

SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE GFMD

Workshop on Migration Profiles: Developing Evidence-Based Migration and Development Policies

New York, 30 June 2011

Organized and hosted by: Government of Switzerland, as the Chair of the 2011 GFMD

Co-Chaired by: Governments of Argentina, Ghana and Moldova

In Collaboration with: IOM, UNITAR, UNFPA and the MacArthur Foundation

Supported by: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, MacArthur Foundation

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Rapporteur: IOM

Participants: Permanent Missions, Government Ministries, Regional Organizations, International Organizations, UN Secretariat, UN Funds and Agencies, Civil Society

Total number of participants: 60

1. Introduction and Summary

The first-ever thematic international workshop on ‘Migration Profiles: Developing evidence-based Migration and Development policies’, was held within the framework of the Swiss-Government chaired Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) 2011, and the regular Migration and Development Series, convened by IOM, UNITAR and UNFPA, with the support of the MacArthur Foundation, in New York for Government delegates, UN and other international organizations, civil society organizations and relevant partners. This workshop, Co-Chaired by the governments of Argentina, Ghana and Moldova, utilized the format of a small, focused and action-oriented meeting in support of the Chair’s flagship theme ‘Taking action on Migration and Development – Coherence, Capacity and Cooperation’. As a critical tool for gathering and analyzing data on migration as well as building governmental institutional capacity in this arena, this workshop on Migration Profiles (MP) brought to a new level the work of the GFMD Ad-hoc Working Group on Policy Coherence, Data and Research (WG), which focuses on processes and tools that can promote an evidence-based approach to policy-making.

The Migration Profiles concept, first introduced by the European Commission in 2005, has evolved in recent years into both a process and a tool to promote an evidence-based approach to policy-making as well as policy coherence on migration and development. Governments today identify Migration Profiles as a key tool for such policies, as suggested initially at the 2010 GFMD in Puerto Vallarta and in the expert GFMD WG June 2010 seminar in Vienna, Austria. The WG has consistently supported the conceptual development and implementation of Migration Profiles, while specialist agencies have worked directly with governments to assist them in their efforts to develop and maintain national MPs.

The overall objective of this seminar was to highlight the importance of data and research for evidence-based policy making and explore Migration Profiles as a capacity building tool for strategic policy planning.

This report covers the key issues and outcomes of the workshop, with particular reference to the panel discussions and conclusions drawn by the participants.

2. Key issues and outcomes of the Workshop

The governmental presenters at the international workshop on ‘Migration Profiles: Developing Evidence-based Migration and Development Policies’ focused on their countries’ experience of preparing a Migration Profile, common challenges and ways to improve the process. It offered an opportunity for policy-makers from around the world to raise awareness, develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of the process and suggest improvements to this exercise.

Governments, including Argentina, Ghana and Moldova, presented comprehensive reports on the importance of data and research for more evidence-based policy making. Their presentations emphasized the importance of national level inter-ministerial cooperation to gather and verify data collected from several disparate administrative sources and the need for a process of compilation and analysis. The experience of Moldova and Ghana highlighted that the establishment of a **Technical Working Group (TWG)** within the government to assist in the development and updating of its Migration Profile was crucial, while Argentina relied heavily on existing institutions and cooperation mechanisms. All noted significant challenges in information collection, sharing and cooperation across ministries. Migration-relevant data is gathered by several different ministries in each government according to administratively-defined criteria that did not take into account or foresee its use for other analytical purposes. Consequently, even within the same government, there is often limited comparability of data and even sometimes differing definitions of key terms based on different legislative mandates.

The **national ownership** of such exercises, both for data and policy development, is an important element of a successful undertaking. The development of Extended Migration Profiles – which go beyond providing a static snapshot of migration dynamics in a given country to creating a dynamic inter-ministerial process and on-going capacity to develop and update the MP – is a welcome development that ensures national ownership. While MPs are equally relevant for developing and developed countries, developing countries may continue to need the assistance of expert agencies to backstop their MP efforts.

The participants uniformly underscored the significance of the exercise in terms of understanding the needs of migrants and enhancing the capacity of mechanisms to provide detailed information for coherent governmental policy-making. The representative of the Philippines shared the experience with the ongoing Migration Profile exercise and highlighted its importance in enhancing the ability of the government to influence the scale of migration and channel remittances into development.

The Migration Profiles exercise provides a framework for aggregating in a structured and systematic manner existing data and information from international, national and regional sources. The issue of **comparability** of such data at the international and regional levels was raised by several participants, including representatives of international organizations and civil society. At the country level, assistance of technical agencies can be critical for governmental authorities, particularly in developing countries.

