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### Globalization and interdependence

## International migration and development

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/225, the present report reviews trends in international migration in the light of the effects of the financial and economic crises and discusses the consequences of the economic crisis for migrants in countries of destination. It then reviews ongoing efforts to leverage the positive aspects of international migration on countries of origin and to avert or reduce its negative consequences. It focuses next on actions by the United Nations system to ensure respect for the human rights of migrants and promote a rights-based approach to the management of international migration. The focus then turns to a review of multilateral funding for activities and projects to promote the beneficial aspects of international migration and development and to the work of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and its interaction with the Global Migration Group. Lastly, the report reviews advances made in improving the evidence base for policy development.

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## I. Introduction

1. Attention to international migration at the global, regional and national levels has been increasing since the General Assembly decided in 2003 to hold the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006. A growing number of actors have been actively engaged in fostering the positive aspects of international migration. Population dynamics and the restructuring of economies have contributed to increasing awareness among policymakers about the key role that international migrants play in satisfying labour demand in specific sectors and in maintaining the international networks necessary for the operation of the global economy. As a result, increasing numbers of Governments have come to realize that international migration is an integral part of the development process and the functioning of modern economies. However, as a result of the financial crisis that began in 2007 and the economic crisis that ensued, unemployment has risen globally, especially in the developed countries<sup>1</sup> that are major destinations for international migrants, thus dampening expectations about future trends in international migration.

2. Globally, the number of international migrants in 2010 is estimated at 214 million, up from 195 million in 2005. Females account for 49 per cent of the total. Six out of every 10 international migrants (128 million) reside today in developed countries, and the majority of those (74 million) originated in developing countries. Although the economic crisis has slowed down the increase in the number of international migrants in developed countries, their overall numbers have continued to rise: by 12.8 million between 2000 and 2005 and by 10.5 million between 2005 and 2010.<sup>2</sup> The reduction in the net increase in the number of international migrants in developed countries between those two periods has not been matched in developing countries, where the number of migrants rose by 4.0 million from 2000 to 2005 and by 8.2 million from 2005 to 2010. However, most of that increase can be attributed to the rising numbers of refugees. Thus, whereas the number of refugees in developing countries declined by 1.1 million from 2000 to 2005, it increased by 2.7 million from 2005 to 2010. Excluding refugees, the increases in the numbers of other types of migrants in the developing world would have been of the same order of magnitude during both periods: 5.1 million vs. 5.5 million. By 2010, the developing countries were hosting 86 million international migrants, including 14 million refugees.

3. The dampening effect of the economic crisis on migration flows to developed countries is confirmed by data published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the 2010 *International Migration Outlook*. Between 2007 and 2008, the number of long-term immigrants admitted by OECD member States<sup>3</sup> fell by 6 per cent and temporary labour migration by 4 per cent, and further declines were expected through 2009. Nevertheless, migrant inflows continue, and, because the vast majority of migrants living abroad emigrated years or decades ago, they are well established in the countries of

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<sup>1</sup> Developed countries include all countries in Europe plus Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States of America. All other countries are denoted as developing countries.

<sup>2</sup> "Trends in international migrant stock: the 2008 revision", United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Rev.2008.

<sup>3</sup> Three OECD member States are developing countries according to the classification used in this report, namely, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Turkey.

destination and are unlikely to return to their countries of origin because of the crisis. Thus, except for a few migrant streams between member States of the European Union (EU), most notably the return of Polish workers from Iceland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, no major increases in return migration from developed countries have been documented so far.

4. In most developed countries, international migration policy is complex and revolves around several categories of international migrants whose admission has become “non-discretionary”, as is the case of migrants admitted for family reunification or as refugees resettled under prior commitments. Only 20 per cent of the migrants admitted by developed countries belong to “discretionary” categories, amenable to rapid modification in response to changing economic conditions. In countries where admissions in discretionary categories are driven by demand from employers, major reductions have occurred, as in Australia, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In addition, free movement within the European Union, much of which is for employment, has also contracted in response to the crisis.

5. There have also been reductions in irregular migration flows.<sup>4</sup> Estimates of irregular migration to the United States indicate that it started falling in 2007 and that the reduction accelerated in 2008. In the European Union, the number of migrants in an irregular situation working in EU member States has been decreasing, and so has the number denied entry at the border. There are also increasing departures of migrants in an irregular situation.

