

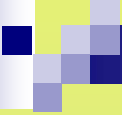


# **International Symposium on International Migration**

**Turin-28-30 June 2006**

**Key Issues Characterizing International Migration  
and Development in the Arab Region**

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**□ In light of the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/58/208) in its 58th session to organize a High Level Dialogue on “ International Migration and Development, ESCWA, in collaboration with the Population Division of DESA organized an Expert Group Meeting on “International Migration and Development in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities,” which took place in Beirut, from 15 to 17 May 2006.**

**□ The meeting aimed at :**


- Identifying key aspects of international migration and development that should be considered in the HLD .**
- Initiating and promoting a process of cooperation and dialogue at the regional level.**

***The following sessions were organized in order to provide a framework for discussions***

- **International migration trends and policies in the Arab region.**
- **International migration and socio-economic development.**
- **Temporary labour migration in the Arab region.**
- **Highly-skilled migration: Challenges and Opportunities.**
- **Trans-national communities and return migration.**
- **Remittances: development impact and policy responses.**
- **International migration in the Arab region: prospects for governance and management.**

## **International migration trends and policies in the Arab region**

- The number of migrants to Arab countries was 13.1 million in 1990 , and was increased to reach 20 million in 2005.**
  
- The GCC States are the major receivers of migrants ; especially South to South Migration.**
  
- According to the place of birth ,there are about 8.3 million Arab all over the world .**
  
- For those who lost contacts with their countries of origin there are 14 million Lebanese migrants and about 20 million Syrian.**

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- ❑ The distinction between sending and receiving countries is becoming difficult since a number of Arab countries have dual policies.**
  - ❑ Migration policies range from encouraging migration to restricting it according to circumstances and time .**
  - ❑ The Maghreb countries have a well defined policy that encourages emigration in order to manage unemployment levels and acquire hard currency .**
  - ❑ There are identifiable gaps in reliable and comparable statistics and databases.**

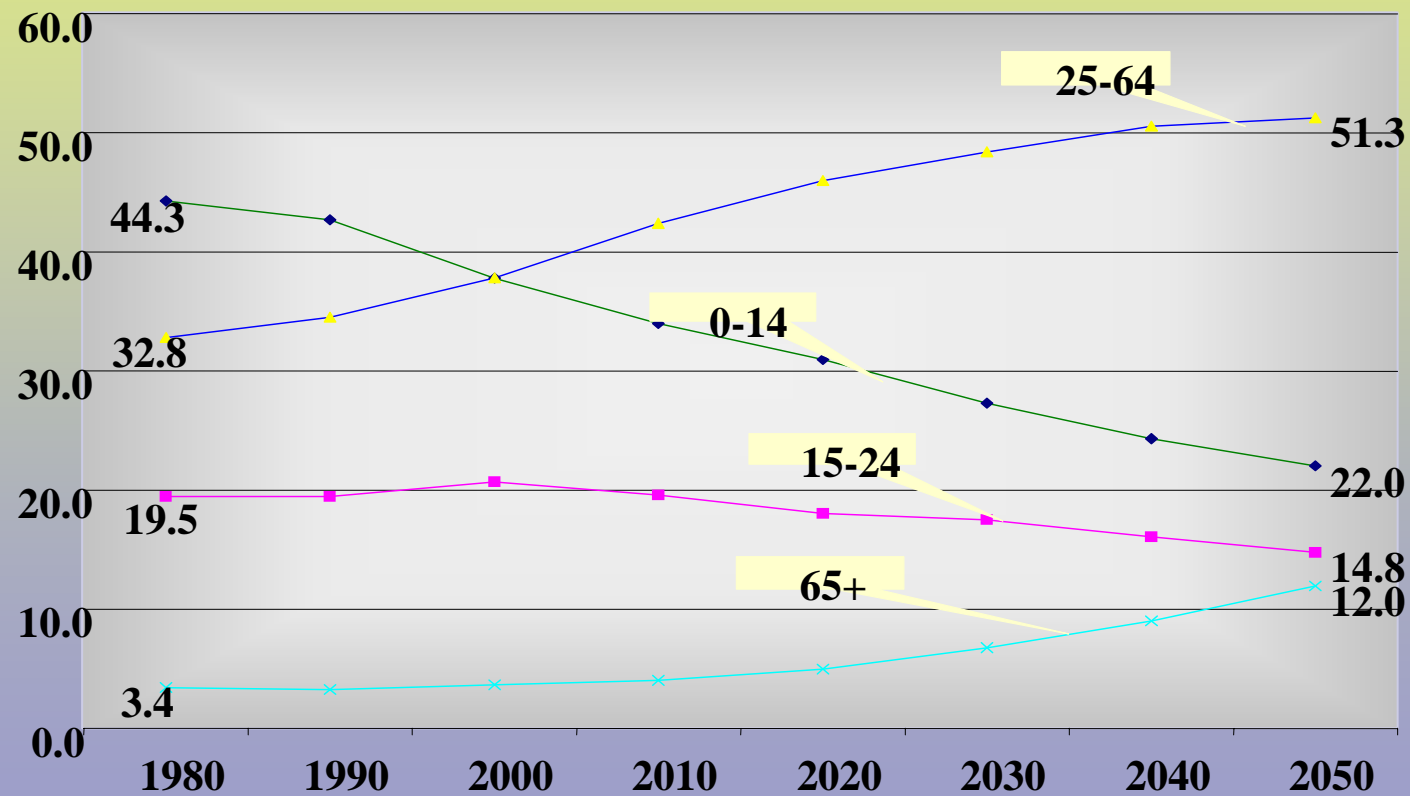
## **Increase in Number of Migrants (Millions) in the Arab Region**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>Increase 1990-2005</b>
<b>Arab region</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Mashreq</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>GCC</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>

