

## Summary Note

### **From Cairo to Addis: Migration, labour mobility and the renewed global partnership for sustainable development**

Side event to the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the  
Commission on Population and Development  
and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Drafting Session of the Outcome Document for the Third International Conference on  
Financing for Development

United Nations  
16 April, 2015, 1.15-2.45 pm

The side-event was co-convened by the Troika of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in partnership with the Global Migration Group (GMG) and the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration (SRSG). The side event was attended by some 70 delegates from governments, international organisations and civil society attending the negotiations on the outcome document for the Third Conference on Financing for Development as well as the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Population and Development.

Panelists included Director-General, Ambassador Mehmet Samsar, representing the Turkish Chair of the GFMD (opening remarks), Ambassador A.K. Abdul Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Ambassador Y. Halit Çevik, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, Ambassador Per Thöresson, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, Mr. Vinicius Pinheiro, Deputy Director of International Labour Office (ILO) in New York and Mr. Gregory Maniatis, Senior Advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration (closing remarks).

The key note address was delivered by Michael Clemens, Senior Fellow, Centre for Global Development, Washington DC. The event was moderated by Mr Bela Hovy, Chief of Migration Section, Population Division, UNDESA.

Mr. Hovy welcomed the panelists, the key note speaker and all participants. In referring to the [concept note](#), he explained that the purpose of the side event was to discuss the role of migration in generating resources for development and in boosting disposable incomes beyond remittances as well as to inform the intergovernmental negotiations on the outcome documents for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) (Addis, July 2015) and for Summit on the post-2015 agenda (New York, September 2015). In particular, the side event aimed at recognizing the value of facilitating labour mobility for development, including by expanding regular channels of migration.

In his [key note address](#), Mr. Clemens pointed out the benefits of migration for the world, for people and for countries. With regard to the global benefits of migration, he observed that potential gains from a modest reduction in barriers to labour movement (USD 4.2 trillion) far outpaced the gains achieved from eliminating all remaining barriers to trade and capital flows (USD 2.8 trillion). With regard to benefits for people, he noted that migration is often the most effective path to move out of poverty. For instance, of all Haitian born people living above the poverty line, 82 percent resided abroad while only 18 per cent lived in Haiti. In terms of benefits to countries, he presented research demonstrating the role of migrant and diaspora communities in the transfer of technology, in foreign direct investment, and in trade flows. Further, he presented examples of "social remittances" whereby returning migrants bring home norms and values from host countries.

Ambassador Y. Halit Çevik, explained how Turkey had moved from a net emigration to a net immigration country. He recalled that migration was inherent to every society. Unduly restricting the outflow of skilled workers ("brain drain") was therefore futile. Instead governments should plan for migration and encourage the return of migrants. Ambassador Samsar noted that one of the priorities of

the Turkish Chairmanship of the GFMD was to promote the inclusion of migration in the post-2015 development agenda. He highlighted the role of migration in matching labour demand and supply, in contributing to productivity particularly in countries of destination, in promoting bilateral trade, investments and transfer of know-how, and in generating remittance transfers. Ambassador Samsar also presented the priorities of the Turkish Chair of the GFMD. He called for expanding avenues for regular migration, for reducing the costs of recruiting migrant labour, and for recognising skills and qualifications as key elements for FfD and the post-2015 development agenda.

Ambassador Thöresson shared the migration policy of Sweden, which was based on demand-driven labour immigration, whereby employers, not the Government, took the lead in hiring foreign workers. Sweden also promoted the role of international migrants as conduits of trade. Recently, Sweden had welcomed many asylum-seekers, in particular from the Syrian Arab Republic. Ambassador Thöresson recalled that including migration in the post-2015 development agenda was one of the key recommendations of the GFMD Forum meeting, held in Stockholm in May 2014. As such, this [recommendation had been communicated to the Secretary-General](#). Other recommendations from the GFMD that Ambassador Thöresson said ought to be incorporated in the post-2015 agenda and the FfD included mainstreaming migration into national development planning, the need for fair and ethical recruitment of migrant workers, and the potential of financial inclusion for families receiving remittances.

Ambassador Momen observed that remittances, which constituted 13 per cent of GDP, had contributed significantly to lifting living standards in Bangladesh. He emphasized that remittances were private funds that should not be considered a substitute for official development assistance (ODA), a point which was raised by several participants. He further shared positive experiences of entering into bilateral agreements to reduce recruitment fees and to improve the rights of migrants. He pointed to the need to reduce the costs of migration and of transferring remittances as well as to strengthen the governance of migration to promote migration that is safe, fair and more beneficial. In conclusion, Ambassador Momen noted that migration with dignity should be included in the declaration and the means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda as well as in the FfD outcome document.

Mr. Pinheiro noted that the ILO was pleased that the proposed sustainable development goals of the post-2015 development agenda included migration-related targets on decent work and on reducing inequality. Mr Pinheiro called for cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, including governments, employers and trade unions in implementing the post-2015 development agenda and in this regard recalled the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration as a rights-based approach to labour migration. He reiterated that the developmental contribution of migration was far greater than remittances and urged participants to also look at the reduction of recruitment costs, the portability of social security and the promotion of skills recognition. In response to a question on how to monitor the rights of migrants, ILO suggested that this can be done by monitoring the implementation of ratified conventions.

During the discussion, participants focused on the need to manage irregular migration and to protect the rights of migrants, the time lag between investing in migration and in benefiting from migration, the importance of internal migration for national development, the role of migration in landlocked countries, the brain-drain, and the important distinction between migrant remittances and ODA.

Mr. Maniatis, in wrapping up the event, pointed to challenge in countries of destination, where migration and migrants were often perceived as negative. He inquired why it was so difficult to make the point that migration was overwhelmingly positive, given the all the evidence to this effect. He expressed the hope that by including migration in the post-2015 development agenda, challenges of migration could be addressed.

-----