6. The evidence of the effect of the crisis on migration to developing countries is sparse. In 2010, there were almost as many migrants from developing countries living in other developing countries (73 million) as migrants from developing countries living in developed countries (74 million). Job losses and increasing migrant-worker outflows have been reported in the United Arab Emirates owing to the suspension of infrastructure projects valued at \$582 billion, but some of those migrants have found work in other Gulf countries. Reductions in the number of work permits issued or non-renewals of permits have been reported in other labour-importing countries in Asia, including Kazakhstan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand.<sup>5</sup>

7. Reductions in remittance flows provide indirect evidence of reductions in the number of emigrants working abroad, reflecting growing unemployment, return flows and possible reductions in the numbers of recent migrants. Remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries amounted to \$316 billion in 2009, down from \$336 billion in 2008, the highest value ever recorded. The decline amounted to 6 per cent of 2008 levels; aside from being the first reduction since 1980, that contrasts markedly with annual increases averaging 18 per cent from 2000 to 2008.<sup>6</sup> The sharpest reductions were recorded in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where remittances fell by 21 per cent from their 2008 level, owing partly to the devaluation

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<sup>4</sup> See “Mexican immigrants: how many come? How many leave?” Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn (Pew Hispanic Center, Washington, D.C., 2009) and “The impact of the global economic crisis on illegal migration to the EU” (Frontex, Warsaw, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Khalid Koser, “The impact of the global financial crisis on international migration”, *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, vol. XI, No. 1, winter/spring 2010, pp. 13-20.

<sup>6</sup> Migration and Development Brief 12, World Bank, 23 April 2010.

of the rouble versus the dollar. Latin America and the Caribbean followed, with a reduction of 12 per cent, and the Middle East and North Africa came next, with 8 per cent. Remittances remained stable in sub-Saharan Africa and in East Asia and the Pacific, and they increased by 5 per cent in South Asia.

8. In sum, international migration trends, at the global, regional and country levels, have not been immune to the economic crisis that struck in 2008 and whose effects have yet to run their course. Nevertheless, the changes in trends documented so far have been moderate, partly because the effects of the crisis have varied considerably among countries and because large components of current migration flows are resilient to economic shocks.

9. This report discusses the consequences of the economic crisis for migrants in countries of destination. It reviews ongoing efforts to leverage the positive aspects of international migration on countries of origin and to avert or reduce its negative consequences. It focuses next on actions by the United Nations system to ensure respect for the human rights of migrants and promote a rights-based approach to the management of international migration. The focus turns then to a review of multilateral funding for activities and projects to promote the beneficial aspects of international migration and development and to the work of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and its interactions with the Global Migration Group, which consists of 13 United Nations entities<sup>7</sup> plus the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Lastly, the report reviews advances made in improving the evidence base for policy development.

10. The report shows that, despite the economic crisis and its dire effects in terms of rising unemployment and recession, Governments of both countries of origin and countries of destination remain committed to finding effective ways of leveraging the beneficial aspects of international migration for development. Furthermore, the Governments of countries with rapidly ageing populations continue to consider international migration a useful means of addressing labour shortages, and a majority of Governments recognize that migration is necessary to gain access to needed skills. In this context, the role of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in promoting dialogue, generating collaboration and setting an agenda for voluntary action is growing in importance. The process it leads will likely make major contributions to the consideration of the opportunities and challenges that international migration brings to development by the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development that the General Assembly will conduct in 2013.

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<sup>7</sup> The International Labour Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations regional commissions, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank.

## II. Impact of the economic crisis on migrants in countries of destination

11. A major consequence of the economic crisis has been the rise in overall unemployment: from 5.7 per cent of the world's workforce in 2007 to 6.6 per cent in 2009, meaning that the number of unemployed workers increased from 178 million to 212 million worldwide.<sup>8</sup> However, marked differences exist among countries. In OECD countries, for instance, unemployment rates increased by 3 percentage points on average, but they rose by 5 percentage points in the United States, 8.6 in Ireland and 10 in Spain.

12. According to the 2010 *International Migration Outlook*, between 2008 and 2009 the unemployment rate of foreign-born workers rose markedly in all OECD countries. In Spain, it rose by 11 percentage points, and in both Iceland and Ireland it increased by about 8 points. In the United States, it jumped from 4.3 per cent in 2007 to 9.7 per cent in 2009. Increases were smaller in Australia, Canada and EU member States other than Ireland and Spain. Moreover, with the exception of the United Kingdom, the unemployment rate of the foreign-born in all other OECD countries rose more rapidly than that of natives. By the end of 2009, foreign-born unemployment had reached 28.3 per cent in Spain and surpassed 15 per cent in Belgium, Finland, France, Ireland and Sweden. Increases in unemployment among foreigners was also reported in the Russian Federation and the United Arab Emirates, and job losses among foreign workers were on the rise in several countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, including Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand.<sup>9</sup>

13. The crisis also reduced the proportion of migrants and natives employed, and by the end of 2009 the employment rate of migrants was at least 7 percentage points lower than that of natives in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. In Belgium, only 53 per cent of economically active migrants were employed, and in France and Spain only 58 per cent held jobs. In the United States, migrant employment dropped by 1.4 million between 2007 and 2009 and in Spain by nearly 300,000 between 2008 and 2009.

14. The crisis has affected disproportionately the employment of migrant men because they tend to be concentrated in some of the most affected sectors of the economy, including construction, manufacturing and finance. However, the unemployment rate of migrant women increased in most OECD countries, albeit generally at the same pace as that of native women. In addition, the participation rate of migrant women in the labour force increased in several countries, partly because of their need to compensate for the income losses of men in their families. Between 2008 and 2009, the participation rate of foreign-born women rose by 0.9 percentage points in Canada, 0.8 on average in the EU-15<sup>10</sup> and 0.6 in the United States.

