it is still woefully deficient.

IOM has a long-standing programme fostering research and analysis of the various aspects of international migration and the interrelations between international migration and development. The Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific

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(ACP) and the EC have entrusted IOM and a consortium of 19 research partners to set up an Intra-ACP Observatory on Migration to develop research capacity. This Observatory, one of three components of a larger ACP Migration Facility, will establish a network of migration observatories in Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

ILO also has a well-established programme that carries out or fosters research on international labour migration, including its major interrelations with key aspects of development as well as with labour migration governance.

The World Bank has a research programme on international migration that aims to identify and analyse the development impact of international migration and the types of policies, regulations and institutional reforms that can improve the development outcomes related to international migration. Research areas include the migration of the highly-skilled, transnational communities and their effects on human capital development, migration and the provision of healthcare services, and the impact of migration on fertility and on productivity.

The World Bank also has a programme on remittances that has contributed to raise awareness about the capacity of remittances to improve the lives of families of international migrants and their communities of origin and has advocated, often successfully, for the reduction of transfer fees and to ensure the integrity of money transfer systems. Studies on remittances have been undertaken in the following regions: Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific. Remittance market studies have been completed in several African countries and in France, the United Kingdom and the United States as part of the Africa Migration Project, and studies have also focused on a number of bilateral remittance corridors. Together with the African Development Bank, the World Bank has established a multi-donor trust fund to support the study of international migration, remittances and development in sub-Saharan Africa. Also important is the work of the Inter-American Development Bank in promoting reduction of transfer costs and raising awareness of the importance of remittances for development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

To promote global policy coherence regarding international migration, the World Bank has co-chaired with the Bank for International Settlements a taskforce for international coordination of remittance payment systems and has provided inputs to the Group of Twenty (G-20) Study Group on Labour Mobility and Demographics. The World Bank coordinates work on a number of thematic areas set by the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Remittance Working Group, including (a) interconnections of remittances with migration and development, and policy; (b) payment and market infrastructure, and (c) remittance-linked financial products and access to finance.

In 2008-2009, the Human Development Report (HDR) unit of UNDP generated or compiled numerous research papers on various aspects of international migration and development in preparation for the HDR on international migration issued in 2009.

Each meeting of the Global Forum has called for assessing the impacts of the policies, strategies and practices that link international migration and development and has recommended the development of indicators to facilitate such assessments. The ad-hoc Working Group on Policy Coherence, Data and Research of the Global Forum focuses on how data and research relevant for the formulation of international migration policy can strengthen institutional and policy coherence within Governments. In the Working Group, GMG members collaborate with Governments and experts in the follow-up to the meetings of the Global Forum. The Working Group will convene a seminar on assessing the impacts of international migration and development policies in Vienna, Austria, from 30 June to 1 July 2010. The outcomes of the Seminar will support the preparation of the forthcoming meeting of the Global Forum.

Challenges

One challenge to research activities by GMG members in the area of migration and development is that often, the research does not adequately address the real needs of policy-makers. Further, many of the research and analysis activities of GMG members rely heavily on the work of the research community at large. In many cases, GMG members provide small financial incentives to allow or prompt researchers and academics to focus more directly on the issues of importance. Without active engagement of the research community, research and analytical activities of GMG members would be quite limited. So far, GMG members have been able to garner the support of researchers and have leveraged their work by making their findings better known to policy-makers and other stakeholders. GMG has, therefore, an interest in

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continuing to support directly and in fostering support from Governments to academic and research institutions, especially those located in developing countries.

In this regard, one of the challenges is to ensure that rigorous research standards are followed and appropriate methodology is used by researchers, especially those in emerging research centres in the developing world. Capacity-building is therefore necessary, not only with respect to data generation, processing and dissemination, but also in regard to analytical approaches and methodology. GMG members have produced manuals and handbooks relevant for the improvement of data and the evidence base. Similar publications on analytical approaches and methodology could be considered.

5. Partnerships

Developing working partnerships between those needing information on international migration to guide action or make decisions and the persons in charge of collecting, processing, disseminating and analysing migration data is a necessary step to build bridges between decision-makers and technicians. Also, partnerships between data producers can be beneficial to promote the sharing and compilation of migration-related data at the national level, as well as the use of comparable concepts, definitions, classifications, tabulations and overall experiences in working in this area.

