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# Conclusions

## by the Vienna Informal Expert Group Meeting on Policy and Institutional Coherence on Migration and Development Vienna 15-16 June, 2009

*This summary record contains the main conclusions on topics tabled by the government, civil society, international organisation and academic experts in migration and development participating in the Informal Expert Meeting on Policy and Institutional Coherence on Migration and Development held in Vienna on 15-16 June 2009. The meeting was organised to support the work of Roundtable 3 of the 2009 Global Forum for Migration and Development in Athens and follows up on the Helsinki Expert Group Meeting<sup>1</sup> and Roundtable 3.1 of the 2008 GFMD in Manila. The meeting was sponsored by the Government of Finland and organised by ICMPD in collaboration with the co-chairs and coordinator of Roundtable 3.*

### 1. Policy and institutional coherence

- **Achieving coherence.** Policy coherence must be defined in relation to clear policy objectives and should be conceived as an issue which necessarily has to start “at home”. Only if coherent approaches towards migration and development are achieved in the national context, can coherence be achieved at the regional and global levels.
- **Several interconnected coherence challenges.** Three policy clusters are involved in the area of international migration and development policies, within which and between which there can be challenges regarding policy coherence and institutional coherence. These are
  - 1) Country of origin (and transition) policies and institutions
  - 2) Country of destination country policies and institutions
  - 3) Global and regional agencies' policies and institutions
- **The principles proclaimed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA, 2008)** provide an internationally endorsed framework for a dialogue on aid harmonisation and policy coherence. These principles should also guide efforts to achieve policy coherence in the area of migration and development as well as between low and high income country policies. Developing country ownership, aligning a country's procedures and institutions,

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<sup>1</sup> Hosted by the Government of Finland, a group of international experts from academia, international agencies, governments and civil society met in Helsinki on 1 October 2008 to consider priorities for improving data on migration and development and produced a set of recommendations that were presented at the GFMD in Manila.

harmonising donor action and establishing mutual accountability should be considered as the basis for dialogue on equal grounds.

- **Measuring development.** In the context of migration and development the term *development* must be defined in a multidimensional manner and must go beyond the indicators defined by the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, other indicators on human and social development must be included to arrive at a conceptualization of development that is sensitive to the role of migration for development and thus relevant to both migration and development policies. Evidence based research is needed to show how development issues can be integrated in migration policies and vice versa.
- **Measuring coherence and policy impacts.** Both the complexity of migration and development as a social phenomenon and the multiplicity of stakeholders involved make coherence difficult to measure. Qualitative and quantitative indicators and in depth studies of policy goals, processes, procedures and impacts are needed to assess the degree of coherence. Frequently policymakers both in countries of origin and destination perceive policy coherence – both between different policies on migration and between migration and development policies – to carry few benefits and high costs. However, the lack of coherence increases transaction costs, decreases policy effectiveness, increases duplication and results in unintended outcomes for countries of origin, transit and destination as well as for the migrants.
- **Identifying objectives in times of crises.** There are several interconnected crises – caused by both short and longer term shocks – that affect the nexus of migration and development. These include the food crisis, the energy crisis, the current financial and economic crisis, the related job crisis and the environmental crisis. Governments should focus both on short and long term issues. A process should be designed to better feed research results in the field of migration and development into policy making and the debates within the Global Forum.
- **Progress and limitations for coherence.** It is necessary to identify the limitations and opportunities for coherent policy making in receiving countries. Which are the barriers to coherence in these countries? Data is often collected for administrative purposes and is not easily accessible to use for the purpose of designing migration policies. No single institution in origin/destination countries is charged with improving policy coherence. Migration and development is a cross-cutting issue that inherently requires coordinating many agencies and departments.
- **Soliciting priorities in an open dialogue between stakeholders.** It is important to analyse the needs, costs and benefits of policy coherence between low and high income countries. The priorities of destination countries may not reflect those of the country of origin and policy is often shaped exclusively in the national interest and is not designed in collaboration with people who work on development policy. There is a need to set up a coherent framework for dialogue and identify in what ways this setup can increase the benefits and decrease the negative effects related to the migration and development nexus. Little funding is available for initiatives to promote improved policy coherence.
- **Assessing impacts as a core challenge.** Evidence-based, gender disaggregated data based on migration flows and stocks, root causes and impacts as well as on the multiple dimensions of development is necessary for coherent decision making. In order to set priorities, however, sound evidence and well-informed assessments on impacts of policy choices as well as on impacts of migration on development are needed.
- **Integrating the migration and development nexus in the main development frameworks** of each country is necessary for achieving policy coherence in migration and development.
- **There are three main frameworks where migration and development issues need to be included in a well-informed manner:**
  - 1) Poverty Reduction Strategies in developing countries
  - 2) The National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) that relate to climate change

### 3) High income country national development frameworks

As there is a link between the causes and effects of internal migration with those of international migration, both phenomena need to be included in development strategies.