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<sup>8</sup> World Economic Vulnerability Monitor, No. 4, April 2010, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

<sup>9</sup> Khalid Koser, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

15. The effect of the crisis on youth employment is a major concern. Between 2008 and 2009, the employment rate of persons aged 15 to 24 in OECD countries fell by 7 percentage points, and the unemployment rates of foreign-born youth are higher than those of natives. By 2009, the unemployment rate of young migrants had reached 15.3 per cent in the United States, 20.2 per cent in Canada and 24.1 per cent, on average, in the EU-15, with record highs recorded by Spain (40.8 per cent) and Sweden (35.7 per cent). Young migrants are more likely to be unemployed because they are less qualified than young natives. To prevent their current experience from leading to long-term marginalization, measures to provide unemployed youth with language training, mentoring and apprenticeships are a good investment for the future.

16. Rising unemployment generally results in pressure to limit inflows of foreign workers. Governments of receiving countries have used the following mechanisms to adjust inflows to changing conditions: (a) reduce numerical quotas; (b) adopt more stringent labour-market tests; (c) limit the possibilities for migrants to change status or renew work permits; (d) apply supplementary conditions to non-discretionary flows; and (e) promote return migration. Thus, Australia, Italy, the Republic of Korea and Spain cut quotas on certain flows; Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States modified the labour-market criteria that employers need to meet when hiring foreign workers under certain migrant categories; and Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom modified the labour-shortage lists used to determine who can be hired from abroad. Australia, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway and the United States have been reconsidering the terms and conditions of employment, adding measures to protect national workers while also assisting unemployed foreigners by, for instance, allowing those whose work permits expire to stay for a period in order to seek work. The Czech Republic, Japan and Spain have offered financial incentives to facilitate the return of unemployed migrants who choose to go back to their countries of origin.

17. Several countries have introduced changes across the skill spectrum, including simplified procedures. The Czech Republic introduced a “green card” early in 2009 and Poland liberalized the admission of seasonal workers. Finland developed an action programme on labour migration in the light of the projected reduction of its working-age population. The United Kingdom is introducing a point system over several years. Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway have merged work and residence permits into a single permit. France and Romania have simplified procedures, and Japan has extended the coverage of its labour law to foreign trainees.

18. Despite the economic downturn, Governments continue to work on identifying and reducing endemic skill shortages. Measures to attract highly skilled workers are evolving and continue to garner support. Moreover, with populations ageing more rapidly and the prospects of a contraction of working-age populations looming, many Governments view migration as an option that needs to be kept open. That position is being maintained despite the growing concerns expressed by public opinion. Indeed, analyses of public opinion surveys carried out from 2002 to 2008 confirm that a deteriorating economic situation, reflected in rising unemployment, leads people to perceive the economic effects of migration as negative, and that those who are unemployed have a far more negative perception of the impact of migration than people with jobs. These trends in public opinion make it all the more

important for leaders to focus on medium-term goals when managing migration rather than focusing solely on current challenges.

### **III. Pursuing international migration for development in countries of origin**

19. The UNDP *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers — Human Mobility and Development* provides an updated overview of the ways in which international migration can benefit the countries of origin. It documents how the families of migrants benefit from remittances, which provide the means to improve health and educational outcomes. It recognizes that international migration contributes to the reduction of poverty, but stresses that its effects should not detract from broader local and national efforts to combat poverty and improve human development.

20. The report notes that the effects of international migration on the national economies of countries of origin are complex and difficult to measure. Studies on the impact of remittances on long-term economic growth suggest that it is often small, mainly because such an impact is contingent on local institutions and overall development policies. On their own, remittances cannot remove the structural constraints to economic growth, social change and better governance that characterize many countries with low levels of human development. Nevertheless, international migration can set the foundation for the development of networks that facilitate the diffusion of knowledge, innovation and attitudes that can promote development. Migration-driven processes of social and cultural change can have significant impacts on entrepreneurship, community norms and political transformations — impacts that are often felt for generations to come.

21. A growing number of countries are developing innovative ways of engaging their expatriate communities (the “diaspora”), including through the transfer of collective remittances to support specific development projects. Some countries, facing the current scarcity of capital that is threatening to jeopardize economic growth and job creation, are considering or have begun to mobilize support from their migrants abroad by issuing “diaspora bonds”. For investors, these bonds offer the means to help their countries of origin while at the same time taking advantage of an investment opportunity. El Salvador, Ethiopia, India, Israel, Nepal, the Philippines, Rwanda and Sri Lanka are among the countries that have issued or are planning to issue “diaspora bonds”.

