

**THIRD MEETING OF THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND
DEVELOPMENT
Athens / 4-5 November 2009**

“Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All”

THEMES CONCEPT PAPER

This is a concept paper on the Roundtable themes for the Third Global Forum on Migration and Development to be held in Athens on 4 and 5 November 2009. The paper takes account of the thematic survey conducted by the Chair with Steering Group governments, and the subsequent consultations held with the GFMD Troika (Philippines, Greece, Argentina) on 25 February and 01 April 2009, the GFMD Steering Group on 25 February and 01 April 2009 and the Friends of the Forum on 02 April 2009.

With these themes, the Chair aims at promoting a balanced approach to the migration and development facets of the GFMD process, and the balanced engagement of developing and developed countries from all regions of the world in the process.

This Themes Concept Paper serves as the basis for the work of the Roundtable session teams in preparing and conducting the Roundtables. Governments are encouraged to consult their national development agencies and, if relevant, to include them in the preparatory process of the GFMD.

I. General considerations

- a) The Roundtable themes and session topics are guided by the overarching theme of the Greek Chair, *Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All*. This theme remains central to the GFMD process, yet opens a space for new approaches and ideas.
- b) The Chair intends to focus on development in the migration and development nexus as a key to ensure that, if people move, they do so by their own choice not out of necessity, to give more visibility to the initiative of the UN Secretary-General to address the nexus between root causes of migration and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- c) A further innovative element is the proposed discussion of the inter-relationship between migrant integration (as inclusion, protection and acceptance), reintegration and development in the light of new migration patterns, including circular migration.
- d) The Athens meeting will reinforce the practical orientation of the GFMD in order to define practical solutions to concrete problems. During the preparatory process and the meeting in November, participants will be expected to define good practices and identify policy gaps. Practical outcomes should be the priority for each session.

- e) The individual is central to both migration and development. Migrants are people; development is about human well-being and empowerment. The Athens meeting will give special attention to human rights, in the context of policies of inclusion, protection and acceptance of migrants in society, during the discussion in Roundtable 2, pursuant to the Manila focus on these concerns.
- f) Government policies and programs remain paramount in the GFMD, but the discussions should also be informed by the latest data and findings of non-state and international experts in the field of migration and development. The Civil Society contributions will thus also be important to the success of the GFMD.
- g) While the Chair wishes to build upon the previous GFMD meetings, it is also necessary to avoid repetitive discussions from one meeting to the next.

II. The Roundtables

The Greek Chair will continue the participative and team-based approach to preparing the Roundtable sessions. The structure of three Roundtables will be retained, with break-out sessions prepared by government teams around themes of common interest. As in Manila, it is intended to limit the Roundtables to seven sessions for reasons of manageability and logistics.

The GFMD process pursues an incremental approach to the themes and is also open to new topics. The Athens meeting will thus build upon the Brussels and Manila meetings, while breaking new ground with the overarching Greek GFMD theme. The theme of *Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All* will be addressed in some form throughout all Roundtables, but will also be the specific focus of *Roundtable 1*, along with some new approaches to the role of diasporas for development and to the root causes of migration in light of the current global economic crisis. *Roundtable 2* will deepen the earlier discussions on regular migration, labour mobility and the protection of migrants, and will examine migrant integration, reintegration and circulation strategies and their inter-linkages with development. *Roundtable 3* will expand on, and update, the ongoing policy and institutional coherence efforts underpinning the other Roundtable debates and focus on data and research issues and regional and inter-regional activities.

Roundtable 1: *How to make the migration – development nexus work for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*

This Roundtable reflects the priority of the Greek Chair to emphasize the integration of migration policy in developmental strategies. Within this overarching theme, the Roundtable will also continue the discussion of previous GFMD meetings on the contributions of diaspora and migrant communities to development. It will also open the floor for discussion of new issues, with a focus on how to address root causes of migration in light of the current global economic crisis.

While the substantial contribution of migrants to development is widely recognized, this Roundtable will focus on the way migration can be associated with the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, and governments' national development plans, aid policies or partnerships underpinning this pursuit. It will take into consideration that migration is not a substitute for development nor that development is a substitute for migration.