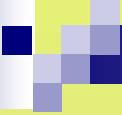
## **International migration and socio-economic development**

- Arab countries have the highest unemployment rate in the world . Unemployment rate ranges between 13.2 and 20 percent . Youth unemployment constitutes 53% of total unemployment , of which 59% are first time job seekers .**
- A large number of working age people are leaving their country of origin for other countries that offer more attractive employment opportunities and higher income .**
- As the process of demographic transition proceeds, the working-age population increases , and meeting the employment needs of these young people will be a great challenge .**

**Arab countries: population age structure is changing dramatically**  
**(1980-2050)**







**□ As a result, labour markets in the region have to cope with a rising tide of first time job seekers on top of those already unemployed and seeking work.**

**□ Unless effective policies are undertaken to make employment rates grow faster than the working-age population, open unemployment will further escalates .**

**□ The major challenges Arab countries are expected to face is the political and social pressures resulting from the unemployment rate on one hand , and the unmet growing demand by people to emigrate. ( demographic pressure of migration )**

## **Temporary labour migration in the Arab region**

**Total migrants in GCC States are estimated to be 12.8 million. In 1975 intra Arab migration represented 74% of the total in the region; in 2005 it declined to about 28%.**

**□ The share of women among migrants is still very low, and they are largely concentrated in low level occupations such as domestic workers.**

**□ The available data on migrants workers are neither reliable nor adequate for the analysis of gender .**

**□ The coexistence of open unemployment of nationals and large expatriate labour in the GCC States is a unique feature of the region.**



**□ Equally unique, is the high percentage of non-nationals in the populations of the GCC countries.**

**□ The use of the concept migrant workers for contractual expatriate workers in GCC countries is contentious and problematic.**

**□ Most if not all GCC countries want to lower immigration, because of the rising unemployment of nationals.**

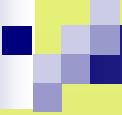
**□ There are marked deficiencies in policies, programs and institutions to help settle and integrate migrants in the host countries in the region.**

*Distribution of GCC States according to government views  
and policies on the level of Immigration*

	<b>Immigration</b>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>1976</b>		<b>2003</b>	
	<b>View</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>View</b>	<b>Policy</b>
<b>Bahrain</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Maintain</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>No intervention</b>
<b>Kuwait</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Maintain</b>	<b>Too high</b>	<b>Lower</b>
<b>Oman</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Maintain</b>	<b>Too high</b>	<b>Lower</b>
<b>Qatar</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Maintain</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Maintain</b>
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	<b>Too low</b>	<b>Raise</b>	<b>Too high</b>	<b>Lower</b>
<b>UAE</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Maintain</b>	<b>Too high</b>	<b>Lower</b>
<b>Yemen</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Maintain</b>	<b>Too high</b>	<b>Lower</b>

## **Highly-skilled migration, transnational communities and return migration**

- There exists large migration flows of skilled workers within and to outside the region. The emigration of highly skilled workers from Morocco and Algeria has become of great concern .**
- Highly skilled migration from the region is underpinned by large student flows that do not return to the sending countries.**
- Improved links between migrants abroad and their communities of origin have positive impact for the transfer of knowledge, ideas and funds between countries of origin and destination.**



