

Fourth Meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development
Mexico 2010

THEME CONCEPT PAPER

Partnerships for migration and human development: shared prosperity – shared responsibility

I. Introduction

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) provides a space for governments to discuss the links between migration and development in an informal, comprehensive and cooperative way. It enables policy makers and experts to debate and exchange ideas, best practices and experiences that support governments in designing effective and coherent migration and development policies. Importantly, the Forum involves civil society representatives, who also hold meetings and share their deliberations and outcomes with the states.

To date, the GFMD has successfully addressed various aspects of international migration. But there remain gaps to be filled and new perspectives to be considered, in order to achieve a more comprehensive approach to designing and implementing effective policies. The current international situation requires the GFMD to evolve into a source of ideas and possible models for governments and policy makers to address the multidimensional aspects of migration and development. For the Forum to remain an effective process, it needs to deal with the phenomenon as a whole.

Previous GFMD meetings have proven that governments can successfully discuss migration and development issues at the multilateral level without the sensitivities observed in other similar fora. To move forward, we must renew the debate on issues that have previously been neglected, because they were considered too complex for multilateral discussions. We need to revisit some concepts and break some old stereotypes. We also need to take a longer term approach and look at issues likely to shape, or be shaped by, future migration flows.

The GFMD 2010 dialogue provides an opportunity to strengthen the conceptual basis of the GFMD process and make a substantial contribution to the international debate on these matters.

This paper outlines the working themes for GFMD 2010 based on the extensive consultations Mexico undertook in late 2009/early 2010, including a survey of the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum in January/February 2010. It offers brief descriptions of the Roundtable themes to guide the preparations of the Roundtable sessions and the background papers for those sessions.

II. Mexico's vision and objectives for the GFMD 2010

Mexico proposes as the central theme of the Fourth GFMD Meeting: "**Partnerships for migration and human development¹: shared prosperity – shared responsibility**".

¹ Human development is here defined as the expansion of people's freedom to live their lives as they choose and to pursue a higher quality of life, including through migration (UNDP Human Development Report, 2009; UNGA Agenda for Development). In the context of migration and development, this has policy implications in a number of areas, including access to health, education, and decent living and working conditions.

The Chair aims to foster a debate on partnerships and synergies to address the causes, challenges and effects of migration for development; and of development for migration. *Partnerships* are defined in this context as mutually agreeable arrangements between individuals and/or groups (governments, public and private sectors, migrants, diaspora, employers, home communities, NGOs, international organizations, etc.), that can maximize the developmental benefits of migration for all. Mexico believes that building partnerships among countries of origin, transit and destination can facilitate more comprehensive, balanced policies on migration and development, and a greater willingness to share responsibility. Non-governmental actors in both fields play an important role in this.

Partnerships are also an effective means of addressing other critical migration challenges, such as those posed by irregular migration. No one can contest that orderly, safe and regular migration is preferred by countries of origin, transit and destination. However, the GFMD agenda cannot ignore the need to discuss all migration issues, including irregular migration, as part of a comprehensive approach, in partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination. Such a comprehensive approach should allow, in a broad and open manner, a common analysis of the positive and negative aspects of migration, including the issues of migrants' contribution to development in their host and origin countries and the need for mutually supportive development. At the same time, this approach allows a shared diagnosis of the best way to manage legal migration, curb irregular migration and trafficking networks and simultaneously address the need for protection of migrants in a vulnerable situation.

Mexico intends to advance an evidence-based discussion of migrants' contributions to the development of both origin and host societies. Better understanding this can ultimately change the way migrants are perceived in society. It can help promote their *human development*, and their acceptance and inclusion in host countries, thus reducing the likelihood of xenophobia and criminalization of the migrants. The new perspective of human development transcends the usual debates about the economic effects and consequences of migration; and opens a space to discuss certain issues that still need to be addressed more thoroughly, such as health, education, training and gender; and the human rights and protection of all migrants. Partnerships help to achieve institutional coherence towards more effective and longer term policies in these and related areas.

The concept of *shared prosperity* recognizes that migration has the potential to mutually benefit migrants, their families, home and host societies, employers, local and national economies, etc., in terms of personal, social and economic development. How these developmental benefits can be realized in an equitable way, particularly in times of economic crisis, is a matter of *shared responsibility*. The recognition of shared benefits can be a basis for negotiating and conducting migration flows between countries in more cooperative and mutually responsible ways than traditional unilateral migration arrangements.