22. Various bilateral donors have created programmes that seek to leverage the contribution of expatriate communities to countries of origin. In 2008, the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development launched the Diaspora Volunteering Programme, which is aimed at increasing the participation of expatriate skilled professionals in development work. The Programme has a budget of £3 million over three years and works with over 20 organizations of expatriates. Similarly, in 2009 the United States Agency for International Development, in partnership with Western Union, launched the African Diaspora Marketplace, which will use \$1.5 million to leverage direct investment from African expatriates residing in the United States to small and medium-sized enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa.

23. Despite the decline in remittance flows noted earlier, remittances have been more resilient to the effects of the economic crisis than other types of financial flows. Partly for that reason, remittances are being factored into sovereign ratings in middle-income countries and debt-sustainability analysis in low-income countries.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the stability of remittances to the Philippines gave it the ability to raise \$750 million from bonds despite the crisis. Similarly, remittances have been the basis for giving Bangladesh a rating equivalent to that of many emerging markets.

24. The positive impact of remittances on the families of migrants is enhanced when the costs of remittance transfers are low. Efforts to reduce transfer costs are bearing fruit. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, average remittance transfer costs to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have dropped by about 75 per cent since 2000 and now average between 5 and 6 per cent of the amount remitted. According to the World Bank, the global costs of transferring remittances declined from 9.8 per cent in September 2008 to 8.7 per cent in early 2010. Nevertheless, transfer costs remain high in several corridors. At their Summit in July 2009, the leaders of the Group of Eight endorsed the “5x5” objective, whereby average transfer costs would be reduced by five percentage points over five years and financial services would be made more accessible to migrants and their families.

25. The Inter-American Development Bank, through its Multilateral Investment Fund, leverages the development impact of remittances by funding projects to reduce transfer costs, facilitate access to formal transmission channels, mobilize savings through formal financial institutions and promote productive investment. The International Fund for Agricultural Development coordinates the Financing Facility for Remittances, which has used \$15 million to support innovative remittance services since 2006, including those that reduce transfer costs or facilitate productive investments by migrants in rural areas of countries of origin.

Table 1  
**Topics related to international migration included in the 84 poverty reduction strategies produced between 2000 and 2008**

	<i>Percentage</i>
Engage expatriate communities	20
Export labour	12
Sign bilateral agreements	11
Facilitate remittances	11
Address the brain drain	11
Promote investment by expatriates	10
Support return	8
Improve labour conditions abroad	7
Provide pre-departure training	7
Build institutional capacity	6

<sup>11</sup> Migration and Development Brief, op. cit.

	<i>Percentage</i>
Combat trafficking	23
Modernize customs services	21
Strengthen border control	20
Combat illegal migration	14
Promote refugee return	12
Participate in regional cooperation programmes	10
Promote more research and monitoring	10
Combat HIV/AIDS among migrants	8
Promote refugee integration	8
Reintegrate victims of trafficking	6

Source: Table 4.1 of the *Human Development Report 2009*, op. cit.

26. An indication of the extent to which countries are actively engaging in leveraging international migration for development is provided by the poverty reduction strategies, which are statements of development objectives and development policy prepared mostly by developing countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders and external development partners. Between 2000 and 2008, 34 countries prepared one poverty reduction strategy and 25 prepared two, bringing the total to 84. An analysis of the full set shows that, with regard to international migration, a variety of issues are considered. Issues cited by at least 5 per cent of the poverty reduction strategies are listed in table 1, divided into two groups. The first group includes issues that are directly related to Government engagement in managing emigration and relations with expatriate communities. The second group includes the rest of the issues cited frequently. Among the first group, the highest proportion of poverty reduction strategies, 20 per cent, have the objective of engaging expatriate communities. Exporting labour, concluding bilateral agreements on migration, facilitating the transfer of remittances, addressing the brain drain and promoting investment by expatriates are all objectives cited in at least 10 per cent of the strategies. Relatively high proportions of poverty reduction strategies reflect concern about controlling migration, with at least 20 per cent having the objective of combating trafficking, modernizing customs services or strengthening border control. That is, the poverty reduction strategies recognize the complexity of international migration and acknowledge both the opportunities it generates for development and its potentially negative effects.

27. Among the potentially detrimental effects of international migration, the emigration of highly skilled workers has long been a concern of developing countries, in particular when it involves health personnel whose services are crucial for the attainment of the health-related Millennium Development Goals.<sup>12</sup> According to the 2007 *International Migration Outlook*, around 2000, 74 per cent of foreign-born doctors and 65 per cent of foreign-born nurses in OECD countries originated in non-OECD countries. For some countries, the losses of health personnel through emigration are crippling. In the case of Angola, Antigua and

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Population Division, *Health Workers, International Migration and Development* (Population Facts No. 2010/2/E), March 2010.

Barbuda, Cook Islands, Dominica, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Liberia, Mozambique, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Republic of Tanzania, for instance, over half of the doctors born in each of those countries are working in OECD countries. In order to prevent the loss of health personnel from countries experiencing severe shortages, in May 2010 the World Health Assembly adopted a non-binding code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel. The code requests countries of immigration to establish fair recruitment and employment conditions for migrant health personnel and to refrain from recruiting in countries facing critical health-care shortages. It also calls upon donor countries to provide assistance to strengthen health systems in developing countries, including support for the training and retention of health personnel.