To eliminate the deficiencies that continue to exist in the areas of data collection, dissemination and analysis, partnerships need to be established where they do not exist or reevaluated and redefined where they prove to be ineffective.

In most countries the role of policy-makers is decisive with regard to data collection. Partnerships should therefore include Government representatives with close ties to political decision-makers. National stakeholders should set priorities, advise which issues have the highest policy relevance and build linkages with the research community. National task forces that bring together policy-makers, statisticians, researchers and migration specialists, including representatives of non-governmental organizations, can help buttress institutional capacity and promote coherence. International organizations can advise on statistical standards, best practices and assist in raising awareness and finding support for activities planned or already under way.

Many GMG entities are involved in capacity-building at the field level, including in strengthening migration data collection and research. While some GMG entities have collaborated in organizing joint migration training workshops, there is scope for closer cooperation in the future. As a first step, training activities in the areas of data and research could be shared with a view to develop synergies and develop joint training materials.

In the past, GMG members have collaborated with universities on data collection and analysis, often on an ad-hoc basis. Future collaboration could include making survey data collected by GMG members available to the research community through the International Federation of Data Organizations for the Social Science (IFDO) with the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), part of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, responsible within the Federation for data preparation and archiving.

As discussed earlier, the ad-hoc Working Group on Policy Coherence, Data and Research of the Global Forum gives Governments and involved experts, including GMG members, the opportunity to analyze thoroughly key outcomes of the Global Forum and to discuss their relevance in terms of possible follow-up action by interested Governments and institutions.

6. Recommendations

1. GMG should develop a strategy to advocate for specific improvements in the availability and timeliness of relevant data on international migration, including remittances, focusing on data sources that already exist, are functional but are not sufficiently exploited for dissemination and analysis.

2. GMG members should use their various interactions with Governments, whether through global inter-governmental processes or at regional and national levels, to transmit clear messages based on the strategy developed under (1) and, where possible or necessary, be able to provide support for capacity-building activities or funding to institutionalize the routine dissemination of relevant data.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

3. GMG members should continue to strengthen partnerships among themselves in the dissemination or analysis of data relative to groups of countries. Such partnerships would leverage the competitive advantages of each member and avoid duplication of efforts. GMG has already contributed to the development of such partnerships with benefits for all.

4. An immediate priority that is already well recognized is to accelerate the generation of relevant results from the 2010 round of population censuses. UNFPA, as the lead member in supporting census activities, may wish also to take the lead in promoting the tabulation and dissemination of census results, especially through the early release of microdata and critical tabulations. The distribution of *Migrants Count* among key decision-makers in regard to census content is urgent in those countries that are still at the early stages of preparing their next census.

5. GMG may wish to take stock of the state of research and analysis on the interlinkages of international migration and development, assess the role members have played, as a group or individually, in fostering relevant research, and consider whether a joint strategy on how best to engage the research community and other international organizations in cooperative research would be useful. Making an inventory of ongoing research initiatives by GMG members would also be useful.

7. Questions for discussion

1. Are there ways in which GMG members, whether individually or jointly, can be more effective in advocating for specific improvements in data collection, processing and dissemination by Governments?

2. What messages on data availability and ways to improve it should GMG send to intergovernmental gatherings in which its members are represented? How can we get real commitment from the units of Government involved in collecting data relevant for migration in participating in the Global Forum?

3. How can we ensure that the work of members that compile national statistics for dissemination is being carried out in the most effective way? Could new partnerships improve that work?

4. How can GMG members cooperate more closely with the research community and foster research on the issues that Governments consider most important?

5. To what extent do GMG members evaluate migration programmes that they implement from a development perspective?

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For further information: www.globalmigrationgroup.org

About the GMG

The GMG is an inter-agency coordination group, established by the United Nations Secretary-General in early 2006. It brings together the Heads of agency and technical level experts of 14 UN organizations, the IOM and the World Bank and aims to enhance the overall effectiveness and coherence of the normative and operational response of its members and member states to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration. The GMG has produced a number of joint outputs, including compilations and guidance material, and its members regularly work together in different constellations to provide countries with operational support. Apart from sustaining inter-agency cooperation in the field of international migration, the GMG and its members regularly contribute to the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), the United Nations periodical deliberations on international migration and development, and to regional cooperation processes and fora.