Mexico proposes that, as part of a broad and comprehensive approach, the GFMD discussions also address the *root causes* of international migration. The Chair aims to ensure that the exchange of good practices and experiences leads to conclusions and recommendations that governments can translate into workable policies and programs.

Building partnerships can also facilitate the collection of adequate data and research to support coherent and effective policies and analysis of the linkages between migration and development. For example, information systems that highlight the contributions of migrants could be created,

which also inform countries of origin, transit and destination about more balanced measures to benefit from migration.

III. The Roundtables

As in previous years, and based on comments from the Friends of the Forum, there will be three Roundtables, each comprising two sessions, except in the case of RT 3, which will devote a third session to Climate Change. There will also be a separate, special session on the Future of the Forum for heads of delegation to discuss the GFMD process and future steps. The preparations for this will be dealt with separately.

Roundtable 1 - Partnerships for migration and development

Migration and development policies are a matter of national sovereignty, but unilateral actions can be counter-productive for the positive evolution of the migration and development relationship across borders. Both origin and host countries benefit from migration; and sharing responsibility for addressing it, and supporting and protecting the migrants, can optimize those mutual benefits. Building partnerships with all stakeholders can create consensus on the basis of such mutuality of benefits and responsibility, and lead to more comprehensive approaches.

The willingness to advance international cooperation in this matter across countries, and across public and private sectors, is evidenced by the very existence of the GFMD. Now may be the right time to discuss the advantages of strengthening such cooperation, define some respective responsibilities, and make more visible the valuable contribution of migration. The Roundtable will examine whether and how new forms of cooperation may be needed to meet the current and longer term challenges of fostering more regular, protective forms of migration in times of economic crisis and demographic imbalances. How may such new forms of synergy and cooperation best be negotiated and developed?

RT 1.1 Partnerships for more regular and protected migration

This session will focus on partnerships as an indispensable institutional tool for fostering more comprehensive, balanced approaches to migration and development and a consensus towards shared responsibility. Examples already exist of successful joint approaches, programs and initiatives involving governments, non-governmental agencies, migrants, private sector etc. that encourage more regular and protective forms of migration. These include bilateral and regional agreements on cross-border movements, migrants in transit, labor exchange, skills recruitment, border management, consular cooperation, etc.; but also joint strategies to better manage irregular migration. The bigger challenge may well be to identify forms of development partnerships conducive to regular and protected migration.

A selection of good practice partnerships at key points in the migration cycle can be examined for their lessons about: how to create such partnerships; how to make them work for development effects at the personal, social and economic levels; and how they are changing (or could change) public perceptions about migration in the origin and host countries. This discussion should also yield some insights into how effective partnerships can contribute to institutional coherence and through this to more effective policies.

This session will sharpen some of the earlier GFMD findings about the importance of regular migration for development by focusing on the partnership mechanisms to support regular migration. It will also complement the deliberations of RT 2.1 on joint labor, education and

health strategies for human development.

RT 1.2 Joint Strategies to address irregular migration

Irregular forms of mobility occur in various ways alongside regulated migration, both permanent and temporary (e.g. tourists, students and temporary workers). They can have significant development implications for origin and host countries, and for migrants and their families who find themselves in vulnerable situations. States have called for irregular migration to be part of a comprehensive approach to promote the well-being and human development of migrants, and protect their labor and human rights throughout the migration cycle. Regular and irregular migration represent two faces of the same coin, hence this session will complement RT 1.1. Some policy makers have recognized that the lack of regular migration opportunities, or lack of knowledge about them, can also be a cause of irregular migration.

The discussion should focus on vulnerable groups: trafficked persons, indentured labor, women and children, and families of irregular migrants in home and host countries. The majority of irregular migrants are workers, for whom it is necessary to deal with both sides of the issue: the migrant workers and the employers engaging in irregular activities. Joint approaches should be identified among all players, including the diaspora, to better understand and address the development-related causes and effects of irregular migration and the circumstances of the irregular migrants and their families. The biggest challenge may be to identify forms of development cooperation that can offer people viable alternatives to irregular migration.