Session 1.1: Mainstreaming migration in development planning -Key actors, key strategies, key actions

This session addresses how national and international strategies for development, poverty reduction and economic growth take account of migration to the benefit of all parties, particularly developing countries.

This can take different forms, ranging for example from policies to spread the benefits of migration more widely in the country of origin to the adjustment policies of such countries in regard to large outflows of their labour force. Taking account of migration in development planning also relates to building strong partnerships that embrace migration considerations in joint developmental efforts. The session could examine ways of building comprehensive partnerships among countries of origin, transit and destination to promote synergies between migration and development, including cooperation among governments, private sector, migrants and diaspora. It could also examine in this framework some emerging partnership models on, for example, human resource development and skills sharing, particularly with a view to reducing or reversing brain-drain and jointly achieving the MDGs in critical areas such as health, education and gender.

The session should identify concretely what complementary strategies can be put in place (or are already in place) across different levels of government, in the first place those most directly concerned with development and migration, in countries of origin, transit and destination. It could identify practical and workable tools and processes for governments, and the role and involvement of international organizations and other stakeholders in the development of these. The implementation of such development strategies may well offer the best testing ground for the migration and development nexus, particularly in the broader pursuit of the MDGs. This is of interest to both developing and developed countries at all points on the migration spectrum, including along south-south tracks.

Session 1.2: Engaging diasporas and migrants in development policies and programs - Their role? Their constraints?

This session would consider the contributions that migrants and diasporas can bring to the development of their home country. It will build upon the discussions begun in Belgium and Manila on how to strengthen the positive development impact of diaspora initiatives with a specific focus on the partnerships to be established for the achievement of MDGs.

The session can elaborate on the development role of diasporas and the policies of origin and host countries in supporting diasporas through specific partnerships. It can examine the contribution of diasporas to development and the achievement of MDGs, e.g. through the transfer of knowledge (converting brain-drain into brain and knowledge gain) and financial transfers. It could also examine the conditions and incentives that cause diasporas to choose to contribute to development policies and programs, for instance through capacity-building projects or through investments, business or trade ventures between origin and host countries. This session could result in the elaboration of a toolkit of policies and initiatives to engage diasporas for development.

Session 1.3: Addressing the root causes of migration through development, specifically in light

of the current global economic crisis.

The full scale and impact of the current global economic crisis are still little known, but are likely to become clearer as we approach the GFMD Athens meeting in November. This session will explore the possible impacts of the global economic crisis on migrants as well as on the “push” and “pull” factors relating to the migration and development nexus (e.g. on international mobility and labour migration opportunities, remittance flows, pressures to migrate in irregular ways, socio-economic effects of return migration etc.) and the strategies to alleviate these impacts.

National development and international development cooperation - at strategic, policy and funding levels – can play an important role in ensuring that people migrate by choice and not by necessity. The session could aim at identifying some best practices in addressing the root causes of migration (e.g. enhance human security and livelihoods, improve social and economic development in regions with high out-migration pressures or strengthen resilience or adaptation to environmental change), particularly at a time of global economic crisis, and the further deterioration of conditions at the root of migration.

Also in this regard, the session could identify specific strategies and partnerships to respond to the consequences for developing countries of origin of possible large flows of returning migrants, of fewer migration opportunities or of possible decreasing remittances, and to protect the development benefits of migration in the current global economic crisis.

Roundtable 2: Migrant integration, reintegration and circulation for development

This Roundtable will complement the development orientation of Roundtable 1 by addressing policies that secure the rights and situation of migrants in the host country, and in the origin country if and when they return. It will also build on the discussions of the earlier GFMD meetings on protecting and empowering migrants, as well as on fostering more opportunities for regular migration (for example through new forms of circular migration).

