



## **Background Paper**

(Original version: English)

### **Roundtable 3 -Policy and Institutional Coherence to Address the Relationship between Migration and Development**

#### ***Roundtable Session 3.3: How Can Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) and Inter-Regional Fora (IRF) Best Include the Migration and Development Nexus?***

**Co-Chairs of RT 3.3:** Governments of Indonesia, Morocco and Spain

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This paper has been drafted by Ms Maureen Achieng and other colleagues from IOM, in close consultation with the RT 3 Coordinator Dr. Rolph K. Jenny and with input provided by the Session 3.3 co-chairs Indonesia, Morocco and Spain. Input and comments were offered throughout by the 3.3 government team. The aim of the paper is to inform and facilitate the discussion of Roundtable session 3.3 during the Mexico GFMD meeting in November 2010. It is not exhaustive in its treatment of the 3.3 session theme and does not necessarily reflect the views of the GFMD organizers or the governments involved in the GFMD process.

## **1. Introduction**

This paper forms the basis for the preparations and discussions around Roundtable (RT) 3.3 of the Fourth Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in November 2010 in Mexico. The paper seeks to build on the outcomes of the deliberations of the three previous GFMD meetings on the potential of Regional Consultative Processes on migration (RCPs) and Inter-Regional Fora (IRFs) to productively explore the relationship between migration and development and to further assess how these processes can best include the migration and development nexus in their agendas.

In broad terms, the paper does the following:

- 1) Recalls the salient points from previous GFMD discussions on the theme of RCPs and IRFs and their contributions to date to migration and development deliberations.
- 2) Looks at the possible contribution of RCPs and IRFs to the GFMD and vice-versa, through the prism of balanced and comprehensive capacity at the national level.
- 3) Suggests a new paradigm for how we view RCPs and IRFs and their contribution to the migration and development nexus, including in the context of enhanced policy and institutional coherence.
- 4) Reviews developments in selected RCPs and IRFs following the Third GFMD meeting, particularly those that were informed by its outcomes. These developments may, in turn, inform this Fourth GFMD meeting.
- 5) Suggests possible areas of relevance for the migration-development nexus that could potentially enhance the development outcomes of RCPs and migration-focussed dialogue in IRFs.

## **2. Objectives**

RT 3.3 seeks to further reflect on RCPs and IRFs so as to discuss the role, both actual and potential, that these fora can play in positively affecting migration and development discourse and action at national and regional levels.

## **3. Background**

Much like the GFMD, RCPs are informal State-led and State-owned, non-binding processes for dialogue on a range of migration issues that are determined by them at the point of their founding or as determined by the ever-changing migration landscape. In contrast, IRFs, set up in an inter-regional context, have a more formal character and address directly the migration and development nexus.<sup>1</sup>

Both RCPs and IRFs involve repeated meetings of States dedicated to discussing migration and related issues, and will vary greatly in their composition, history, purpose and organizational frameworks. Their role in providing critical mechanisms for inter-State dialogue and cooperation on migration issues is increasingly recognized, particularly as migration has emerged from being an issue addressed primarily as a matter of national sovereignty to one

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<sup>1</sup> It is increasingly difficult to distinguish clearly between RCPs and IRFs, not least because some RCPs, such as the Bali Process and the Colombo Process, also involve countries from different regions. The difference lies mainly in the thematic focus and degree of formality: IRFs focus directly on the development implications of migration and are of a more formal nature. The Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development (Rabat Follow-up) can thus be considered a typical IRF. The July 2009 Bangkok meeting involved 14 RCPs, and did not include IRFs.

which is now increasingly understood to require enhanced inter-State dialogue and cooperation and a broader thematic approach.

#### 4. Previous GFMD Deliberations on the Role of RCPs and IRFs

Starting with the Brussels GFMD in 2007 through to the Athens GFMD in 2009, the important role that RCPs and IRFs play in terms of enhancing migration discourse has been discussed at some length, resulting in a broad understanding of how RCPs and IRFs are structured and what role they can or could play.