The session will build on earlier GFMD discussions on irregular migration, but from the angle of partnerships or joint initiatives to better manage migration for its development effects. It will also consider the importance of this for changing perceptions about migrants in society, to reduce xenophobia and promote the well-being and human development of migrants. For this, it will be indispensable to know the real dimensions of the phenomenon, the geographical distribution, different types of irregular migration, its characteristics and appropriate policies.

Roundtable 2 - Human mobility and human development

Experts agree on the need to *unpack* the development concept in the discussion of the effects of human mobility. This would allow the debate to consider the net consequences of migration not only for the job markets and economies of origin and host countries, but also for the *human development of the migrants themselves* and the communities they belong or move to.

This Roundtable will explore some specific transnational initiatives by governments and civil society, that ensure human mobility occurs in a manner supportive of the human development of migrants, their families and home and host communities. Improving the prospects and outcomes for migrants (e.g. through labor market opportunities, health, education and training support) can enhance their integration and reintegration, and their capacities to secure the wellbeing and growth of their families and communities. Special consideration of gender-related needs and the health care and social welfare of the migrants and families abroad, as well as families left behind, can deepen the developmental effects of the migration.

The Roundtable will showcase individual and joint strategies by origin and host countries aimed at realizing the individual and mutual development benefits of migration, with special regard to human rights and gender differences. It complements Roundtable 1 and builds on earlier GFMD discussions on labor mobility and human development. It could also address some key outcomes of earlier GFMDs, such as assessing the benefits of various social protection schemes across

countries, or of reduced migration costs and risks, with a sharper focus on gender and family.

RT 2.1 Labor mobility - strategies for human development

This session will explore some key strategies for maximizing the human development of migrants in the context of cross-border labor mobility. In line with the partnership focus of the GFMD, it will look at five strategic areas for joint and complementary action by origin and host countries to expand the opportunities and capabilities of migrants, diaspora and their families:

- i)** reduce the costs and risks of migration (such as high recruitment fees or exploitation/abuse of migrants by recruiters, employers, etc.);
- ii)** education, training and skills recognition and enhancement of the migrant/diaspora and family at home and abroad;
- iii)** health care for migrants and their families;
- iv)** social welfare plans for the migrants and their families back home; and
- v)** identify barriers and facilitators to spontaneous circular migration in destination and origin countries.

These aspects affect the ability of migrants, diaspora and their families to exercise their human rights, benefit from migration and contribute to broader development efforts in the societies of their countries of destination and origin. Earlier GFMD meetings identified bilateral arrangements for temporary and circular labor migration as effective vehicles for managing cross-border labor flows to the mutual economic benefit of origin and host countries. Creating an enabling legislative framework to facilitate circular migration has also been discussed, including how different policies affect the preconditions for increased mobility. This session will re-visit these issues from the human development angle, and identify good partnership practices, such as Consular agreements, social security agreements, shared health and other insurance packages, portable welfare benefits, diaspora engagement, etc.

The session will complement the work of RT 1 on partnerships. It will also expand on earlier GFMD Roundtables on fostering regular migration, labor mobility and human development, as well as some outcomes of earlier GFMDs, such as comparing various social protection schemes across countries, or public-private sector schemes for reducing migration costs and risks.

RT 2.2 Migration, gender and family

This session spotlights two pivotal concerns in any discussion on migration and development – gender and family – which earlier GFMD meetings have mostly dealt with in a peripheral way. While they feature prominently in much of the mainstream literature on development, there has been little international discussion of the relationship between gender, family, migration and development (2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development). Yet it is in the areas of gender and family where policy makers can be most challenged on issues such as human development, human rights, equal opportunities, etc., fundamental to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. There is growing evidence that empowering female migrants and diaspora can be a critical factor for family formation, community development and poverty reduction. Similarly, the family can be a significant force for social cohesion and societal development.

Gender roles and family structures can be greatly affected by, and greatly affect, migration patterns and outcomes for development, and vice versa. For example, the changes that migration can cause to traditional family structures, or intra-family gender relations, are likely also to affect the development of the children. Similarly, the migration of males and females can have

differential impacts on the development of the family, both at home and abroad. New policy approaches need to address these challenges.

The session will demonstrate the importance of gender and family for understanding the causes and developmental consequences of migration; and how to factor them into coherent policy making. It will identify some policies and programs that work for women and families in the context of migration and development. These could include child support in host and origin countries, gender-specific education and training for emigration, integration and return home, migrant/diaspora youth identity and mobilization, gender-sensitive immigration policies, treatment of victims of trafficking and gender-based exploitation, etc. It would deepen the earlier GFMD discussions on protecting and empowering migrants, and complement RT 2.1 by approaching human development through the prisms of gender and family.

