

**TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

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**MANAGING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN TODAY'S COMMONWEALTH.
THE RAMPHAL COMMISSION ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT 2009-2011¹**

The Ramphal Institute

¹ The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

THE RAMPHAL COMMISSION ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT 2009-2011

In 2009 the Ramphal Institute established a Commission on Migration and Development, with a mandate to formulate a practical programme of action for Commonwealth leaders to effectively manage international migration. Chaired by the Hon PJ Patterson, former Prime Minister of Jamaica (1992-2006) the Commissioners are closely connected to a range of Commonwealth countries and have worked over a two year period to advocate their recommendations with governments and the media. An enquiry was launched into how Commonwealth governments can adopt mutually beneficial and practical policies to maximise the benefits of international migration for international economic and social development.

Driven by social and economic disparities, more than 45 million people are living in Commonwealth countries other than the states they were born in. The Commonwealth has been constructed through migration and importantly it promotes the kind of cooperative response progress requires. The Commission was supported in its mandate to engage with the relationship between international migration and development by the Heads of Government communiqué from Port of Spain in 2009. Governments “called for the strengthening of existing global mechanisms to effectively address the protection of migrants”; affirming the “importance of enhanced cooperation among states, and other relevant actors, in managing mixed migratory flows and addressing protection needs” (Communiqué, 2009, Port of Spain, para 34).

Proceeding three academic reports, prepared by academics at the universities of Oxford, the West Indies and Adelaide, the Commission successfully secured a commitment to maximise the social and economic benefits of migration and development from leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit in Perth, October 2011 (CHOGM). As advised by the Commission, leaders in Perth encouraged participation in the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which Mauritius will host in 2012.

Accordingly, The Ramphal Commission acknowledges that international migration is an inevitable, structural feature of global economies, which can provide development dividends to both destination and origin countries. The Commission further recognises that the development potential of international migration is currently thwarted by poor global governance and weak coordination between international organisations. It has therefore examined the human dimensions of international development in order to devise strategies to enhance International Corporation on the migration- development nexus.

In the following sections this paper:

- Summarizes the Ramphal Commission’s position, in concurrence with the outcomes of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Perth, 2011.
- Give examples of partnership projects that the Ramphal Institute has initiated that have focused on the managing of migration for improved global development prospects.
- Lists recommendations and initiatives of the Commission, which have been discussed by Heads in Perth to promote human development.
- Details the impact of the Commission on international cooperation on migration.

A. RAMPHAL VISION

The Ramphal Commission on Migration and Development highlights the lack of coherence between migration and wider economic development and poverty reduction policies in the international community. It emphatically endorses the sovereignty of individual nations but believes that migration can be beneficial, provided there are effective, equitable and fair migration management policies, practices and programmes in place. The Commission shifts the balance of public debate and policy responses from the *policing* of migration to its *management*. It targets the many more opportunities than risks offered by international migration, focusing on the facilitation of ‘brain circulation’.

The Commonwealth is uniquely placed to shift the balance of discourse on migration away from an overwhelming concentration on policing and security issues towards full inclusion of issues of management of migration. The Commonwealth can bring its institutions, experience and cooperative ethos to help make international migration, especially that between low income and high income countries, more ‘development friendly’. The Commonwealth, with its experience of migration, could be a laboratory for best practice on the equitable management of migration.

The Commission recognises the complexities of important influences on migration; in particular: climate change, the unique characteristics governing the migration management of small states, the growth of informal labour markets and structural inequalities in global trade relations. The Ramphal model therefore challenges the neoclassical development paradigm, in which methodological individualism motivates responses to poverty reduction. Recognition of a migrant’s right not to move is imperative in context of devising policies which respond to migration as an adaptive livelihood strategy. Rights based approaches to migrant labour standards are therefore critical, and the particular ratification of standards for women is a pressing concern.

In its reports the Ramphal Commission encourages Commonwealth governments to adopt a powerful, cooperative vision for the next decade with the purpose of¹:

- Enhancing international cooperation over migration by developing shared principles to govern migration policy.
- Building migration management capacity through programmes to transfer knowledge data collection methods and experience.
- Streamlining migration in development policies by adoption of more development friendly migration policies.
- Helping migrants share their successes by encouraging more evidence driven, balanced and fair dialogues on migration issues in Commonwealth countries.

B. RAMPHAL PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

1. Diaspora Consultation on Opportunities for Trade, Investment and Remittances

The Ramphal Institute, in collaboration with The African and Caribbean Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, London, held a conference on diaspora opportunities for trade, investment and remittances in July 2011. Participants included representatives of financial institutions, diaspora

organisations and business and Ramphal Commissioners. The conference highlighted three key policy areas that are necessary for encouraging Diaspora contributions to countries of origin; mitigating risk and increasing trust in business environments; developing networks; and facilitating investment and development through the Diaspora. The conclusions of this consultation were used to underpin the recommendations of the Ramphal Commission on Migration and Development. The consultation concluded that the responsibility to produce attractive environments and build the profile of the diaspora must be assumed by Governments and the international community. It affirmed the view that the diaspora should be viewed not only as a source of financial support but recognised for their political, intellectual, cultural and social capital.