- **Promoting cooperation between the public sector, the private sector and civil society** in order to design well-informed, coherent migration and development policies, and effectively implement and follow up on them. The role of the private sectors in international migration needs to be recognised, further studied and also better integrated in the GFMD.
- **Using the GFMD process as a flexible forum for emerging issues.** The GFMD process provides a unique forum for information exchange and innovative research. Among the emerging issues is the need to understand the role of migration in asset-building for development. Migration, if properly managed, can create financial, material, human and social assets that can be mobilised for accelerating development. Furthermore, the interrelationship of migration and climate change is a topic of high priority for many countries and should be taken on board by the GFMD.

**Annex 1** contains examples of recent studies on policy coherence issues illustrating the complexity of coherence and pointing out some of the added value that academic research can bring to the policy dialogue.

## 2. Data and research

- **Availability of valid and reliable data** and other systematic information is necessary for evidence-based or well-informed policy design, decision making, monitoring and evaluation. Improving the coverage, comparability, timely availability and sharing of migration data remains a priority.
- **Utilising all types of data.** There are various types of data: generic data, hard and soft data, data *on* data, data supporting specific operations, administrative records, data and information on the impact of all relevant policies on migration and development, and data on demand/supply/skills, opportunities and obstacles. Information gathering should be done in a coordinated way by the public sector, private sectors, NGOs and the research community.
- **Utilising existing data collection systems and institutions.** Migration modules should be included in e.g. labour force surveys, household surveys, health and demographic surveys and censuses. Particular attention should be given to the 2010 round of censuses as an opportunity to make progress in baseline data.
- **Resourcing data collection and supporting capacity building.** Governments need to commit their resources into data collection and create a national mechanism to identify data needs and ensure the collection and dissemination of data and statistics. For example, there is an urgent need for more information on people leaving a country. Ideally, data should provide information on skills, experiences, and motivation. Such data could be updated by information collected from the diaspora. In addition, more knowledge is needed regarding potential returnees. Data gathering could involve the creation of a database for returnees including how many re-migrate, and statistical data collection on the social, economic and environmental impacts of migration, amongst others. Resources are also needed to build capacity of the institutions that deal with data and research particularly in low income countries of origin.
- **Initiating joint studies.** It is important for country-pairs to initiate bi-national studies of data and potential policy coherence. Multilateral workshops (such as the Suitland Group) can also play an important role in building demand for, and technical skills for, better data.

**Annex 2** provides information on good practices and more detailed suggestions on how to improve data collection, management and dissemination to support improvements in policy coherence.

### 3. Mechanisms at the national and international levels

- **Designing mechanisms at various levels to produce and utilise data** on migration and development in a more coherent and innovative way and for identifying priorities for research.
  - a) At the national and bilateral level: creating a platform where stakeholders, including NGOs and the private sector, can discuss policy coherence and data and research needs openly. Nurture national level mechanisms for building links between agencies that gather migration information and those that make migration policy. Involve individuals who divide their time between research and policy-making. Use international technical cooperation mechanisms and Official Development Assistance (ODA) resources where applicable.
  - b) At the international level: Identifying ways in which global networks and forums can gain access to data managed by various countries and agencies. The GFMD is well placed to become a platform and a clearinghouse for data and research on migration and development.
- **Creating New Partnerships**. A useful instrument for collecting, utilising and applying information is the development of institutional cooperation between the countries of origin, transition and destination in a partnership arrangement. Appropriate resources need to be identified and channelled in order to make institutional cooperation possible.