In the host countries, the Roundtable will identify good practices of social inclusion, protection and acceptance of migrants that strengthen their capacities to contribute to development in host and origin countries. In the origin countries, it will examine reintegration policies that are linked to development efforts and offer incentives for migrants to return, circulate between countries or choose to stay home. The Roundtable thus covers two important scenarios in the life cycle of migration: living and working abroad and returning home, in both cases either temporarily or permanently. In each scenario, inclusion, protection and acceptance of migrants and their families can better enable them to contribute to development of the host and/or home societies.

The Roundtable sessions give recognition to the fact that new forms of global mobility and circular migration today call for more flexible and cooperative integration and reintegration efforts by both origin and host countries.

Session 2.1: Inclusion, protection and acceptance of migrants in society – linking human rights and migrant empowerment for development.

This session will explore the assumption that the more migrants are included, protected and accepted in their host societies, the better they may be able to contribute to development in both host and origin countries. It expands the usual debate on migrant integration by looking at the

links between the creation of a protective and enabling environment for migrants and their contributions to development. What are some good practices of host communities to foster harmonious, multi-cultural communities and ensure social cohesion that also benefit migrants? Issues such as migrant health, education, employment, housing, non-discrimination, gender, rights and obligations could be addressed in this context.

While not specifically focused on temporary migration, the session gives recognition to the fact that all persons living and working abroad need a certain level of social and economic support and empowerment to be able to contribute to development. This is especially important for temporary or circulating migrants, who often make the greater contribution to family well-being and development back home, yet have less access to, and incentives to avail themselves of, services and other integration-related programs in host countries. The role and needs of female migrants in such scenarios will be given special consideration. Some good practices already exist for both permanent and temporary migrants – either specifically oriented to migrants or as part of universal social support systems – and these can offer useful lessons for other countries.

By focusing on the situation of migrants, this session offers a natural complement to Session 1.2 on diaspora. It will also continue the discussion in Manila on protecting and empowering migrants for development. The session could yield some elements of good practices that ensure the inclusion, protection and empowerment of migrants.

Session 2.2: Reintegration and circular migration – effective for development?

This session will look at the situation of returning migrants, either as a singular occurrence or as part of a circular migration pattern, and the policies that can support and enable their reintegration for personal and broader development outcomes. It limits itself neither to finite, temporary nor to repeat, circular forms of migration. It assumes that many of the policies and conditions that will help returning migrants reinsert themselves permanently in their home communities are likely also to attract migrants and diaspora to circulate themselves or their skills and capital between host and origin country. It could examine initiatives to enhance the effect of reintegration on development, such as business start-up funds, education and vocational training, databases of migrant and diaspora skills, public-private partnerships for micro-enterprises etc. It may also look at the policy environments that enable migrants and their families to contribute to development after their return to their home countries.

Most reintegration programs are not tailored to development, but there is an increasing tendency by some host and origin countries to tie return and reintegration programs more to the development needs and planning of the origin country. Some circular migration pilot programs which have in part grown out of the Brussels and Manila GFMD discussions offer a natural experiment for testing the reintegration-development nexus. Within such negotiated programs, origin and host countries jointly plan labour circulation to meet their mutual labour market needs, while offering opportunities for migrants to increase their earnings and skills abroad, reintegrate productively upon return, but also more freely between countries, as desired.

In line with the outcomes of the Manila discussion on circular migration, the session can examine the mutually reinforcing relationship between circular migration and development. How effective are the broader development efforts at sectoral reform, strengthening of business environments, education, training and job creation in helping migrants reintegrate into labour markets when they return? Can circular migration help alleviate brain-drain? How effective are joint efforts by countries to manage circulation of migrants, diaspora and/or their skills to mutual benefit? The session could identify some effective reintegration schemes and the measures to assess their

developmental impacts. It could also identify from the assessments of circular migration pilots the policies and practices that may increase the developmental effects of circular migration.

Roundtable 3: *Policy and Institutional Coherence and Partnerships*

In Brussels as well as in Manila, policy and institutional coherence was identified by participating governments as a mainstay of the GFMD, underpinning all other themes on migration and development. At both GFMD meetings, in-depth exchanges were held on (a) the concept of policy and program coherence within government, (b) the mechanisms required for more coherent institutional arrangements within government, (c) the need and ways to assess these concepts and arrangements, (d) the tools required for developing comparable and policy-relevant data and defining research priorities, and (e) how regional and inter-regional processes and fora contribute to coherent policy-making on migration and development and how these experiences can be relevant for the GFMD process.

