
UN/POP/MIG-5CM/2006/05
15 November 2006

**FIFTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**
Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
New York, 20-21 November 2006

**UNFPA CONTRIBUTION TO THE
FIFTH COORDINATION MEETING
ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

UNFPA

A. INTRODUCTION

The High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development underscored the important role that properly managed movements across borders play in the development of countries of origin and destination. It demonstrated the strong commitment of Member States, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and civil society to examine the relationship between international migration and development. The High-Level Dialogue also pointed to the need for collaboration and cooperation to promote orderly flows of migration and to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative consequences of migration for both countries of origin and destination as well as for the migrants themselves. It showed that international migration is a growing phenomenon that could no longer be addressed at the national level alone.

The High-Level Dialogue affirmed that international migration could be a positive force for development if well channeled and supported by appropriate policies. International migration is an integral aspect of the global development process. It can no longer be considered peripheral to the mainstream of population and development policy. Formulation of sound migration policies as well as building national capacities to meet the challenges of international migration could significantly increase the benefits and reduce the risks for countries involved as well as for the migrants themselves. Policies must promote the orderly flow of migration and address such important issues as protecting the human rights of migrants, especially women; combating trafficking in human beings; stemming the brain drain, especially the out-migration of health-care workers in areas where they are most needed; and addressing irregular migration.

B. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES ADDRESSING KEY ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF THE OUTCOME OF THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Migration was not included in the final document of the Millennium Declaration and it is not mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). 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. 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. As pointed out in the publication of the UNFPA-organized *Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and the Millennium Development Goals*, if properly managed, migration can contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

UNFPA issued a new Policy Guidance Note on the Fund's strategic direction in addressing international migration noting that the increasing focus on inter-linkages between migration, poverty reduction and development has important implications for UNFPA's programmatic work in a number of key areas, including the role of migration in socio-economic development, especially poverty reduction; the relationship between migration and women and migration and young people; and the impact of migration on human rights. The Policy Guidance Note suggests a number of activities that UNFPA can undertake to make a difference. With its network of Country Offices worldwide, UNFPA is well positioned to make a significant contribution to enhancing awareness and increasing national capacity to address the challenges of international migration, and to support countries in their efforts to integrate migration issues into national development plans, including poverty reduction strategies.

UNFPA plans to continue its collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and offer 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 of the relationship between migration and development and a forum for discussion of important issues of concern to countries of origin, transit and destination.

The 2006 edition of UNFPA's *State of World Population* focused on women and international migration and showed how women can both benefit from migration and be subject to discrimination and abuse when migrating. The report examined the impact of female labour migration on source and destination countries and addressed, *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.

Female migration was the subject of an Expert Group Meeting convened by UNFPA to identify the gaps and challenges through the life cycle of female migrants and to make recommendations on how governments, the United Nations system and other relevant organizations can work together to ensure that the rights and needs of female migrants are adequately addressed.

C. KEY ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

International migration has important implications for demographic dynamics. It also has an immense potential for advancing development. Among the key issues of concern to UNFPA are the following:

Migration as a tool for development. Increasingly, efforts aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals embrace migration as a development force, not a development failure. Research shows a strong positive correlation between remittances and poverty reduction in developing countries. Remittances sent by migrants to their families exceed official development assistance (ODA) and constitute the largest single

source of financial flows to developing countries exceeding at times, foreign direct investment (FDI) flows in many countries. Migrants are also important vehicles for transmitting “social remittances” including new ideas, products, information, and technology. However, while migration can aid development and reduce poverty, it can also broaden social inequity, particularly in sending countries. It is increasingly becoming important to capitalize on the benefits of migration and to mitigate the negative effects of cross-border movements.

Female migrants. While the size and diversity of female migration are increasing, women still tend to be more concentrated in traditionally female occupations and in the informal sector. Those in unregulated sectors of the economy are at greater risk of exploitation and abuse. The feminization of migration and the abuses often experienced by women migrants call for the recognition of gender equality as an integral part of the process of policy making, planning, programme delivery and monitoring at all levels. Protection of human rights and access to legal and health services, including reproductive health services, are especially important when it comes to addressing the challenges faced by migrant women.

Human rights. Increasing migrant flows have resulted in growing international attention to such complex issues as xenophobia, discrimination, racism, human trafficking, human rights of migrants, and most recently, terrorism and national security. Women and young people are especially vulnerable to exploitation and human rights abuses and need special protection. The legal framework affecting international migration should be strengthened and implemented more effectively to protect the human rights of all migrants.

Human trafficking. Trafficking in human beings is the third most lucrative illicit business in the world after arms and drug trafficking. Widespread discrimination and violence against women, and restrictive immigration policies that limit opportunities to migrate safely and legally fuel the trafficking trade. Trafficking is very closely tied to sexual exploitation and abuse, and many victims are forced into sex work against their will. Although awareness and action against trafficking is growing, there is an urgent need to do more to end this terrible crime. Greater cooperation between and within countries is essential in order to bring traffickers to justice and to provide services and human rights protection for victims. To be effective, a comprehensive policy response should be multi-pronged and should include prevention, protection of victims, and prosecution of perpetrators.

Brain drain. The out-migration of highly educated and highly skilled segments of the population drains developing countries of much-needed talent and hinders development efforts. The demand for skilled migrants in receiving countries, together with push factors in countries of origin, have driven increasing numbers of highly skilled workers abroad. A number of developing countries are experiencing serious deficits in the health-care system because of the emigration of doctors, nurses and other health personnel. A significant challenge is to provide decent work and decent working conditions in countries of origin to help stem the brain drain. Another challenge for development in countries of origin is to encourage return of skilled migrants.

D. CONCLUSION

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.

Age and sex disaggregated migration data are essential for evidence-based policy dialogue, development planning and programme formulation. Research is essential in order to enhance understanding of the migration process, including in such areas as: the root causes of migration; the relationship between migration and development; the impact of remittances; the impact of migration on gender equality and women's empowerment; labour migration in a globalized economy; the role of the diaspora; and the impact of migration on the environment.

The momentum generated by the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development on 14-15 September 2006 must continue. The establishment of a Global Forum on Migration and Development, as proposed by the Secretary-General, will facilitate further constructive dialogue on this important issue by giving countries the opportunity to come together in an informal and voluntary setting to engage in non-binding consultations and to find ways of improving cooperation.

The inter-agency Global Migration Group (GMG) can play an important role in facilitating the work of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and in ensuring effective follow-up to the High-Level Dialogue. The GMG can encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approaches to the issue of international migration. It can be instrumental in providing direction and leadership in a system-wide context; contributing to greater consistency in policy formulation and programme implementation; identifying critical issues, challenges, gaps and best practices; and promoting interest and dialogue on migration-related issues.

UNFPA looks forward to working with its GMG partners, Member States, United Nations agencies, and other international organizations on the important challenges of international migration in the context of follow-up to the High Level Dialogue.