### 4. GFMD Follow-up

- **Establishing a follow-up mechanism to keep the process going in between major events**. Several feasible options are available.
  - 1) Coordinating existing events. There are a number of events which are being organised and can be used to bring the GFMD agenda forward.
  - 2) Working together on ad hoc basis for designing a wider research and data strategy for GFMD needs. Many governments recognise the need to get experts and researchers involved in the policy process, but current use of research and data in GFMD process seems patchy.
  - 3) Establishing an informal expert group focusing on Policy Coherence, Data and Research. Such an informal group, while not working exclusively for GFMD, can support the GFMD process by providing input to all the RT teams.
  - 4) Utilising existing networks. The Helsinki/ Vienna informal expert group expressed its interest to continue working together on an informal basis within available voluntary contributions and in flexible composition.
- **Creating a mechanism enabling low income countries to participate in the GFMD process**, including the in-between processes, is essential for an equal and productive joint work.
- **Widening the role of the national focal point**. The role of the focal point need to be reviewed and utilised more effectively by expanding the function beyond the GFMD to facilitate institutional collaboration and coherence building, as feasible in each participating country.

# Annex 1. New Research on Policy Coherence

Prepared by Michael Clemens, Center for Global Development

This is a list of examples of new research on the development effects of international migration policy coherence issues. The list illustrates some of the ways that migration policies of origin countries and destination countries have been criticized as incoherent or contradictory.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Origin Countries

*Attack poverty at home, but impede remittances.* New research suggests that different policies toward remittances could do more to complement domestic efforts at poverty reduction.

- New research by Dean Yang of the University of Michigan has suggested that **innovations in financial instruments for sending remittances might be more important than lowering remittance costs**, as a determinant of total remittances. Giving migrants access to bank accounts jointly held with the remittance receiver, so that the usage of remittances can be monitored, roughly *doubles* remittances in this rigorous, randomized experiment. For the full text of the paper [http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Migration%20Conference,%205.26.09/Dean\\_Yang\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Migration%20Conference,%205.26.09/Dean_Yang_Paper.pdf).
- New work by Jeffrey Frankel of Harvard University has shown, with more exhaustive data than have previously been used, that remittance flows are clearly “countercyclical” with respect to the migrant origin country’s economy. That is, when economic times are bad at the origin, remittances tend to rise to compensate. For the full text of the paper [http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Migration%20Conference,%205.26.09/Jeff\\_Frankel\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Migration%20Conference,%205.26.09/Jeff_Frankel_Paper.pdf).

*Invest in job creation, but ignore the diaspora.* New research explores the complex ways in which diasporas have contributed to economic development at home, far beyond their remittances.

- A new book by Natasha Iskander, *The Creative State*, is about to be published. She lived for years in the Moroccan Souss region and painstakingly documents how pressure by a diaspora-based organization led to improvements in Moroccan government policy for electricity and water provision in the migrants’ villages, and conversely how changes in government policy facilitated the migrants’ efforts at self-provision of infrastructure. The book is not publicly available yet but should be later this year. For more information <http://wagner.nyu.edu/iskander>.

## 2. Destination Countries

*Depend on low-skill foreign labor, but use aid, trade, and enforcement to stop it from entering.* New research suggests that programs allowing increased legal temporary labor mobility can have important impacts on poverty.

- John Gibson of the University of Waikato and David McKenzie of the World Bank are rigorously evaluating the new Recognized Seasonal Employer scheme in New Zealand, which brings workers from very poor island nations to work temporarily in horticulture. They find that it effectively targets the poor and greatly raises savings in the workers’ families. For some of their research see [http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Migration%20Conference,%205.26.09/David\\_McKenzie\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Migration%20Conference,%205.26.09/David_McKenzie_Paper.pdf) and <http://ideas.repec.org/p/wai/econwp/08-18.html>.

*Promote professional careers for women, but limit access to affordable childcare.* Most destination countries take policy measures to facilitate professional careers for women, but it has only recently been recognized that allowing greater low-skill labor mobility might complement those efforts.

- Patricia Cortés of the University of Chicago and José Tessada of the Brookings Institution have shown that when low-skill immigrant labor is available to provide childcare and household services, professional women in the United States 1) are more likely to work outside the home and 2) are

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<sup>2</sup> Disclaimer: this is not a complete list and does not reflect the opinion of Mr. Clemens. The intention was to create a list of some of the policy coherence questions that some people have found interesting, and provide links to very recent, high-quality social science research that contains information about each question.

more likely to have children. For their paper <http://sites.google.com/site/jtessada/files/time-use-june2009-final-wtables.pdf>.

*Give aid for poverty reduction, but restrict low-skill labor mobility.* New research suggests that labor mobility has powerful effects on incomes, mental health, risk, and fertility for people from developing countries, suggesting that there is much room for improvement in designing migration policy to complement overseas development efforts.