**❑ Return migration programs have not been successful, despite the support provided by some receiving and sending countries.**

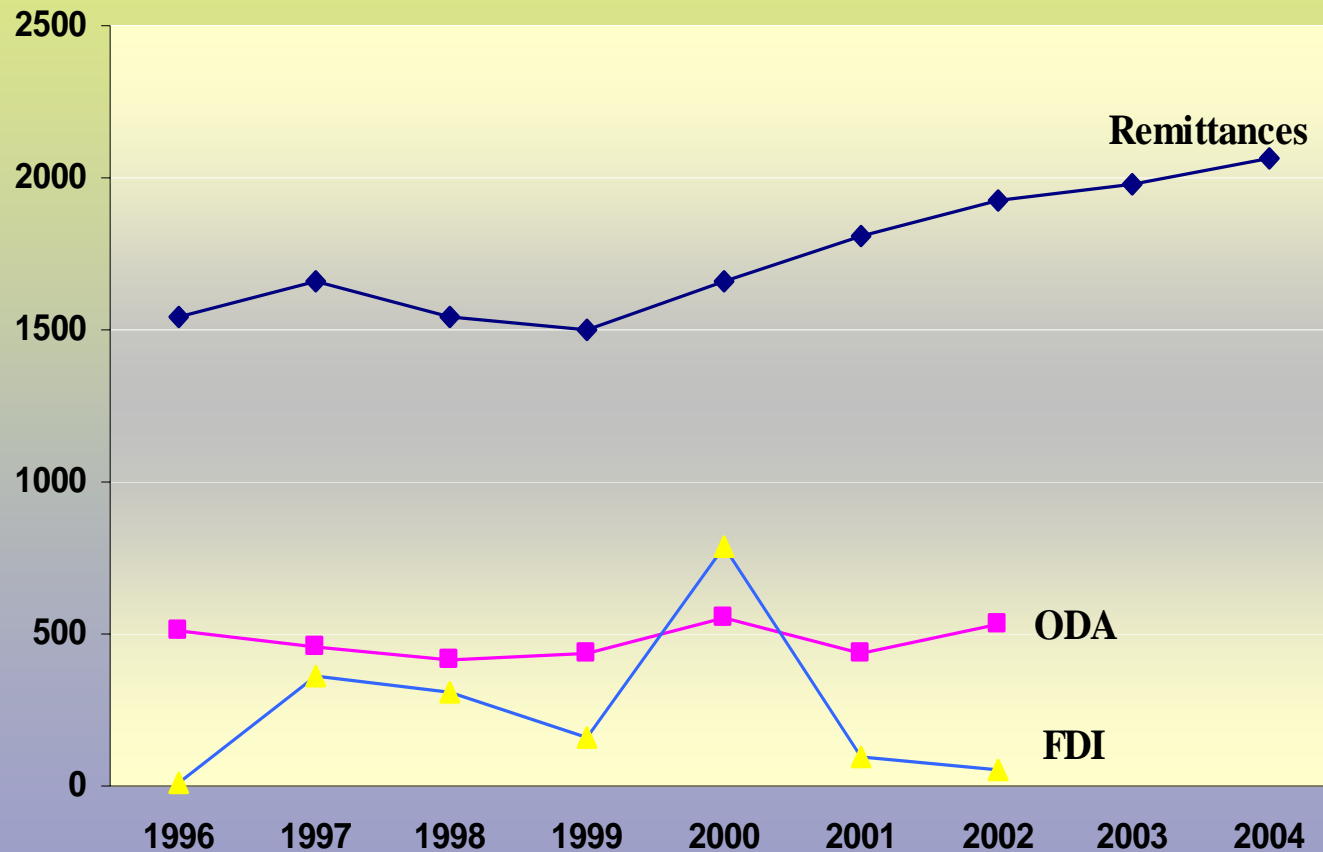
**❑ Return migration could be encouraged by programmes such as TOKTEN, through which highly skilled emigrants are attracted to return home.**

**❑ Return is also encouraged when conditions in home countries improved, including the role of law, democratization, political stability, and a responsive investment climate.**