#### **IV. Protecting the rights of migrants**

28. The contribution of international migrants to both their countries of destination and their countries of origin depends crucially on safeguarding their human rights and ensuring that they are not subject to discrimination or xenophobia. The recent financial and economic crises have underscored the importance of taking effective measures to protect the rights of migrants. Growing commitment to upholding their rights is demonstrated by the increasing number of States ratifying relevant international instruments. By June 2010, 82 Member States had ratified at least one of the three international instruments relative to migrant workers, namely, the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the 1949 International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised) (No. 97) or the 1975 ILO Convention concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) (No. 143). Combined, those Member States hosted 32 per cent (69 million) of all international migrants worldwide.

29. ILO leads the promotion of a rights-based approach to the management of labour migration, building upon internationally recognized rights and standards. In its 2010 report entitled *International Labour Migration: A Rights-Based Approach*, ILO distinguishes three axes of protection: (a) universal human rights and core labour rights that apply to all persons, including all migrants, irrespective of status; (b) standards specific to migrants; and (c) certain labour standards that also have general applicability, including to migrant workers. This framework still has some gaps, particularly with respect to the protection of female migrant workers in certain occupations and the protection of temporary migrant workers and migrants in an irregular situation. Furthermore, ILO notes that the enforcement of existing standards and the effective safeguarding of recognized rights are often weak and therefore calls for better enforcement through appropriate labour inspection and effective access to the justice system. The non-binding ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration provides a comprehensive synthesis of all applicable principles and guidelines to formulate sound migration policies. In an effort to fill some of the gaps in the rights framework, the International Labour Conference is considering developing a legal instrument on the protection of domestic workers, many of whom are migrant women.

30. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, an independent body of experts that oversees the implementation of the Convention on

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, has also been active in setting standards for the protection of female migrant workers. Its recommendation No. 26, adopted in 2008, addresses human rights concerns related to migrant women, including women who, by being in an irregular situation or in low-paying jobs, are at higher risk of abuse and discrimination.

31. The United Nations Development Fund for Women has been assisting countries, particularly those in Asia, in formulating migration policies that are gender-sensitive and has developed a standard labour contract for migrant women, promoted the implementation of a covenant on ethical conduct and good practices for recruitment agencies, and advocated for the elimination of restrictions on overseas employment for women. In Europe, guidelines for integrating the gender dimension in labour migration policies were developed in 2009 by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

32. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provides substantive support for the eight human rights treaty bodies that monitor the implementation of the core international human rights treaties. The Committee on Migrant Workers monitors the implementation of the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families by its 42 States parties. During 2010, as part of the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, OHCHR has been promoting its universal ratification. In addition, it has raised awareness about violations of the human rights of migrants, focusing on discrimination, xenophobia and racism; violations of economic, social or cultural rights; and the criminalization and administrative detention of migrants in an irregular situation. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants focused on the protection of children in the context of migration during 2009 and is currently investigating the rights of migrants in relation to health and housing.

33. In commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 2008, the Global Migration Group issued a report entitled *International Migration and Human Rights* documenting how the benefits of international migration hinge on respect for the human rights of migrants and underscoring the responsibility of States, in exercising their sovereign right to determine who enters and remains in their territories, to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people. By discussing the challenges faced by different groups of migrants, including female migrants, migrant children, migrant workers, victims of trafficking and refugees, the report identifies protection gaps and suggests ways of filling them.

34. An area of major concern in regard to the protection of human rights is the prevalence of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The rapid ratification of the two relevant Protocols to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime indicates the commitment of Member States to exert concerted action to combat such heinous crimes. Thus, by June 2010, 136 States had ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and 122 had ratified the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. The Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, launched in March 2007 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, has been raising awareness about the dangers of falling victim to trafficking in persons and providing technical assistance to combat traffickers in collaboration with Global Migration Group partners and other stakeholders.

35. Commitment to safeguarding the lives of refugees and providing them protection is patent in the high levels of ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The 147 States parties to at least one of those instruments hosted 6.3 million refugees by the end of 2009, representing 61 per cent of all refugees.<sup>13</sup> Since launching the 10-point plan of action on refugee protection and mixed migration in 2006, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been conducting meetings and round tables to raise awareness about the Plan, stressing the need to prevent the refoulement of refugees and other human rights violations that are increasingly leading persons in need of protection to engage in hazardous onward movements. UNHCR also continues to seek ways of ensuring sustainable and durable solutions to the plight of refugees and others in need of protection and to avert irregular movements by integrating refugee programmes in national development strategies.

## V. Multilateral projects on international migration and development

36. Since 2006, as a result of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, there has been growing engagement by the United Nations system and other international organizations in projects promoting the development potential of international migration. In particular, clusters of Global Migration Group members have been collaborating in a number of initiatives to support Member States in making international migration contribute to development.