Panelists and participants also stressed that Migration Profiles are a **capacity building tool** to promote policy development and policy coherence. Governments, including from Brazil, Azerbaijan and Vietnam, outlined how Migration Profiles are affecting the development of or already being used as **national plans for migration policy**. In Azerbaijan, for instance, the Migration Profile helps in centralizing dispersed data to lead to good evidenced-based policy making. The hope of a better home for data was also expressed by Vietnam. A current IOM/Government of Vietnam project is developing a Migration Profile together with corresponding policy initiatives to capitalize on the country's extensive diaspora as well as to develop further protection initiatives for vulnerable migrants. Of particular interest was Vietnam's suggestion to make data available online, enabling Migration Profiles to be dynamic.

Migration Profiles need to be both a product and a process in order to serve as a capacity building tool in promoting policy development and policy coherence. At the national level, data needs to be shared and government ministries need to work together to facilitate a common response to migration. Similarly, Migration Profiles created by or with the assistance of several different international agencies could usefully be made accessible in one place to create not only national coherence on migration data but also to support regional and global policy making.

While country profiles address migration through the lens of a single state's borders, some speakers raised the need for data from other countries, for example to facilitate diaspora engagement in fostering development. The Philippines, for instance, offers pre-departure programs through which it is able to assess the size and characteristics of its outgoing population. This includes the ability to track expatriate population figures, which is particularly helpful in times of crisis. Moldova integrates diaspora planning in its national policies and carries out programs to attract their return. Yet, a host country's migration data is not always accessible by the origin country. Participants noted that this would be useful in times of crisis as well as in regional cooperation initiatives, for example through some of the Regional Consultative Processes on migration that bring together origin, transit and destination countries.

Governments are increasingly putting migration high on their policy agendas, both at national level and in an inter-state cooperation context, with the growth and development of Regional Consultative Processes on migration around the world testifying to this growing importance. Migration Profiles in this context become a key tool in promoting policy coherence by fostering close cooperation at the national level across ministries, and by establishing a mechanism to engage the expertise and views of academia,

international organizations, and civil society to contribute to data compilation, analysis and policy development.

Regional cooperation proved to be a crucial component for both Moldova and Argentina, both in enhancing understanding and in creating more coherent policies. For example, Argentina highlighted that regional cooperation resulted in a more effective policy for migrants coming from the region, providing them with the same level of social rights.

Outcomes:

1. Participants welcomed the development of **core comparable indicators** to be used in Migration Profiles by the Global Migration Group (GMG). These comparable indicators would include statistical data as well as information on a country's human development index and human rights instrument ratifications, consistent with international standards and definitions.
2. Migration Profiles should be **both a process and a product**; a balanced approach in the use of the Migration Profiles would help keep it as a realistic and useful tool for policy-makers.
3. The migration data available to a government may not reflect the actual amount of data that is being processed in its various administrative bodies. Having access to such data is imperative. There needs to be coherence and cooperation at the national level when it comes to migration and migration data; Technical Working Groups bringing together various ministries as well as a mechanism to consult with more actors, such as civil society organizations and academia, in the creation of Migration Profiles would help ensure that relevant areas are captured.
4. Indicators could be expanded to reflect internal migration.
5. Bilateral arrangements may facilitate data sharing especially in regard to ascertaining data on populations abroad.
6. One of the recommendations from the Mexico GFMD 2010 called for regional/sub-regional cooperation and information exchange. In this regard, regional Migration Profiles can help inform national Migration Profiles and also foster inter-state cooperation, particularly between origin and destination countries.
7. Because Migration Profiles are produced by different entities, it would be helpful to make this information accessible to all actors in a central, universally accessible place, possibly through the GMG or through the GFMD Platform for Partnerships.

3. Conclusion

Clear messages came out of this first Migration Profiles workshop. First, Migration Profiles are a useful tool for policy makers. Comprehensive MPs provide a one-stop-shop for designing and implementing evidence-based migration policies. Furthermore, they serve as a vehicle to mainstream migration policy into development planning. If they are updated on a regular basis, Migration Profiles can also contribute to monitoring and

evaluation, enabling governments to understand better how migration and migration programmes impact on development over time.

Second, it is thus no surprise that their acceptance is increasing amongst governments as well as civil society. While initially there was some skepticism about the motives behind this EC-initiated endeavor, governments around the world and their civil society partners consistently now see the value to national authorities of MPs and an inclusive process to develop and sustain them. This provides the necessary impetus and backing to support the further development of extended Migration Profiles, with the support at the country level, particularly for developing countries.

Third, a way forward for Migration Profiles needs to include consideration of comparability through, for example, inclusion of a GMG-generated annex with internationally-recognized and available data. The conclusions of this workshop strongly underlined this.

Finally, concrete steps for policy makers that build on the outcomes of this workshop could include support for the development of regional Migration Profiles to complement national MPs, including in the context of existing Regional Consultative Processes on migration.