## **Remittances: development impact and policy responses**

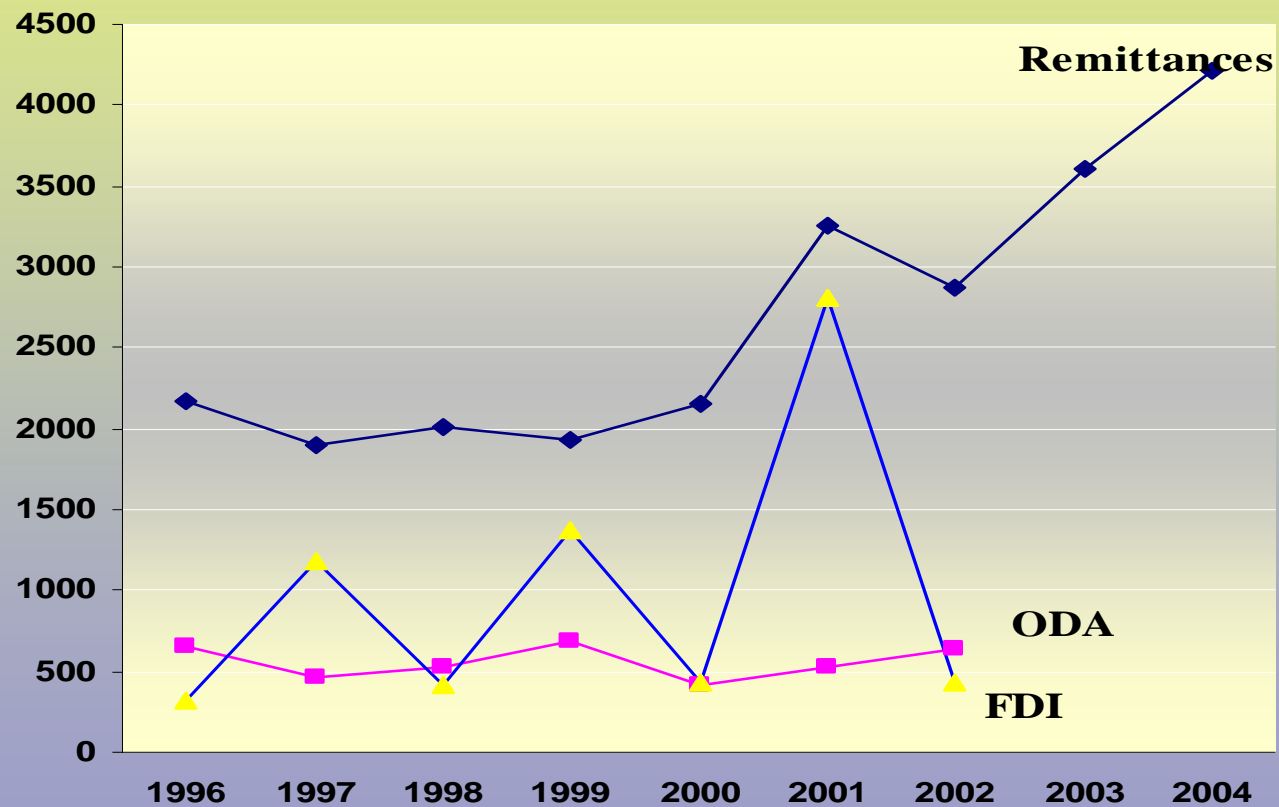
- ❑ Migrant remittances have become the first largest capital flow in the region. and constitute the fastest growing and most stable capital flow to the region.**
- ❑ Remittances were higher than Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and ahead of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) ,**
- ❑Migrant remittances have made major contributions to poverty reduction, health improvement and educational attainment of many households.**

## Jordan- workers' remittances and other inflows (Million)





## Morocco- workers' remittances and other inflows (Million)





**□ Among the countries receiving large remittances from their migrant workers are Morocco (US\$ 4.3 billion), Egypt (US\$ 2.9 billion), Lebanon (US\$ 2.3 billion), and Jordan (US\$ 2.2 billion) in 2003 .**

**□ Jordanian expatriate remittances, which rose from 19.5 percent of GDP in 1998 to 22.6 percent of GDP in 2003, are the highest in the Arab region, followed by Yemen, 16.1 percent of the country's GDP, Lebanon 13.8 percent, and Morocco 9.7 percent.**

**□ There are marked deficiencies in policies, programs and institutions to effectively utilize remittances in productive investment.**

## Conclusions

- ❑ An Arab regional dialogue on international migration was deemed imperative.**
- ❑ International migration databases should be available for policy making.**
- ❑ Improve the evidence-base in the region was an important conclusion of the meeting .**
- ❑ Protecting the rights of migrants, including women workers, was also emphasized .**
- ❑ Policies to facilitate the flow and use of remittances for development benefits was emphasized.**
- ❑ Improving the overall investment environment and increasing access to formal sector transfer services will enhance the productive aspects of remittances.**