The **Brussels GFMD** broadened the understanding of how RCPs are structured and how, if at all, they deal with issues relating to the migration and development nexus. It laid out the **specific factors that have a bearing on whether or not migration and development issues form part of the agenda of an RCP**, outlining, among others, issues such as funding; breadth of ministerial representation; the predominance of developing as opposed to developed country States; and the extent of their concern with policy coherence issues.

The **Manila GFMD** reiterated the notion of State ownership and leadership of RCPs. It also addressed in greater depth the **more recent inter-regional fora and initiatives (the IRFs) and those regional economic institutions** that deal to an increasing extent with migration and development issues. These discussions furthered the understanding on regional and inter-regional **practices that have proven effective in promoting inter-State dialogue on migration**, especially as they relate to migration and development. This was followed by a detailed examination of specific initiatives undertaken by RCP and IRF dialogues on migration, and included the sharing of information on new RCPs and IRFs that sprouted since the Brussels GFMD. The dialogues as well as the extensive range of inter-State cooperation being undertaken across all the five major world regions -the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Africa, the Middle East and Europe- were also briefly reviewed, while recognizing that immense policy challenges remain. Such challenges include the **need for greater coherence among the various regional and inter-regional dialogue fora**; the need for more **effective implementation of outcomes**; and the need for better impact **assessment**.

Based on the discussions at the preceding GFMD meetings, and in the spirit of building upon rather than merely echoing earlier discussions, the **Athens GFMD** outlined **key developments in this domain that took place following the first two GFMDs**: These developments include: (1) the convening of the first ever global meeting of RCPs since the GFMD began, held in Bangkok in June 2009; (2) a comprehensive study on the impact of RCPs on migration governance; and (3) key meetings and other developments within the Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development in November 2008 and its outcome (a Three-Year Cooperation Programme); the South American Conference on Migration (SACM); the Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development (FIBEMYD); the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (The Colombo Process); Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia (The Abu Dhabi Dialogue); the Bali Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (The Bali Process); and the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue (MTM).

There is arguably an improved understanding today of RCPs and IRFs for dialogue and cooperation on migration-related themes, thanks in part to the decision of the first three GFMD meetings to focus on them. The GFMD debate contributed to a better understanding of the migration and development nexus and had a certain effect on how the agendas of RCPs and IRFs have progressively evolved over recent years.

A case in point, and of particular relevance for this paper, is the bolder *whole-of-government* approach to their meetings with a wider range of ministries represented at more RCP and IRF

meetings than in their initial stages of existence, which invariably puts onto their agendas issues such as the impact of migration on development that might otherwise not have been there. GFMD's constant focus on policy and institutional coherence on migration and development has contributed to this approach.

Several RCPs and IRFs are now holding meetings on the specific theme of migration and development to enable them to prepare for their participation at the GFMD.

As with its predecessors, the challenge for the Puerto Vallarta GFMD will be to build on and meaningfully advance discussion on this important theme.

## 5. Key Developments post-Athens GFMD<sup>2</sup>

One trend line is clear: Inter-State dialogue and cooperation on migration at the regional and inter-regional levels is flourishing. New dialogues on themes relating to migration continue to emerge, notably the Europe-Latin America and the Caribbean Dialogue (EU-ALC).

The vitality of many existing dialogues is continuously being reaffirmed in their decisions on the way forward. Further, several of these existing dialogues are broadening in their substantive/thematic coverage and in their depth of activity. Drawing on outcomes of the deliberations at the Athens GFMD, and equally informed by the evolution of migration and development discussions within their respective regions, several RCPs and inter-regional dialogue fora have stepped up dialogue and action on this aspect of migration.

It is also worth noting that a few countries that currently do not belong to any RCP -such as some in Central Africa, the Caribbean and the Middle East- are currently discussing the possibility of the creation of an RCP that could enable them to more effectively address migration issues of common concern to them.

## 6. Advancing the Discussion at Puerto Vallarta

It is important to establish that migration and development issues are part and parcel of any migration management system, rather than issues apart as their handling sometimes might suggest. Migration, being the multi-faceted issue that it is, demands a comprehensive approach at national, regional and international levels.