2. Migration, Rural Development, Poverty and Food Security: prepared in collaboration with the UN. Food and Agriculture Organisation and Commonwealth Foundation

The Ramphal Institute has engaged in a study of diaspora contributions to rural development, poverty reduction and food security with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Commonwealth Foundation. Consultants met stakeholders in each country, in the presence of officials of the Commonwealth Foundation on occasion. The final report was prepared by Dr Thomas Lacroix, of the International Migration Institute, Oxford, following a technical evaluation in June 2011. It synthesizes the findings of eight country case studies in India, Jamaica, Kenya, Sri Lanka, St Vincent and Grenadines, Tonga Islands and Zambia.

The study concludes that migration contributes to food security and alleviates poverty reduction, even for non migrant households. It highlights five key “deficits” impeding rural development in developing countries and four forms of migratory transfers likely to alleviate them. Rural development is currently restricted by market chain, infrastructure, knowledge, financial and investment deficits. Accordingly, migration can alleviate these impediments in the form of financial, social and collective remittances and entrepreneurship.

The Ramphal Institute is currently engaging in further collaboration with the FAO in the areas of diaspora influences on family farming and on matters arising from the Perth Declaration on Food Security.

C. NEW INITIATIVES

The following recommendations are the culmination of the work of the Ramphal Commission on Migration and Development and were placed before the Commonwealth Meeting at Perth. Their shared aim is to strengthen intergovernmental cohesion by providing practical initiatives to govern national policy on migration. The Commission recommends the following initiatives:

- Implement a programme to strengthen the migration management capacity of officials, with improved training and sharing of data collection.
- Develop strategies to address negative public perception. Recognise the role of media, political leaders and civil society, and challenge misinformation and xenophobia on the basis of accurate evidence and humanist principles. Cultural engagement strategies with second and third generation diasporas can contribute to changing negative stereotypes of home countries. The private sector can also play an important role by facilitating business opportunities.

- Develop more coherence between remittances and development policies, by encouraging circular migration through schemes such as dual nationality, portable pensions and promoting best practice, such as the example of a Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.
- Scale up efforts to mitigate environmental risk to better manage climate change induced migration. This includes the establishment of monitoring and early warning systems at the national or regional levels, along with the establishment of appropriate response systems so as to reduce the impact of predictable hazards.
- Create incentives for diaspora communities to invest their financial, social and human capital in the development of communities of origin. Work towards reducing the cost of international remittances and foster greater collaboration with the private sector to encourage diaspora entrepreneurialism and bonds. Improved synergy in intergovernmental spaces can help facilitate enabling environments, in which current information deficits and a chronic lack of trust are better responded to, thereby improving investment prospects in many developing countries.
- Factor the importance of international migration into national strategies for agricultural modernisation, food security and nutrition. The outcomes of the research on migration, rural development, poverty and food security confirms the importance of channelling investment into rural areas through national bonds and other incentives. It highlights three further domains which can improve this nexusⁱⁱ:
 - To enhance internal remittances through innovative channels such as mobile phone transfers
 - To link agriculture and immigrant entrepreneurship to build up international market chains
 - To develop integration policies in Northern states likely to enlarge to capacities of immigrants

D. IMPACT

1. As a result of the work of the Commission, governments at the Perth CHOGM “committed to maximise the economic and social benefits of migration to improve the resilience and prosperity of Commonwealth members, whilst addressing the challenges posed by irregular migration which undermines legal migration policies”. Subsequently they called for:

- a) stronger international cooperation to manage migration effectively in countries of origin, transit and destination, in order to bolster migration’s positive effects and to enhance safety nets for migrants;
- b) cooperation in the fight against irregular migration, including in particular the readmission of own nationals staying irregularly in other states, in accordance with bilateral agreements and international obligations;
- c) in this context, articulated the link between migration and development, affirming the importance of adopting migration strategies that would reduce the cost of migration, and create incentives for diaspora communities to invest their financial resources and expertise in the development of their countries of origin;
- d) and encouraged participation in the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which Mauritius will host in 2012 (item 3h CHOGM Communiqué, Perth 2011).

2. The Ramphal Institute is working to ensure that existing schemes within the Commonwealth are utilised and promoted to build migration management capacity. The Commonwealth Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health Workers has been adopted as a template for the WHO Global Code of Practice for the Recruitment of Health Personnel adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2010. As such, the Commission has called for stricter implementation and wider acceptance of this code, alongside recommending policies which encourage cooperation between small states to share training capacityⁱⁱⁱ. The Ramphal Commission has paid particular attention to health worker migration, signalling the need for enhanced international cooperation on the 'brain drain' of health workers out of poor countries.

Furthermore, the Institute has been influential in the division of new schemes. The Ramphal Institute brokered discussion between the International Organisation for Migration and the Commonwealth Secretariat, to facilitate the establishment of a pan Commonwealth programme to train migration officials.

The Ramphal Institute fully endorses the objectives of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, in recognition that international migration is an inexorable process, which can offer enormous social and economic dividends. Migratory trajectories are subject to a changing climate, in which national government power is reducing as economic power shifts towards transnationalism. The recommendations of the Commission have been devised to enhance Commonwealth wide cooperation on migration; however, as the Institute regards the Commonwealth as a laboratory for best practice, these initiatives may be injected into the UN dialogue.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Alan Gamlen, 'People on the Move: Managing Migration in Today's Commonwealth', The first report of the Ramphal Commission on Migration and Development, 2010.

ⁱⁱ Thomas Lacroix; 'Migration, rural development, poverty and food security: a comparative perspective', International Migration Institute, 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ Graeme Hugo, 'People on the Move: Managing Migration in Today's Commonwealth', The third report of the Ramphal Commission on Migration and Development, 2011.