- Michael Clemens of the Center for Global Development, Claudio Montenegro of the World Bank, and Lant Pritchett of Harvard have calculated the income gain from migrating to the United States from 42 developing countries. They show that in many countries, the income benefits of labor mobility vastly outweigh the benefits of any other known development intervention. For their paper <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/16352>.
- The same Gibson and McKenzie mentioned above have shown that international migration, despite its associated stresses, can cause improvements in mental health. They use a highly scientific research design that makes use of the randomized visa lottery in New Zealand. For their paper <http://ideas.repec.org/p/wai/econwp/06-04.html>.
- Dean Yang, also mentioned above, has shown with a very careful research design that international remittances can serve as highly effective insurance against negative shocks to income for poor and vulnerable households. He shows that 60% of income losses from poor rainfall in the Philippines are compensated for by increases in remittances. For his paper <http://ideas.repec.org/p/mie/wpaper/535.html>. (An improved version was recently published but is not available free online.)
- Michel Beine of the University of Luxembourg, Frédéric Docquier of the Catholic University of Louvain, and Maurice Schiff of the World Bank have recently given strong evidence that social norms supporting low fertility are transferred from migrants back to their countries of origin. For their paper [http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/papers/viewAbstract?dp\\_id=3912](http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/papers/viewAbstract?dp_id=3912).

### 3. Both origin and destination countries

*Invest in human capital, but allow/encourage skilled labor mobility.* While many people believe that allowing skilled labor mobility is antithetical to developing countries' efforts to build a human capital base for development, new research suggests that this is far from clear.

- Michael Clemens of CGD and Satish Chand of the University of New South Wales have recently shown that skilled-worker emigration can have large effects on human capital investment inside the migrant-origin country. They use a natural experiment involving the sudden onset of massive skilled-worker migration from a small island state. For their paper please see <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/123641>.
- The aforementioned Gibson and McKenzie have undertaken a major effort to track all of the top high school graduates from several small countries over the past 30 years, to learn how they moved internationally over long periods. They find surprisingly high rates of circular and return migration. For their paper <http://ideas.repec.org/p/crm/wpaper/0903.html>.
- Bill Kerr of Harvard Business School has used an ingenious research method to show that new technologies diffuse from the United States to developing countries within ethnically-specific networks of researchers and high-tech companies. Skilled-worker migration to the US therefore plays an important role in international technology diffusion. For his paper <http://ideas.repec.org/p/hbs/wpaper/06-022.html>. (That is an older version of his recently published paper, the new version of which is not available free online.)
- Antonio Spilimbergo of the IMF has recently given strong evidence that sending more students overseas to study in democratic countries tends to make the country of origin more democratic over time. For his paper

[http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Migration%20Conference,%205.26.09/Antonio\\_Spilimbergo\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/doc/events/Migration%20Conference,%205.26.09/Antonio_Spilimbergo_Paper.pdf)

*Demand better migration policy, but limit migration data.* Everyone wants better migration policy, but paying for the expensive data improvements necessary to formulate better policy is understandably unpopular. New research suggests that large improvements in migration data for better policy could be made at relatively low cost and within existing institutions.

- The Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy, a blue-ribbon group of experts on migration data, has recently issued five limited, specific, low-cost steps that could be taken in the short run to improve international migration data. Their report is available at <http://www.migrationdata.org>.

## Annex 2. Challenges and Solutions of Policy Coherence

Prepared by Michael Clemens, Center for Global Development

This is a summary of elements the Vienna informal expert group put forward for the Roundtable 3.1 background paper: 1) specific areas where policy coherence is lacking and the harm this causes, 2) barriers to improving coherence, 3) examples of greater coherence, and 4) lessons learnt.

### 1. Selected areas where improved coherence could avoid costs and bring benefits

- National poverty reduction strategies could take better advantage of migration as an antipoverty tool, but some fail to even mention migration
- Destination countries that depend on low-skill foreign labor but tightly restrict low-skill labor mobility contribute to the creation of illegal movement
- Impeding the development of privately-funded education systems in origin countries can tend to increase the fiscal loss from skill-worker emigration, even in countries taking other measures to limit that loss
- Policies intended to suppress human trafficking have often harmed the human rights of legitimate migrants, according to the *Collateral Damage* report, see [http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp/articles\\_publications/publications/collateraldamage\\_20070927](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp/articles_publications/publications/collateraldamage_20070927)

