

**FOURTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Secretariat

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**UNFPA'S POLICY AND PROGRAMME OF WORK
ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

A. INTRODUCTION

International migration is a complex global phenomenon with important social and economic implications for every country in the world. The growth and diversity of current migration flows mean that today no country remains untouched by migration, either as place of origin, transit or destination, and often all three.

International migration is an integral aspect of the global development process. It can no longer be considered peripheral to the mainstream of population policy. Migration is increasingly being perceived as a development tool and a force that can contribute to development. Research shows a strong positive correlation between remittances and poverty reduction in developing countries.

B. ACTIVITIES OF UNFPA THAT FURTHER UNDERSTANDING OF THE EFFECTS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

When Member States signed off on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, they did not include migration in the final document. Migration is not even mentioned in the MDGs. Moreover, the relationship between migration and the MDGs has not been adequately explored despite the fact that the link between migration and development is increasingly recognized. Development can reduce migration pressures and migration can have a significant impact on a country's development. Migration is still not adequately addressed in development frameworks such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and United Nations Development Frameworks (UNDAFs). Yet migration can play an important role in the achievement of the MDGs. Although it can certainly serve as a constraint, if properly managed, migration can also contribute to the realization of the goals.

In order to further explore the role of international migration in the development process, UNFPA convened in October 2004 a *Round Table on International Migration and Development* in New York at which it launched the joint International Migration Policy Programme/UNFPA publication, **Meeting the Challenges of Migration: Progress Since the ICPD**. The Round Table explored the issues, implications and challenges of international migration, including those related to poverty and development, demographic dynamics, the nexus between decent work, globalization and migration, empowering refugees and returnees as agents of development, and capacity building in migration policy and management. Migration can no longer be considered solely as a development failure but should be seen as an integral part of the global development process. Many migrants reinvest in their countries of origin through remittances, direct financial investment and skills transfers, and act as important agents when it comes to poverty reduction, small-scale enterprise and human development.

In May 2005, UNFPA organized an *Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and the Millennium Development Goals* in Marrakech, Morocco. The meeting analyzed migration and its effect on those MDGs that are most closely affected by migration, including the goals pertaining to poverty reduction; gender equality; improving maternal health; prevention of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnerships for development. The meeting addressed the complexity and diversity of migration and showed how it affects not only the migrants themselves but also the sending and receiving countries and their ability to reach the MDG targets. It looked at how migration fosters development by bringing in remittances, and how it can potentially hinder development through the brain drain. It especially looked into the adverse consequences of the out-migration of medical personnel in developing countries, especially those

devastated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It looked into diaspora networks, circular and return migration and how they contribute to technological transfers and the development of the community of origin.

UNFPA published selected papers from this meeting, together with a synopsis of the discussion highlighting some of the more salient points raised by the experts in a report entitled *International Migration and the Millennium Development Goals, Selected Papers of the UNFPA Expert Group Meeting*. The report also suggests possibilities for programmatic activities in the areas of data and research, policy and capacity development. The report was launched in New York in September 2005 at a high-level *Panel on International Migration and the Millennium Development Goals* which explored the interface between international migration and development, the gender dimension of migration, the human rights of migrants, and the health needs of women labour migrants.

UNFPA is collaborating with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) on a series of training workshops on key migration issues for government delegates at the Permanent Missions to the United Nations. These workshops are intended to provide government officials with a better understanding and a forum for discussion of such important issues as human trafficking, remittances and post-conflict development, contractual labour mobility and promoting cultural diversity and social cohesion.

The 2006 edition of UNFPA's *State of World Population* will focus on women and migration and will show how women can both benefit from migration and be subject to discrimination and abuse when migrating. The report will address, *inter alia*, issues of empowerment and risks, including trafficking; and the social and economic implications of women's migration, including disruption of families on the one hand and benefits of remittances on the other.

As international migration gains greater scope and impact, UNFPA is considering possible strategic directions to strengthen its support to policies and programmes addressing the challenges while capitalizing on the opportunities that migration presents to individual migrants, their larger community and both sending and receiving countries.

C. IMPLICATIONS OF THE REPORT OF THE GLOBAL COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

UNFPA welcomes the report of the Global Commission on International Migration. The report provides a comprehensive examination of migration in an interconnected world, stressing the need for maximizing positive outcomes, capitalizing on the opportunities, and meeting the challenges of international migration. It points to the need for capacity to formulate and implement effective migration policies, the establishment of a coherent approach to migration and interstate consultation and cooperation as a basis for the formulation and implementation of migration policies, and enhanced cooperation and coordination between the different multilateral international organizations working in the field of migration.

UNFPA believes that the Principles for Action as outlined by the Commission are essential in addressing the challenges of international migration today: migrating out of choice, reinforcing economic and developmental impact, addressing irregular migration, strengthening social cohesion through integration, protecting the rights of migrants and enhancing governance.

UNFPA welcomes the Commission's recommendations and looks forward to working with Member States, United Nations agencies and other international organizations in facilitating their implementation. The Fund is ready to collaborate in both the immediate and long-term and facilitate dialogue between and among Governments, the United Nations system and international organizations. The Fund believes the

proposed Inter-agency Global Migration Facility will ensure a more coherent and effective institutional response to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration. It looks forward to working with the high-level inter-institutional group to identify existing overlaps and gaps, explore the pooling of institutional expertise and develop the modalities of the Global Migration Facility. UNFPA can utilize its network of regional technical teams and national Country Offices to advocate for, and facilitate, policy dialogue, planning, capacity building, data collection and dissemination, and consultations.

D. CONCLUSION

International migration has important social and economic implications for countries of origin and destination, as well as for the migrants themselves. The challenge before the international community is to harness the potential of migration in such a way as to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits for both sending and receiving areas while preserving the basic rights of individual migrants including female migrants in order to spur development and facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Addressing the challenges of international migration requires a high degree of coordination and inter-State cooperation and collaboration both regionally and at the international level. It requires awareness and understanding of the social and economic implications of migration, the political will to manage migration flows and to address the consequences of migration, institutional capacity and trained staff, and resources to manage migration flows.

UNFPA looks forward to the discussions of international migration and development in 2006 at the Commission on Population and Development and the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Both events will provide the international community with a forum for discussion of the implications as well as the challenges and opportunities presented by international migration.