There is clearly, even if to varying degrees, a **dearth of capacity at national, and consequently, regional and global levels**. This lack of capacity -including the absence of an understanding of migration in all its complexity- is the reason for the frequently compartmentalized approach that characterises government approaches to migration issues, and hence the add-on manner in which the question of migration and development is approached.

Against this background, unless capacity building needs in the domain of migration management<sup>3</sup> at the national level are addressed, it will be difficult for any government or

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<sup>2</sup> More detailed information on some of these developments is outlined in the Annex to this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Capacity building in the context of migration management should be understood as the process of strengthening the knowledge, abilities, skills, resources, structures and processes that States and institutions need in order to achieve their goals effectively and sustainably, and to adapt to change. More specifically, capacity building in migration management includes as key components: more timely and accurate migration and labour market data; assistance in defining national migration policy goals and priorities; training of migration officials; development of an effective and equitable legal framework; coherent administrative structures; consultation mechanisms between government and other national stakeholders; and international cooperation. *The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change*, IOM World Migration Report 2010 (forthcoming).

society to have a comprehensive and balanced approach to migration that examines the phenomenon in all its complexity, including issues that directly relate to migration and development.

Addressing capacity building needs at national level will also invariably lead to **more policy and institutional coherence for a ‘whole-of-government’ approach** to migration and development, thereby ensuring a more consistent focus on the link between these two areas.

Moreover, national governments are the building blocks for RCPs and IRFs. **Weak capacity in this area of governance at national level translates into the same weak capacity at the RCP and IRF levels.** Consequently, the aspiration of having RCPs and IRFs take full account of the migration and development nexus in their deliberations implies first and foremost building capacity of the governments which constitute them.

Evidently, there is a two-way relationship between the level of individual States and the level of RCPs and IRFs. Firstly, States set the agenda of RCPs and IRFs. Secondly, however, States’ very participation in these fora also influences their thinking and the migration priorities that they establish, and, thereby, the issues they choose to address at regional and other levels.

While RCPs and IRFs are State-led fora and their agendas therefore determined by the States that lead and own them, the stronger and better-established they are, the better they will evolve and adapt to changing migration concerns. This is based on new knowledge gained from interaction amongst its members, between RCPs and inter-regional fora, and with such global fora as the GFMD.

This kind of interaction has the potential to lead to the **inclusion in deliberations by RCPs of issues directly touching on the migration and development nexus even if this had not been a declared thematic priority at the outset.** It is therefore crucial, beyond the concern relating to enhanced capacity and greater policy coherence at the national level, that RCPs are strengthened so as to enable them to be the dynamic regional fora for comprehensive exchange and sharing of experiences they seek to be. To the extent possible, knowledge and tools could be made available for RCPs to make well-informed decisions as to how, if at all, migration and development issues might be incorporated into their agendas.

A better understanding of certain issues would probably result in greater focus by RCPs in their deliberations, including on such questions as:

- **the role that genuine partnership and shared responsibility among States can play;**
- **the potential of well-managed migration to contribute to the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);**
- **the benefits that could accrue to States from strengthened dialogue and cooperation with diaspora groups; and**
- **measures to address ‘brain drain’ and ‘brain circulation’ in a context of development.**

## **7. RCPs, IRFs and the migration and development nexus: a new understanding**

Based on the findings of an assessment of RCPs commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in 2009<sup>4</sup>, the impact of RCPs on migration governance is now understood in a fundamentally new way. The study highlighted that RCPs cannot be evaluated solely in terms of their impact at national level (i.e. policies, laws and practice) where their function is a complementary rather than determinative one. Instead, the contributions of RCPs are more

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<sup>4</sup> Hansen, R (2010) *An Assessment of Principal Regional Consultative Processes on Migration*. IOM Migration Research Series No. 38. Available from [www.iom.int/rcp](http://www.iom.int/rcp)

wide-ranging and complex and relate to their roles in: i) building trust between States and enhancing understanding of migration issues, **including the migration and development nexus**; ii) creating consensus and setting in motion a convergence of positions on migration; and, lastly, iii) building capacity and influencing changes in institutional arrangements, laws, policies and practice in the area of migration management at national and regional levels.