### 2. Barriers to achieving and measuring coherence

- Detailed data on migration are often collected for administrative purposes and are not easily accessible to use for the purpose of setting migration policy
- No single institution in origin or destination countries is charged with improving policy coherence, a cross-cutting issue that inherently requires coordinating many agencies and departments.
- Many policymakers in origin and destination countries perceive migration policy coherence to carry few benefits and high costs. It carries few benefits because their time is limited, there is only a small constituency for better migration policy in both origin countries and destination countries, and competing policy reforms carry much great political benefit. It carries high costs because domestic opposition to migration policy reform can be energetic.
- Partly as a consequence of the above, little funding is available for initiatives to promote improved policy coherence.
- Some countries do not have anything that could be described as a unified national “migration policy”. When there is a policy, it is often shaped exclusively in the national interest and not designed in collaboration with people who work on development policy—who are often found in the weakest parts of the government.
- In some cases the governments that would need to work together to promote greater bilateral policy coherence have different and incompatible interests. Interests diverge more between Morocco and France, for example, than between Mexico and the United States. An international forum for negotiating these differences is often absent; the IOM has helped in many cases but lacks the resources and political backing to be as effective as it could be.

### 3. Examples of steps that countries have taken to move toward coherence

- The United States and Mexico have been working together since 1995 to harmonize the collective and dissemination of census data and other data pertinent to migration, and both now freely share microdata from their censuses and Labor Force Surveys.
- Jason Schachter (ILO) has worked with West African countries to explore the potential for adding migration-related questions into existing surveys at low cost, generating information that could help different origin-country ministries to work together around a clear set of facts on migration



- The European Commission-funded Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE) project is carrying out extensive new surveys on migration flows from Senegal, Ghana, and DR Congo to Europe. These might lead to a better understanding of how, for example, European visa policies shape irregular migration. More information at [www.mafeproject.com](http://www.mafeproject.com).
- Many migrant origin countries have already incorporated migration-related questions into their Labor Force Surveys. The Philippines and Mexico, for example, ask where people who leave the survey respondent household went. Other countries, such as Brazil, do not ask.

#### 4. General lessons and recommendations

- Start by collaboratively creating a country profile of migration data, an assessment of existing data sources in different areas of the government. This exercise serves the dual purpose of gathering information about existing data and starting the process of getting different agencies working cooperatively. This process has positive feedbacks: once it gets going people begin to see its usefulness. This is different from SOPEMI, 1) whose full findings aren't made public (summary only is released), and 2) doesn't exist outside Europe. Sources of existing data might include
  - a) Administrative data, e.g. visa records, tax records, entry/exit cards, population registers
  - b) Generalized survey data that capture information about migration: Labor Force Survey or other household surveys
  - c) Census data and census-related modules
  - d) Specialized surveys on migration, collected nationally or internationally
- In particularly important country-pairs, initiate bi-national studies of data needs and potential policy incoherence. Multilateral workshops can also play an important role in building demand for, and technical skills for, better data, such as the Suitland Working Group (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.03.migration.htm>).
- Provide open access to anonymous microdata on samples of individual migrants, information that is crucial for understanding the causes and effects of migration. Many developing and developed countries make their census microdata freely available at the IPUMS-SI project (<https://international.ipums.org>). Several countries developing and developed countries have placed Labor Force Survey microdata online for free, open access by all (including Mexico and the United States), and others make them available to the public for a small fee (including the Philippines and South Africa).
- Nurture national level mechanisms for building links between agencies that gather migration information and those that make migration policy. This can include individuals who divide their time between research and policymaking, in the manner of DfID's research fellow program. International Technical Cooperation and resources could play an important role here.
- GFMD needs wider research and data strategy. This might include setting up a permanent website with an information clearing house, and might include an institutionalized data and research working group. Many governments recognize the need to get experts and researchers involved in the policy process, but current use of research and data in GFMD seems patchy.
  - a) GFMD depends on expertise, academia, etc.
  - b) Data and research on policy coherence underpin all topics discussed at GFMD
  - c) Expertise and an evidence based approach will be discussed in active interface between governments and 'world of experts' (NGOs, academia, etc)
  - d) Avoid making specific reference to a permanent working group: repeated meetings could eventually become a working group. The idea was generally welcomed in Manila.
- New research is needed on the migration consequences of climate change. This remains an area of great policy interest but a very small evidence base.
- Build understanding of links between internal and external migration—the UNDP's *Human Development Report 2009*, which will be released in October, has taken this approach.