

Report on the Outcomes of Roundtable 1

“Human Mobility and the well-being of migrants”

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The overarching theme of roundtable 1 was “Human mobility and the well-being of migrants”. Both sessions (1.1 and 1.2) were very rich and fruitful which makes it a very hard task for me to report their outcomes in brief way. I apologize if I will not be exhaustive and eventually I am not mentioning some aspects the participants dealt with.

Roundtable 1.1 was co-chaired by El Salvador and the Philippines and explored partnerships to promote inclusion and protect the human rights of all migrants in order to achieve the full benefits of migration.

Migrants are rights holders and a major contribution to destination countries. As women and children are particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse, it is important to respect human and labour rights of all migrants regardless of their immigration status. In this regard, detention of migrants can lead to human rights violations. Therefore, alternatives to detention need to be sought.

Many of the national partnerships are outlined in the annex to the background paper of Roundtable 1.1. Some of the ideas and national policies to help ensure that the human rights of migrants are respected included these points:

- Better coordination, both between institutional authority and between civil society, trade unions, private sector, diaspora, governments and international organizations.
- To develop proper pre-departure awareness training for migrants on the rights they are entitled to.
- To ensure that national laws comply with international standards. In this regard, technical cooperation is critical to ensure that human and labor rights are properly incorporated.
- To provide increased channels and opportunities for safe and regular migration, such as visa facilitation agreements to protect human rights.
- To increase decent work in countries of origin so that the so-called “economic migration” is a free choice not a necessity.
- Partnerships at national and regional level with civil society and the private sector are to be implemented.
- To provide access to health care, education, social security, and unemployment insurance among other social services.
- To involve local communities in programs to integrate migrants and to contribute to preventing and combatting xenophobia.
- To negotiate memorandum of understandings that incorporate human and labor rights and establish mechanisms to monitor them. Origin countries can protect their migrant workers in destination countries by having embassies and consular labour consultants in destination countries.

- To ensure access to justice for migrants, even after they return to their home country.
- To train labour inspectors because they play a critical role in identifying abuses migrants face in the work place.
- To ensure that Sustainable Development Goals indicators on migration are strong and that migration related targets are strongly implemented.

Roundtable 1.2 was co-chaired by Russian Federation and the United Arab Emirates and focused on the need to reduce human and financial cost of migration through reducing the costs of remittances and through a fair and ethical recruitment process.

Remittance costs are heavy burden, especially for the poor, low skilled and low-income migrants. Often, migrant workers and their families have to pay a large amount of money in order to get a job, and become heavily indebted, and therefore more vulnerable to exploitation.

As there is no silver bullet, there is a need for multi-stakeholder initiatives. There is growing consensus on what ethical recruitment is and means, but greater awareness about these processes can help inspire change. Support from international and regional organizations can help achieve these goals.

Regarding fair recruitment practices, the participants suggested some national policies and measures, such as these:

- To prioritize rights and protection of migrants in order to avoid exploitation and empower individuals to say no to exploitation.
- To educate and regulate recruitment agencies on ethical issues.
- To implement bilateral recruitment agreements for visa facilitation. And increase the role of diplomatic corps abroad so that they may protect migrant workers.
- Employers should issue bonds and shares for their employees as a measure to avoid abuses.
- Decent work and access to services for migrant worker is vital.
- Fair recruitment initiatives- bringing together government, civil society, trade unions, etc. –need to be further promoted in order to document good practices and design common guidelines.
- Proper legislation is a key to deterring unethical measures: transparent clear contracts and regulations; collective bargaining agreement covering migrant workers.
- Private recruitment firms play an important role, but in too many parts of the world the recruitment process is controlled by firms driven by mere profit, to which the migrants represent a mere chance to boost their income. The recruitment fee costs should be covered by employers not by migrants.

Finally, Roundtable 1.2 also focused on the need to reduce remittances fees and maximize the impact of remittances. Even a small reduction on the costs of remittances would have a significant boost on development. For example, reducing remittance costs from 8% to 3% would save \$ 20 billion/year and create important resources for development.

The national policies and measures to lower remittance fees that were shared in the roundtable included:

- Setting up online portals to compare remittance costs and increase the competition in remittances channels.
- Using new mobile technology as well as the exiting universal post infrastructures for sending/receiving remittances.
- Cooperation along migration corridors.
- Opening bank accounts free of charge to ensure banking coverage for families in rural areas.