



RT 1: Partnerships for More Regular and Protected Migration

General Rapporteur's Report to Plenary (Mr Manuel Imson, Philippines)

Roundtable 1 - Partnerships for Migration and Development

Outcomes And Follow-Up Actions

- Migration is inherent to human nature and it is a historical phenomenon that has affected and will continue to affect most countries economically, socially and culturally, so we all have an important stake in this issue.
- Regular, orderly and safe migration is very important for sustainable economic development. The Roundtable agreed that it is essential to promote regular migration that respects **human rights** and to **leverage the development impacts** of migrants (both economic and social) through effective partnerships between governments, diaspora groups, civil society and the private sector.
- Partnerships are beneficial for countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as migrants themselves. They can help reduce the costs associated with diaspora outreach and increase the chance of successfully leveraging the positive development impacts of migration in a comprehensive and sustainable way.
- Some of the characteristics for successful partnerships outlined by the Roundtable were as follows:
 - 1) The importance of shared responsibility and coherence
 - 2) The need to balance the migration interests of the countries
 - 3) The importance of undergoing a trust-building exercise between parties, and
 - 4) The need to be aware that partnership is a long-term engagement from both sides and that includes the investment of financial and personal resources.
- **Brain drain** is one of the problems that must be tackled by these partnerships. Nevertheless, the existence of **brain gain** and **knowledge transfers** is real and should be leveraged for development.
- The origin and destination countries should **avoid the criminalization** of migrants and in both destination and origin countries, it is important to allow for the dissemination of knowledge at every level in order to fight erroneous or biased perceptions about migration and migrants. At the same time, migrants themselves have to be informed about the challenges of migration.
- The regularization of migrants should not be seen as a factor that negatively impacts the development of the destination countries.
- As a final recommendation, this first roundtable found it important to highlight the issue of

return migration which may involve voluntary or forced- return. Countries need to have a comprehensive policy and program for returning migrants, both in the voluntary cases and in the forced cases. In case of the latter, it is especially important for countries of origin and destination to work together.

- In conclusion, based on the variety of bilateral and regional partnerships discussed, this Roundtable recommends **the development of the Platform for Partnerships (PfP)**, which should be used as a tool for sharing best practices.

Roundtable 1.2 – Joint Strategies To Address Irregular Migration

Outcomes And Follow-Up Actions

The debate at this round table was very valuable and varied, especially considering the complexities and controversies inherent in this topic, which was righteously included in the agenda by the Mexican leadership. The debate included various aspects of the topic of irregular migration, beyond border control/deportation as a solution to the problem, such as the need to identify new and innovative solutions to the issue, including more legal channels for regular migration, preventive measures, protection and the importance of safeguarding every state's sovereignty and right to decide their own migration policies. In fact, these two themes helped guide the discussion at the round table that followed.

Various delegations highlighted the importance of joint strategies, both bilateral and multilateral, to address the issue of irregular migration under a framework of shared responsibility by the countries of origin, transit and destination. The criminalization of irregular migrants puts them in an extremely vulnerable position. There is a need to overcome the current challenges of racism, xenophobia and discrimination, as well as other current biases in the public debate. The co-chairs of the round table highlighted the need for a greater focus on the human rights aspect of irregular migration, keeping in mind the negative aspects of the phenomenon – such as human trafficking and smuggling. Some delegations stressed the economic pressure put on the welfare systems regarding the provision of services to irregular migrants. However, other delegations highlighted that this access was an essential part of the safeguarding of the human rights of migrants, which should not be tied to economic conditionality.

On the Root Causes of Irregular Migration:

- The need for sustainable development in the countries of origin, including decent labor conditions.
- Governments must keep in mind the right to NOT migrate. There is a need for more empirical data and resources to address this right.
- Aside from regularization, other instruments were mentioned by the delegates such as the need for new migration regimes like those that exist at a regional level in various parts of the world.
- Likewise, there is a need for more channels for regular migration, particularly for low-skilled migrants, which are the ones most affected by irregular migration.
- On this point, governments can consider circular or temporary migration schemes, provided that they are fair in granting access to human rights and that they provide a means toward permanent residence and citizenship.

On the Effects of Irregular Migration:

- Governments need a greater focus on irregular migration that prioritizes the need for protecting the most vulnerable groups, specifically irregular migrants, victims of human trafficking, women and unaccompanied children.
- Governments must close the gaps of coordination and cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination. We must also search for cooperation in information sharing internally and internationally.
- There is a need for strengthening the protection of human rights of irregular migrants: the more they are criminalized, the more vulnerable they will become.
- Available data on irregular migrants does not provide a basis for the criminalization, which often affects them.
- Governments must prosecute criminal organizations involved in trafficking and smuggling through joint efforts that involve various international and local actors.
- The majority of the delegates mentioned the regularization of irregular migrants as the main instrument to address the problem of vulnerability. There was a general consensus that deportation and criminalization are not the answers.
- In terms of public perceptions, joint communication and awareness campaigns between countries of origin, transit and destination are an important best practice to addressing the problems of discrimination and xenophobia, and a useful tool to lower the risks and vulnerabilities for the migrants.
- Governments must also remember that there is a need for national leaders to frame the public debate underlining the positive contribution of regular and irregular migrants to host societies.
- Governments need to establish joint mechanisms for international cooperation at the multi-lateral, regional and bi-lateral levels to minimize irregular migration. These must be founded on the principle of shared responsibility between countries of origin, transit and destination, and should include *inter alia* exchanges of information on human trafficking and smuggling.
- For those cases where detention of irregular migrants is necessary, there is a need to adopt a more civil and less penal approach.
- **The respect for human rights, despite their immigration status, is an absolute threshold principle.**

In conclusion, governments must continue to discuss the various challenges and aspects of this subject in future discussions at the forum. We suggest that irregular migration remains on the agenda for the Global Forum and other upcoming international conferences.

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