

## ACTIVITIES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### *Migration Policy Institute (MPI)*

#### A. BRIEF BACKGROUND ON THE MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) was established in 2001 as an independent think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. Formerly a programme of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), MPI is now an independent migration policy research organization. The Institute aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic responses to the challenges and opportunities that migration, whether voluntary or forced, presents to countries, communities, and institutions in this ever more integrated world.

Since 2003, MPI has worked to deepen understanding of the broad impact of international migration on the development prospects of countries of migrant origin through its programme area: migrants, migration and development. Despite the growing volume of research on the actual and potential contributions of migrants and migrant communities to sustainable development and poverty reduction in their countries of origin, the research findings have not been systematically translated into policy guidance, and important topics remain under-investigated. MPI interprets the policy implications of research on migration and development in order to draw a more comprehensive picture of migration-development linkages, ranging from remittances to the economic, social and political influences of transnational communities on countries of destination and origin and returning migrants.

#### B. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES TO THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Since the 2006 High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development, MPI has released several publications in two main areas: circular migration and remittances. In order to promote discussion of salient migration and development issues, MPI organized and co-organized various events in Europe and the United States of America. MPI has contributed to the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). It was represented on the International Committee for the GFMD in Brussels, Belgium, in 2007, and in Manila, the Philippines, in 2008 and on the Core Group of Experts for the Global Forum in Manila, the Philippines, in 2008.

##### *1. Publications*

###### *a. Circular migration*

Since the High-level Dialogue, MPI spent considerable time and effort to study the development potential of circular migration, a pattern in which emigrants return, permanently or temporarily, to their countries of origin. In September 2006, MPI published *From Zero-Sum to a Win-Win Scenario? Literature Review on Circular Migration*, a report looking at the policy implications of new research findings on the developmental impacts of circular migration. MPI reviewed policies intended to encourage circular migration, including temporary worker schemes.

In 2007, MPI consolidated its work on this topic with the publication of a policy brief entitled *Circular Migration and Development: Trends, Policy Routes, and Ways Forward*, and prepared two background papers for the first meeting of the GFMD in Brussels, Belgium. In the intergovernmental

meeting, MPI prepared the discussion paper for the round table on Human capital development and labour mobility: maximizing opportunities and minimizing risks. The MPI paper *How Can Circular Migration and Sustainable Return Serve as Development Tools?* was used in a presentation by the Government of Luxembourg. At the Civil Society Day, MPI presented the paper *Can Migrants, Countries of Origin and Countries of Destination All Win from Circular Migration?*

In the follow-up to the first Global Forum, circular migration has been taken up by a number of governments as a priority policy concern. In 2007-2008, the Government of Sweden, as chair of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum, and Refugees (IGC), selected circular migration as the special focus of IGC deliberations. MPI prepared a paper for the IGC published in September 2008. The report *Learning by Doing: Experiences of Circular Migration* examines actual experiences of circular migration, both where it has arisen naturally and where governments have taken action to encourage it. MPI also prepared a background paper for a follow-up workshop to the first GFMD, on the development impact of circular migration. The workshop was organized by the Government of Mauritius and the European Commission.

With its elaborate system of government institutions facilitating circular migration among temporary migrant workers, the Philippines is often considered a model example of a country looking out for its migrant workers overseas. Over the last two years, MPI released two reports on the Philippines entitled *Protecting Overseas Workers: Lessons and Cautions from the Philippines*, which focused on the Philippines' welfare fund for migrant workers, while *Managing Temporary Migration: Lessons from the Philippine Model* highlighted ways to manage legal and large-scale temporary migration. Both reports analysed how the Filipino migration system works, what its strengths and weaknesses are and, more importantly, what lessons can be learned from its experiences.

#### *b. Remittances*

Migrants' remittances remain the most tangible link between migration and development. MPI has worked continuously to consolidate information and analysis on remittances into a framework useful to policymakers in sending and receiving countries, as well as to migrants, businesses, and non-governmental organizations.

In September 2008, MPI released *Remittances and Development—Trends, Impacts, and Policy Options: A Review of the Literature*, a comprehensive overview of the current academic and policy literature on remittances. In May 2007, MPI published a case study of the world's largest remittance-receiver: India entitled *The Phenomenal Rise in Remittances to India: A Closer Look*, offering a detailed analysis of the dynamics of Indian remittance flows. The following month, in June 2007, MPI released a policy brief by Mr. Dilip Ratha of the World Bank on *Leveraging Remittances for Development*, analysing the growing importance of remittances for development.

The high volume and rapid growth of remittances worldwide has led some observers to caution against remittance dependency. In September 2007, MPI published a fact sheet entitled *Variable Impacts: State-level Analysis of the Slowdown in the Growth in Remittances to Mexico*, that detailed the dramatic slowdown of remittances to Mexico in the first half of 2007 compared to the first half of 2006. It analyses remittances to Mexico by state, identifying those Mexican states that may be most severely affected by a slowdown in money sent home by migrants abroad.

In December 2007, MPI also launched the Global Remittances Guide<sup>1</sup>, an online interactive tool that allows users to learn about remittance trends and patterns around the world, in six regions, and in the top remittances-receiving countries in terms of volume and their share of GDP. Users can select maps to visualize global remittance flows or view extensive country- and region-specific profiles.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Events

In preparation for the first GFMD, MPI organized several events. In February 2007, MPI, together with the German Marshall Fund of the United States, organized a brainstorming session in Brussels, Belgium attended by the Belgian organizing team for the Global Forum, including the Forum's Executive Director, Ambassador Regine De Clercq, and representatives of key governments and the European Commission. The discussion focused on remittances and human capital issues associated with migration. It was based on four briefing papers commissioned by MPI, including one on circular migration and one on remittances to India. Other Global Forum-related events sponsored by MPI include a breakfast briefing with Ambassador De Clercq and a telephone briefing with participants from outside the United States.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, MPI organized two major conferences on migration and development. The World Bank, the OECD Development Centre and MPI co-sponsored a two-day Migration and Development Conference in Washington, DC from 23 to 24 May 2007, which focused on forging a stronger link between research institutes and development agencies. MPI also organized a conference with the Inter-American Development Bank on Demographic trends, immigration policy, and remittances in Washington, DC on 16 May 2007, which examined the linkages between demographic trends, immigration policy and remittances featuring renowned demographers and immigration experts.

In November 2008, MPI held its first workshop in preparation for the third GFMD. In partnership with the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO), MPI convened senior experts and policymakers in Athens to discuss the role of transnational communities on development.

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Global Remittances Guide can be found at: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/remittances.cfm> (accessed 5 March 2009).

<sup>2</sup> For other publications from MPI, see <http://www.migrationpolicy.org> (accessed 25 February 2009).

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