37. With funding from the Development Account, the United Nations launched a \$1.2 million project to strengthen national capacities for incorporating international migration issues into national development strategies. Led by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and implemented by all five regional commissions of the United Nations, the project encourages countries to adopt evidence-based policies and programmes that maximize the development benefits of international migration and to build networks for the exchange of information on international migration.

38. The European Commission has provided funding for the Joint Migration and Development Initiative being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with UNHCR, the United Nations Population Fund, ILO and IOM to support civil society organizations and local authorities in implementing projects that maximize the development impacts of international migration. The Initiative is aimed at developing networks of actors working on migration and development and to disseminate good practices. A total of €10 million has been allocated to fund 54 projects in 16 countries. The objectives of projects funded by the Initiative include: improving financial services and reducing the costs of remittance transfers; involving expatriate communities in efforts to improve the entrepreneurial skills of people in countries of origin; supporting families that are separated through migration; and raising awareness about the dangers of trafficking in persons and irregular migration, while promoting the protection of migrants.

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<sup>13</sup> The 4.8 million Palestinian refugees assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East fall outside the scope of the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol.

39. As part of the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, financed by Spain, a total of \$80 million has been allocated to 14 projects on youth, employment and migration implemented by various Global Migration Group members and other organizations. Project activities include generating decent work for youth, increasing access to employment opportunities abroad to reduce labour-market pressures, creating sustainable livelihoods as an alternative to migration and increasing the productive use of remittances.

40. The Government of Spain and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) jointly established the Fund on Migration and Development in July 2008. Endowed with €10 million, the Fund supports activities that maximize the benefits of migration for development and promotes the free movement of persons between ECOWAS member States.

41. The Migration Facility, established by the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States in 2009, assists members of that Group of States in mapping and managing migration flows, while maximizing the development benefits of international migration. The Facility is funded by a €25 million grant from the European Development Fund. Under the Facility, a migration observatory will be established to facilitate the exchange of information on international migration.

42. In total, \$240 million has been allocated to the programmes, funds and facilities described in this and previous chapters, indicating the growing multilateral engagement of donors in supporting activities on international migration and development.

## **VI. Global Forum on Migration and Development**

43. The Global Forum on Migration and Development is a voluntary, intergovernmental, non-binding and informal consultative process that emerged from the 2006 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. Its purpose is to address the multidimensional aspects, opportunities and challenges related to international migration and its interlinkages with development, to bring together Government expertise from all regions, to enhance dialogue, cooperation and partnership and to foster practical and action-oriented outcomes at the national, regional and global levels. It is linked to the United Nations through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development and submits its reports to the United Nations through the Secretary-General.

44. The Global Forum has held three meetings since 2007, in Brussels, Manila and Athens. Each meeting has attracted delegates from about 160 States Members and observers of the United Nations, thus achieving a higher rate of participation than the High-level Dialogue itself, where 132 Member States were represented. The commitment of Member States to the Global Forum is also evident from the growing membership of its Steering Group, the great interest of Governments in participating in the organization of round tables and the continued availability of voluntary contributions to fund its meetings. One of the main achievements of the Global Forum has been its focus on the contributions of international migration to development and on building better understanding and collaboration among countries linked by migration; that collaboration has been maintained despite the global economic crisis.

45. A first compilation of the achievements of the Global Forum showed that it has provided a platform for Governments to showcase new activities, present innovative policies and share good practices.<sup>14</sup> In addition, meetings of the Global Forum have made recommendations and suggested policy initiatives that have been subsequently implemented by Governments, international organizations or research institutes.

46. By establishing two ad hoc working groups, the Global Forum is developing its own mechanisms to pursue specific initiatives. The ad hoc Working Group on Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development has conducted studies on the impact of migrant resource centres, on return migration and reintegration strategies and on the costs of international migration. The ad hoc Working Group on Policy Coherence, Data and Research has promoted evidence-based migration policies, assessed the role of migration profiles<sup>15</sup> in fostering policy coherence within national Governments, promoted the development of ways to measure the impact of migration policies on development and advocated for the use of the 2010 round of population censuses to get a timely and updated assessment of international migration worldwide and of the socio-economic characteristics of migrants.

47. Since the inception of the Global Forum, the United Nations system and IOM, particularly through the Global Migration Group, have supported the process in various ways. Global Migration Group members have assisted Governments in producing documentation for round tables, organized a marketplace for international migration and development services and seconded staff to the Global Forum. IOM, which is a member of the Global Migration Group, is hosting the Global Forum's support unit. Members of the Global Migration Group have also participated in the ad hoc working groups of the Global Forum and contributed to the meetings of civil society that are organized in conjunction with those of the Global Forum. At the opening of each meeting of the Global Forum, the chair of the Global Migration Group has addressed the Forum, presenting the Group's perspective on the Forum's themes.

