



Roundtable 3 – Plenary Report

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The three sessions that made up roundtable 3 were held together by a clear logic: what do we need to do to understand and achieve policy coherence? Delegates agreed that we would need to shape national and international policies to achieve maximum coherence. We would need to develop regional and interstate structures that reflected this priority and enabled us to achieve concrete outcomes.

Roundtable 3.1: Strengthening Data and Research Tools on Migration and Development

The first session reaffirmed the importance of high quality data and research for good policymaking. Discussion focused on three questions: why is better data and research particularly important in the area of migration and development?; what were the three priorities in this area?; how could the GFMD process help facilitate better data and research?

1. Why is better data and research particularly important?

Understanding the realities of international migration, given its complexity, is a mammoth task that requires sufficient time and effort. It is also an area where combating myths with robust facts is critical.

We need to have a better feel for the holistic nature of the “development-migration-development” nexus. In other words, we need to know how development could drive and deter migration and how, in turn, migration shapes development outcomes in sending, transit and destination countries.

Given the opportunity that the GFMD and other initiatives in this area present for developing better and more coherent policy, we need to know which policies work and which don’t work so well to promote development. We also need to understand how the current global economic turmoil will shape migration flows and impacts.

2. What were our priorities?

The papers and the session reaffirmed the importance of making sure efforts covered all three major data and research challenges in the area of migration and development: collecting timely raw data on the scale and nature of migration flows, better analysis of the causes and impacts of migration and better assessments of the impacts of different policies.

We need clearer definitions of the concepts under discussion, greater comparability of data between countries and easy access to existing and new data.

Several topics sprang to the attention of roundtable members for discussion in coming years, namely: how migration impacts children, gender relationships and families, how migration affects progress towards the MDGs; the nature of South-South migration; and how to make better use of diasporas in promoting sustainable development back home.

3. How could the GFMD process help?

The Roundtable supported the establishment of an ad hoc Data and Research Working Group, building on the recommendations of the Brussels meeting and the Helsinki expert group meeting. The Working Group would bring together experts, governments, international agencies and others. It would act as a clearing house for the latest data and research initiatives, promote comparability and accessibility, advise GFMD meeting on recommendations in this area and look at ways to take forward conclusions from the GFMD.

The group could also explore promoting regional cooperation on improving data and research and piloting a project to promote best practice on data collection and sharing – although sponsors would be needed for such work.

The 2010 round of national censuses provided an important opportunity to collect high quality migration data. Individual states would need to ensure that appropriate migration questions were included in all censuses.

Roundtable 3.2: Policy and Institutional Coherence

This session addressed the critical question of what we were trying to achieve in the area of migration and development in a practical sense. It was clear that policy and institutional is crucial to maximising the benefits of migration for development. The survey, conducted by the Swedish Government prior to the Forum, and discussion at the Roundtable itself demonstrated wide spread recognition of the important impacts of migration on development and of development on migration trends. Also discussed were the many other policy arenas that affect both migration and development – not least the financial and economic crisis that is likely to have a profound impact on development as well as on migration and protection of migrants. Give the complexity of this policy framework and the multiple government agencies with responsibilities for migration and development, coherence is essential but difficult to achieve. Without it, however, policies and institutional responses will continue to be ad hoc and uninformed.

What are the priority areas to achieve policy coherence?

- Inclusion of migration policy in poverty reduction strategies, national development plans and donor policies.
- Working with the diaspora and migrants living abroad. Colombia presented a framework for outreach to the diaspora through consulates and embassies that other participants lauded for its comprehensiveness
- Remittances. A particular focus on:
 - Reducing costs
 - Strengthening the financial institutions to transmit remittances
 - Financial literacy for senders and recipients of remittances
- Reintegration of migrants in the context of circular migration including pension portability, irregular migration and post crisis reintegration of migrants and refugees
- Protection of migrants at all stages of migration, in both source and destination countries with particular focus on information for migrants about their rights and responsibilities, special needs for women and children, combating trafficking in persons
- Legal mechanisms for migration, to reduce irregular migration and offer greater policy coherence for admission of migrants. There was a focus particularly on youth, preferably through educational programmes that offered training for jobs at home and legal migration opportunities abroad.
- Improving data on diaspora and migrants communities and their potential contributions to development of home countries and destination countries

How do we achieve coherence?

The workshop identified a number of mechanisms to promote institutional coherence including:

- Domestic, external and interstate action.
- Inter ministerial taskforces, working groups and commissions from Government stakeholders
- Providing adequate human and financial resources to promote coherence between policies
- Involving migrants in the development of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), national development plans and donor development plans.
- Linking national, regional (RCPs) and international (GFMD) levels to promote fuller international coherence.

What are the challenges to moving forward?

