

**Round table 3: Multidimensional aspects of international migration and development, including remittances**

**Thursday, 14 September 2006, 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

**Summary by the Chair**

**H.E. Mr. Kastriot SULKO**

**Vice-Minister of the Ministry for Work, Social Affairs and Equal Chances**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to present a summary of the fruitful debate that took place in Round Table 3, which focused on the “*Multidimensional aspects of international migration and development, including remittances*”. The Round Table, which benefited from the active participation of representatives of Member States, United Nations entities and civil society, discussed the various aspects of international migration with a view to finding ways of enhancing its benefits for development. Appreciation was expressed for the extensive support for the Round Table provided by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. José Antonio Ocampo. In the following, I will highlight some of the main conclusions of the Round Table.

It was recognized that, in order for international migration to be beneficial for development and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, it was necessary to capitalize on the skills accrued by migrants while abroad. It was also necessary to reduce the transfer costs of remittances and to strengthen the financial benefits brought about by such transfers by, among other things, increasing the capacity for productive investment and improving access to financial services in the countries of origin particularly, in the rural areas.

The potential of remittances to reduce poverty was underscored and participants focused on strategies to maximize their development potential. However, some of them warned that remittances could create dependency among recipients. The importance of finding ways to reconcile the positive effects of remittances on poverty reduction with their possible negative impact on productivity was underscored. Participants also stressed that remittances were private funds that benefited primarily the families that received them and should not be viewed as a substitute for official development assistance.

There was consensus on the need to reduce the transaction costs of remittances, since such lower transfer costs could contribute significantly to increasing the funds that actually reached the families of migrants.

Participants called on countries of origin to take a more proactive approach to enhancing the development impact of migrants' contributions and savings, particularly by collaborating with the private sector to widen the access by migrants and their families to financial institutions, including micro-credit institutions. Civil society organizations, including migrants' organizations, could also play an important role by promoting financial counselling among migrant families as well as advice and support for entrepreneurship. Access to such support was a means of leveraging the benefits of remittances for development. Coordinating measures to support or promote entrepreneurship in countries of origin were thought useful.

The involvement of transnational communities in fostering the development of countries of origin was thought both desirable and essential to maximize the benefits of international migration. Delegates acknowledged the positive contribution of transnational communities and networks to the development of both communities of destination and origin. It was recognized that the establishment of knowledge-sharing networks involving members of migrant communities could benefit countries of origin.

A number of participants called for further initiatives to explore policy solutions that would facilitate the reintegration of migrants on their return to their countries of origin. The issue of ensuring the portability of pensions and access to social services was also raised. Many delegates felt that returning migrants could be agents of development, provided that policies in countries of origin facilitated the transfer of funds, access to loans, and the setting up of small businesses.