In Athens, Roundtable 3 will continue focusing on these critical issues in two sessions, one dealing with policy and institutional coherence and related data and research, and one addressing regional and inter-regional activities.

Considering the thorough discussions already held in Brussels and Manila on the concepts of policy and institutional coherence within government, the first Roundtable 3 session will place more emphasis on concrete progress and the evolving government practices in these fields. It will also not repeat the very rich analysis and discussion on data and research tools, but rather focus on actual latest data and research priorities and findings that can support good and coherent policy-making in the fields to be discussed in Athens Roundtables 1 and 2.

In line with the Manila outcomes, the second session of Roundtable 3 will then offer sufficient space and time for interested governments to exchange views on progress made in regional and inter-regional processes and initiatives.

Session 3.1: Policy and Institutional Coherence – Latest Data and Research Findings

In Manila, governments proposed to ensure ongoing exchanges on policy and institutional coherence within government and stimulate the identification and dissemination of best practices, including through the use of the GFMD website. The results of the work undertaken in these fields and related government practices will be reported on and discussed in this first session of Roundtable 3.

The aim will be for governments to discuss concrete progress made in institutional government arrangements, including the pursuit of a ‘whole-of-government’ approach to migration and development; assessment mechanisms and results in terms of policy and practice; and strengthening the role of GFMD government focal points as an integral part of intra-governmental consultation and coordination. The session would also discuss policy coherence issues in the thematic areas of Roundtables 1 and 2.

As policy-relevant data and research findings are closely inter-linked with coherent policy making, the same session will focus on data and research by sharing information on effective data collection mechanisms and research activities. Given the fact that the Greek Chair favours an evidence-based and practice-oriented discussion, the session will focus on data and research

activities related to the thematic issues of Roundtables 1 and 2, for example the root causes of migration, the impact of the economic crisis on migration and development etc. It will further consider certain data and research-related actions flowing from the Manila Roundtables 1 and 2 outcomes, such as the establishment of a common lexicon/dictionary of terms on the migration process (a project currently developed by IOM); the inclusion of migration-related questions in the 2010 round of national censuses; and, as feasible, research on the economic benefits of regular and irregular migration for development.

The work of Roundtable 3.1 could further aim at discussing some practical tools for more systematic and comparable data collection and research within and between countries. The proposed ad-hoc Working Group on Data, Research and Policy Coherence could, if established, offer valuable input into the preparation of Session 3.1.

Session 3.2: Regional and Inter-regional Processes and Fora

The second session of Roundtable 3 will review progress made by regional and inter-regional processes and fora in linking migration and development concerns more productively, and assess how these activities can be relevant in the GFMD context. In line with suggestions made in Manila, sufficient time will be allocated for concerned governments to report on recent activities and results of relevant inter-regional initiatives and regional fora, such as the Euro-Africa Conference on Migration and Development; the South American Conference on Migration, Development and Human Rights; the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and related Transnational Crime; and the Regional Conference on Migration (Puebla Process). The recent achievements of these and other regional and inter-regional processes and fora will be discussed in a practical, future-oriented way.

The session will also hear and discuss the report of the outcomes of the meeting in Bangkok, now scheduled to take place on 4 and 5 June 2009, involving the Heads of all relevant Regional Consultation Processes on Migration (RCPs).

III. Special Session on the Future of the GFMD

As a permanent feature of the GFMD, the special session on the future of the GFMD would continue to review the Operating Modalities of the Forum. There should also be continuing discussion of such strategic issues as the relationship with the United Nations, Civil Society and the Global Migration Group. The session would on this occasion also assess the operations of the new GFMD Support Unit and its continued activity in 2010. These discussions should have been adequately prepared throughout the year.

A separate document/questionnaire could be circulated at a later date on these questions.

**GFMD 2009 Task Force
Athens, 10 April 2009**