The main challenge is sustaining and broadening the current momentum. In a survey conducted in advance of the GFMD, about 80% of governments indicated that they recognised the importance of the migration-development nexus but only 50% had integrated this into national development plans. While there are many new initiatives and institutional arrangements, they have not been evaluated to determine the effectiveness or impact. Capacity building is needed to help governments achieve greater policy and institutional coherence.

How can the GMD process help?

The discussion indicated that GFMD already plays an important information sharing role but there is a need to move from discussion to concrete action.

Potential outcomes

1. Policy and institutional coherence should stay on the GMFD agenda to ensure continued momentum. The survey by the Swedish government should be conducted again, perhaps at two year intervals, and include open ended questions to supplement the yes/no questions in the current survey.
2. GFMD could become a platform for information sharing through its website and working groups
3. GFMD could stimulate assessment and evaluation of the array of new policies and initiatives, including the integration of migration into PRSPs and donor development policies. The working paper recommends that GFMD bring together experts before Greece 2009 to discuss research methodologies for evaluating the policies and programmes.
4. GFMD could stimulate the identification and dissemination of best practice in policy and institutional coherence.
5. Strengthening the GFMD focal points would help enhance institutional coherence, particularly if they became a vehicle for new inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms adopted by governments.

Roundtable 3.3: Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs), Inter-regional Consultative For a and Regional Organisation and Economic Integration Processes at the Interface of Migration and Development

Roundtable 3.3 focused the tools available to improve domestic, inter-state and international governance on migration. It discussed regional forms of cooperation amongst states and what can be learnt from these to inform this global dialogue on migration and development.

The discussion took place in the context of consideration of promoting coherence so that migration made a beneficial contribution to development. Most importantly, it took place in the context of improving the governance of migration.

In the first instance, participants stressed the fundamental importance of dialogue and cooperation. They also stressed that this needed to be based on the development of new policies and the structures to implement them at the national level.

Three principal forms of regional cooperation were explored through presentation of case studies:

- Regional consultative processes (RCPs) on migration – informal, non-binding, fora on migration that increasingly focus on migration and development and specifically management of labour mobility.
- The Colombo process – and its spin-off the Abu Dhabi Dialogue – were presented and the concrete results they were producing were highlighted.

- The second Euro-Africa Ministerial conference, in follow up the first conference held in Rabat in 2006 - a formal, inter-regional dialogue producing concrete results specifically on migration and development and in the context of a specific set of migration flows
- Regional Economic Integration processes – the example of Mercosur was presented to highlight that regional integration processes focused on economic growth and development are increasingly integrated migration in their work, including focusing on migration and development.

There is room and a role for each of these types and levels of inter state dialogue and cooperation. Moreover, there is also a key role for bilateral cooperation, which often brings concrete results, targeted to specific situation, as well as sub regional and global dialogue and cooperation. The challenge is ensuring coherence among and between all these fora. At a minimum, information flow between them is critical.

All of these must be informed by certain basic principles, foremost respect for the human rights of migrants as human beings.

Outcomes

- A virtual platform for information sharing and exchange was proposed for the states and other stakeholders to be able to share their perspectives and good practices.
- Several RCPS including the South American conference on migration and the League of Arab states have organised themselves in preparation for the GFMD to prepare common approaches. They have committed to doing this on an annual basis.
- The exchange will also go in the other direction. ICMPS, which serves as the secretariat for two RCPs, will bring back the experiences shared and lessons learnt from the GFMD to help inform the discussion and possibly the agenda of future meetings of the RCPs.
- While several participants said it might be premature for a formal linkage between the GFMD and various regional and inter-regional fora, this exchange is happening naturally where it is warranted and no doubt will continue,
- States are coming add sharing their positive experiences and practices, whether at the bilateral, regional or inter regional level.
- A specific suggestion was made to look at the possibility of holding events next year in Greece for regional fora to share their experiences.

A more concrete exchange was announced in the form of a meeting that the IOM will organise sponsored by the Government of Australia, bring together the chairs and secretariats of the various RCPs to share experience and lessons learnt, particularly in the migration and development field. This will occur in the first half of 2009 and the results can no doubt be shared in Greece.

Regional exchanges were important in two different ways – (a) to give a political voice from the regions at the global level and (b) to foster concrete outcomes.

In this regard, certain key ideas were underlined:

- Trust, mutual respect and confidence building
- Creating and ensuring adequate capacity
- Shared responsibility

Participants stressed the need to watch, assess and monitor these outcomes so that lessons can be learnt and fed back into debate and practice.

Conclusion

All these roundtables underlined the importance of building on existing initiatives and projects, including between partners and between regions. The theme of our conference was protection and empowerment. May I suggest on a personal note that the participating states now use the empowerment to offer our support to realise the many valuable suggestions made over the past two days and give them practical effect.

Thank you.