48. Through joint activities, the Global Migration Group has provided other input to the Global Forum process. In 2008, the Group distributed its report on international migration and human rights to Global Forum participants in the Manila meeting. The Group's fact sheets on the consequences of the global financial and economic crises for international migrants were distributed at the Global Forum meeting in Athens in 2009. In May 2010, the Group organized a symposium on building partnerships for migration and human development, which was attended by 130 participants, including 30 representatives of Member States engaged in the Global Forum process.

49. Each of the three Global Forum meetings held since 2007 has included three round tables. While a round table on policy and institutional coherence and partnerships has been held each year, the topics of the other two have changed, although always revolving around policies to harness international migration in favour of development, to protect the rights of migrants and to facilitate legal migration.

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<sup>14</sup> See [www.gfmd.org/en/gfmd-documents-library/mexico-gfmd-2010.html](http://www.gfmd.org/en/gfmd-documents-library/mexico-gfmd-2010.html).

<sup>15</sup> Resulting from an initiative of the European Commission, migration profiles are short reports compiling data on migration trends for each country and providing a succinct analysis of their implications. They are a tool for information-sharing and capacity-building and are being implemented mainly by IOM.

50. Global Migration Group members, alone or in partnership, have been actively engaged in following up or implementing the recommendations emanating from the annual meetings of the Global Forum. Since 2007, out of the 114 recommendations produced by the Forum, 27 have been followed up by one Group member and 75 by two or more Group members. Only 12 of those recommendations have not been followed up by any Group member (see table 2). In total, Group members have undertaken 336 follow-up activities in relation to the 114 recommendations of Global Forum meetings, an average of 2.9 activities per recommendation.<sup>16</sup> The number of Group activities per Forum recommendation increased from 2.4 in 2007 to 2.6 in 2008 and further to 3.9 in 2009, a measure of the growing engagement of the Group in supporting the work of the Forum.

Table 2  
Follow-up of Global Forum on Migration and Development recommendations by the Global Migration Group

Year	Round table	Title	Number of Global Forum recommendations followed up by Group members				Number of follow-up actions reported by the Group	Average number of follow-up actions per recommendation
			Total	By one Group member	By two or more Group members	Without follow-up		
2007	I	Human capital development and labour mobility	9	3	5	1	21	2.3
	II	Remittances and other diaspora resources	19	7	11	1	47	2.5
	III	Policy and institutional coherence and partnerships	15	4	8	3	34	2.3
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>43</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>2.4</b>
2008	I	Migration, development and human rights	13	3	9	1	39	3.0
	II	Optimizing development impacts of regular migration	9	4	5	0	20	2.2
	III	Policy and institutional coherence and partnerships	11	2	5	4	27	2.5
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>2.6</b>
2009	I	Migration and development policies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals	19	2	17	0	87	4.6
	II	Migrant integration, reintegration and circulation	9	1	6	2	17	1.9
	III	Policy and institutional coherence and partnerships	10	1	9	0	44	4.4
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>38</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>114</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>2.9</b>

Source: "GMG follow-up of GFMD recommendations, 2007-2009", available at [www.unmigration.org](http://www.unmigration.org).

<sup>16</sup> An activity is considered followed up when a Global Migration Group member reports to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs that it is involved in the implementation of a particular Global Forum recommendation. For details, see "GMG follow-up of GFMD recommendations, 2007-2009", available at [www.unmigration.org](http://www.unmigration.org).

## VII. Improving the evidence base

51. All Member States agree that the evidence available to assess the interlinkages between international migration and development is not sufficient, and calls to improve data and research on international migration and development have been made by all global intergovernmental meetings focusing on the issue. With the growing attention Member States are giving to international migration, efforts to improve the evidence base are beginning to yield results.<sup>17</sup>

52. The availability of data for the analysis of stocks, flows and characteristics of international migrants has improved significantly in recent years. The Global Migration Database, containing data organized by age, sex and origin derived from censuses and population registers and developed by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has expanded to cover over 4,000 datasets.<sup>18</sup> The database developed by OECD on the stock of migrants, organized by education, occupation, age, sex and origin, also derived from censuses, covers all OECD countries. The number of countries disseminating time-series data on migrant flows increased from 15 in 2006 to 29 in 2009.<sup>19</sup>

53. Census information is used to estimate the number of international migrants over time in each country of the world and their distribution by sex. Their distribution by age is being estimated by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and the distribution of migrants by origin has been estimated by the World Bank. OECD and the World Bank have used data classified by education to analyse the brain drain, and OECD has used data on occupation to analyse the emigration of health personnel. These studies have been crucial in shaping policy responses to the migration of persons with needed skills.

54. Census samples have become increasingly accessible in digital form at the individual level. The Integrated Public Use Microdata Series-International, developed by the Minnesota Population Center in collaboration with national statistical offices, academic institutions and international organizations, provides access to standardized samples from 159 censuses conducted in 55 countries, thus greatly facilitating the in-depth comparative analysis of migration.

55. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, with support from OECD and Eurostat, has upgraded its database on the international mobility of tertiary-level students, presenting data on over 200 countries or areas classified by country of origin and sex.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> An overview of improvements in data collection and research led by the Global Migration Group can be found in “Data and analysis: partnering to better understand and address the human development implications of migration”, paper presented at the Group’s symposium on building partnerships for migration and human development, Geneva, 27 and 28 May 2010. Another assessment of improvements can be found in “Migrants count: five steps toward better migration data”, pp. 5-9, available at [www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1422146](http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1422146).

<sup>18</sup> See <http://esa.un.org/unmigration>.

<sup>19</sup> “International migration flows to and from selected countries: the 2008 revision” (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Flow/Rev.2008).

<sup>20</sup> <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

56. Every year since 2001, UNHCR has been publishing its *Statistical Yearbooks*,<sup>21</sup> disseminating data on over 150 countries regarding refugees, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern to UNHCR.

57. IOM, in addition to providing support for the development of systems for the coordinated collection and use of migration data, is supporting the preparation of migration profiles in developing countries, a task that includes the collection and analysis of data on international migration.

58. In-depth analysis of the linkages between migration and development requires data gathered through specialized surveys. The labour-force surveys conducted in European countries are a useful source of such information. ILO has been advocating and supporting the use of migration modules in labour-force surveys in developing countries. The World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Study surveys and the multiple indicator cluster surveys of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have included modules focusing on migration. In the case of UNICEF, the focus is on children of migrants left behind in countries of origin.

59. New survey initiatives include the surveys carried out under the Africa Migration Project of the World Bank to study the impact of international migration and remittances on individuals and households and the surveys carried out in seven countries under the project "Development on the move", implemented by the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Global Development Network.

60. In 2008 the Center for Global Development convened a commission of experts to discuss steps to improve data on international migration. The resulting report, entitled "Migrants count: five steps toward better migration data",<sup>22</sup> makes the following suggestions: (a) ensure that the 2010 round of population censuses collect the basic information to identify international migrants and that the production of relevant tabulations on migrants is assigned priority; (b) use administrative data on international migrants more extensively; (c) facilitate the use of the rich data gathered by labour-force surveys in developed countries by harmonizing the data and improving their accessibility via the Internet; (d) make publicly available microdata from migration surveys and census samples; and (e) introduce appropriate migration modules in ongoing programmes of household surveys. The report is being widely disseminated and is expected to galvanize efforts to increase the availability of data on international migration so that a more comprehensive evidence base can inform the preparations for the 2013 High-level Dialogue.

## VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

**61. The global economic crisis has reduced migration flows to developed countries but the arrivals of new migrants continue despite rapidly rising unemployment, especially among migrants. Because the majority of foreign-born persons in developed countries emigrated years ago, they are fully settled in those countries and many have acquired citizenship, thus building resilience to face current difficulties. Furthermore, most Governments have responded to the crisis by reducing discretionary admissions of new migrants and generally maintaining access to their labour markets for all resident migrants, a practice**

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<sup>21</sup> See [www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02afce6.html](http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02afce6.html).

<sup>22</sup> [www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1422146/](http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1422146/).

that should be continued. The few countries that have offered financial incentives for unemployed migrants wishing to return home have seen relatively few takers.

62. Developing countries, though affected by the decline in remittances and in opportunities for labour migration, continue to pursue strategies to leverage the benefits of international migration for development, a process that merits continued support. Donors and international organizations have been providing support, particularly to lower the transfer costs of remittances, garner the active engagement of expatriates and foster their involvement in promoting investment in countries of origin and entrepreneurship among non-migrants. Such efforts need to be accelerated.

63. The activities on international migration and development of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations have multiplied. Members of the Global Migration Group have expanded their engagement with Member States in projects that harness international migration in support of development objectives, build capacity in developing countries, improve the evidence base or shed light on policy-relevant interactions between migration and development. Yet despite the advances made, the system's efforts need to be reinforced.

64. Crucially, the United Nations system has also stepped up activities to ensure that the rights of all migrants are safeguarded, to protect migrants in vulnerable situations and to advocate for a rights-based approach to the management of international migration. This momentum should be maintained.

65. The meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development have successfully engaged both Governments and the multilateral system in realizing the benefits of international migration for development and in collaborating to address its potentially detrimental effects. The effectiveness of the Global Forum depends on the willingness of Governments to act cooperatively and keep the channels of communication open in regard to shared problems so as to devise common solutions. Maintaining that spirit of cooperation is essential to ensure the success of the process leading to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development that the General Assembly will hold in 2013. It is also important to continue engaging all stakeholders in developing and implementing strategies to make international migration an integral element of national development strategies, including those aimed at reducing poverty. Lastly, the authorities of countries affected by the current crisis need to take the long view in managing international migration, especially if migration is to be maintained as an option to address the consequences of population ageing or to ensure access to needed skills.

66. The international community has already made major strides in developing a realistic and balanced understanding of the role that international migration can play in development, an understanding that has fostered collaboration in the pursuit of initiatives that are beneficial for development. So far, the economic crisis has not dented those achievements. The informal thematic debate that the General Assembly will hold in 2011 will provide an opportunity for Member States to continue building on the advances made.