Roundtable 3. Policy and institutional coherence to address the relationship between migration and development

In all GFMD meetings, policy and institutional coherence was identified as a mainstay of the GFMD, underpinning all other themes on migration and development. In-depth discussions were held on the concept of *policy and program coherence* within government, the mechanisms required for more *coherent institutional arrangements* within government, and the need and ways to assess these concepts and arrangements. Governments also increasingly recognized the need to *link data and relevant research* with the elaboration of evidence-based and coherent policies on present and newly emerging aspects of the migration and development nexus, which will also be relevant in the context of climate change and its impact on migration and development.

Strengthened cooperation and partnerships among governments, and between governments and non-governmental experts, has become a stated objective of all efforts that aim to inform and reinforce policy and institutional coherence on migration and development and to develop more evidence-based policies.

At the same time, regional consultative processes (RCPs) on migration, and inter-regional fora were addressed in all GFMD meetings, with emphasis on coordination and coherence through informal dialogue, partnership and capacity building. While not all RCPs deal with the migration-development nexus, an increasing number of these fora are now addressing this link, and a constructive and mutually reinforcing dialogue has developed between the GFMD and these regional and inter-regional settings.

RT 3.1 Assessing the impact of migration on economic and social development, and addressing its cause-effect relationship

It is broadly acknowledged that migration policies, even when aimed at boosting development, cannot by themselves address underdevelopment. At the same time, development policies that do not account for migration can be incomplete in their focus on causes and effects of development.

Both issues - addressing the development-related causes of migration and analysing the contribution of migration to development - need to be taken further through coherent policies that can contribute to a comprehensive discussion of the complex interplay between migration and development. Indicators are needed to assess the impacts of policies and practices that link migration and development, the effects of migration on economic and social development in host and origin countries, the development effects of integration and reintegration of migrants, and the

continued review of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and their link with migration.

This session takes account of the wish of governments to address both a comprehensive approach to causes and effects of migration on development and how to assess the specific impacts of migration on the economic and social development of host and origin countries.

The session will build on earlier GFMD conclusions on priority data and research findings that support greater policy coherence; and will also take stock of the current status and development of the Migration Profiles, as recommended in the Athens GFMD. During the preparatory process and in parallel with the elaboration of the session background paper, it is also envisaged to carry out a further Informal Inquiry on policy and institutional coherence with interested GFMD participating states. The findings would be presented at the Mexico GFMD. The preparation of the session will benefit from the activities of the ad-hoc Working Group on Policy Coherence, Data and Research, including a preparatory workshop on impact assessments and related indicators, involving government experts, GMG agencies and civil society experts.

RT 3.2 Assessing the relevance and impact of climate change on migration and development

Policy coherence by governments and other actors is also relevant in the context of climate change and its impact on migration and development. Despite the significant number of academic studies on this increasingly important topic, little if any discussion has occurred between states and other actors on the relationship between climate change, migration and development. This session will initiate a dialogue on this by posing such questions as: What are the key issues for development raised by the impact of climate change on migration; and can migration be considered as a form of adaptation? Which partnerships can be created between governments and other actors to assess the effects of climate change on human mobility, and to address the possible migration flows resulting from climate change?

The session would list the key issues and related academic findings that address environmentally-induced migration, and share already existing knowledge on the subject, including National Adaptation Plans for Action (NAPAs) on climate change and related effects on migration and development. An evidence-based exchange on this issue will constitute a useful first step for GFMD participating governments to begin discussing this complex matter in an informal setting.

RT 3.3 How can RCPs and Inter-regional fora best include the migration and development nexus?

In line with previous GFMD meetings and a specific recommendation of the Athens GFMD, this session would again review activities and progress made by regional and inter-regional processes and fora in linking migration and development concerns more productively. This would include a discussion on how RCPs and inter-regional fora can best incorporate the migration and development nexus in their agendas, how these activities can be relevant for the GFMD and how conclusions reached at the GFMD meeting can also feed into regional and inter-regional processes. Interested governments would provide updates on regional activities and discuss the conclusions and findings of the 2009 assessment report on RCPs.