Deliberations on the potential role of RCPs in advancing the debate on migration and development also often overlook the critical role that RCPs already play in improving **the process** of migration and, consequently, its development outcomes.

To advance discussion on this theme, three key points warrant highlighting:

- a) All RCPs and IRFs focus on some facet or other of migration. By their very existence and irrespective of their chosen primary thematic focus, RCPs and IRFs are thus contributing to new thinking and new ways of addressing migration with a view to enhancing its potentially positive outcomes for the migrants themselves, and for the origin and destination countries, and limiting its (potential) negative effects. It is this context that brings to the fore many of the issues that have become the prime focus of discussions on migration and development, such as labour migration and the need for protecting the rights of migrants and reducing upfront costs; ensuring integrity in the recruitment process; facilitating the productive use of remittances; the need to better leverage diaspora contributions, and others.
- b) Well-managed migration regimes are premised on a comprehensive approach that brings in all relevant actors and perspectives to ensure that migration is considered in its entirety, enabling it to enhance developmental outcomes for individuals and societies.
- c) RCPs and IRFs are influenced by its members and vice versa, thereby informing migration policy and action at national levels. Experience to date suggests, as the above-mentioned RCPs study illustrates, that a State's participation in an RCP and IRF is often resulting in improvement in communication and coordination among government agencies at the national level and a common understanding and definition of key concepts, leading to enhanced capacity and policy coherence at national level. The result is improved migration governance, which is in and of itself a critical factor in the context of a discussion on development.

Consequently, RCPs and IRFs, whatever aspect of migration they choose to focus on, can positively affect the migration and development relationship.

## 8. Questions to Guide the Discussion

1. How can a **“whole-of-government” approach** to migration management be achieved? What kinds of **capacities, institutional mechanisms and coordination and communication strategies** are needed at the level of individual governments to effectively participate in RCPs and IRFs? What kinds of capacities and mechanisms are required to promote a better understanding of the migration and development nexus and its inclusion in RCP agendas?
2. What **knowledge, data and tools** (for example, Migration Profiles at regional/sub-regional level) do RCPs and IRFs need most in order to make well-informed decisions on to how to incorporate migration and development issues in their agendas? What role is there for the GFMD in terms of supporting the development and dissemination of the needed knowledge and tools?

3. How important has **cross-fertilization** among and between RCPs and IRFs been, for example in **introducing migration and development-specific issues to their agendas**, or in strengthening cooperation on migration and development between countries of origin, transit and destination?
4. How could **feedbacks** between RCPs and IRFs, on the one hand, and the GFMD, on the other hand, be enhanced? For example, could a process be envisaged by which interested **RCPs and IRFs take up a specific topic defined at a GFMD meeting** and include it in their annual agendas, in addition to their own regional areas of focus?
5. What actions are necessary to **support countries not currently member of any RCP** in joining such a process, or facilitate the creation of new RCPs to address the migration issues of concern to them? How might the GFMD support these actions?

#### 9. Possible Outcomes of the Roundtable Session Discussion

- In addition to the continuing focus for enhanced **capacity** and strengthened **policy and institutional coherence** in migration systems of both developing and developed countries, more meaningful and systematic interaction and exchange between and among RCPs and IRFs may, in some cases, require a strengthening of capacities at regional level.
- In some instances, there may be a need for RCPs and IRFs to **prioritise their themes** and agendas, in order to avoid duplication of efforts.
- RCPs and IRFs may wish to **take forward a specific migration and development topic** addressed by the GFMD and assess its implications and effects at the regional and inter-regional levels.
- As the reflection on how RCPs and IRFs might better address issues relating to migration and development continues in the coming years, the **State-led yet inclusive nature** of these groupings needs to be re-affirmed and supported, including by the inter-governmental agencies and experts who help underpin their work.
- Recalling the conclusions of the Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of RCPs held in Bangkok, Thailand in June 2009 and presented at the Athens GFMD, a **follow-up meeting of RCPs and IRFs** could be envisioned for 2011. This could serve to promote greater exchange and cross-fertilization among them, informed by and informing further development of the GFMD.

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