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**MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN THE
EVOLVING GLOBAL ECONOMY**

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1. To date, the international community's globalization efforts have been focused on facilitating the movement of capital, goods and services, rather than people. Barriers to human mobility have been identified as a continuing and considerable impediment to economic gains that are expected to outstrip gains from further liberalization in other sectors and that would benefit developing and developed economies alike. Yet the international community has been slow to liberalize the movement of people, not least because, as States seek to regulate and facilitate legitimate entry, they are acutely aware of the need to maintain social cohesion, prevent and reduce irregular migration, and protect themselves from the threats of international terrorism and criminality.¹

2. Despite the barriers that exist to the movement of people, human mobility has been and continues to be unavoidably stimulated by the economic and social integration processes of globalization.² It remains the sovereign right of each State to determine which non-nationals enter and remain on its territory, for what purpose, and under what conditions. Thus, **States need to be able to manage migration effectively** in order to maximize the potential benefits flowing from exchanges of skills and talents in a globally interconnected economy. This is equally so for temporary and permanent migration, for low, middle and highly skilled migrants, and at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels. More often than not, migration management involves cooperation with other States and non-State stakeholders for optimal effectiveness.

Migration today

3. Virtually every country in the world is now simultaneously, albeit to varying extents, a country of origin, transit and destination. Migrants hail from more countries and arrive in more locations around the globe, contrary to the common misperception that migration flows nearly exclusively from developing to developed countries. In addition, migratory behaviour is increasingly complex and diverse. Compared to the past, when migration tended to be unidirectional and permanent, many more migrants now choose shorter-term movement, circular movement between two countries, or movement to multiple countries. Return migration to the country of origin is also more frequent.

4. Today, more and more individuals consider the decision to migrate as a viable life choice. Given today's advanced communications and transportation technology, potential migrants find that possibilities for networking, sharing knowledge and identifying opportunities are almost unlimited.

5. In addition, current socio-economic dynamics tend to stimulate migration, particularly migration for employment reasons. Wage and income disparities across and within geographic regions, global demographic imbalances (reflected in growing populations in developing countries and aging and shrinking populations in developed countries), and labour market disparities resulting partly from these demographic imbalances are three of the primary factors driving contemporary migration.

¹ IOM, *World Migration Report 2008*, Chapter 11 (publication forthcoming).

² *Ibid.*, Chapter 1.

The value of effective migration management

6. As discussed at recent international events devoted to migration and development, including the United Nations General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development³ and the Brussels Global Forum on Migration and Development,⁴ migration and its management are intrinsically linked to the welfare of individual migrants and the development of areas of origin and destination.

7. Lack of effective migration management does not stop the movement of people, but it does seriously limit the ability of societies and the global community to realize migration's potential benefits, and exposes them to significant potential negative effects. Inadequate management can fuel irregular migration, the exploitation of migrant workers and "brain drain and waste". It may also result in lost opportunities for the improvement of individual livelihoods and economic growth. Without proper planning, countries of origin cannot take full advantage of possibilities for employment for their nationals abroad and the valuable contributions that returning migrants can bring. In addition, social cohesion in countries of destination can be eroded in the absence of measures to manage the relationship between migrants and the host society and to promote harmonious co-existence and mutual adaptation and accommodation.

Principal policy issues and challenges

8. During the last three decades of the 20th century, the attention of migration policymakers in many regions was focused primarily on issues relating to asylum and irregular migration – a response to a long succession of crises around the world leading to the movement of people. Yet the predominance of these issues left little opportunity for the consideration of broader, more comprehensive approaches to migration management.

9. The early 21st century has seen a shift in policy perspective towards broader awareness of the complex nature and prevalence of migration. This shift can be attributed, at least in part, to declines in claims for asylum and the increasing realization that addressing separate migration issues in isolation is not particularly effective. However, perhaps the greatest driver behind this shift is the growing recognition of the beneficial economic impact of orderly labour migration on countries of origin and destination and its human development potential for individual migrants and their families.⁵

10. In most cases, the institutional structures at national, bilateral, regional and global level have yet to evolve at the pace required to manage temporary, circular and permanent labour migration necessary to meet the employment-related mobility needs of the evolving global economy and in a fashion consistent with legitimate national needs to maintain security, social services and social cohesion and with the need to ensure protection of the human rights and well-being of migrants. In the context of globalization and new migration patterns and behaviour, policymakers in both developed and developing countries face a number of key challenges in developing comprehensive and effective migration management strategies.

³ See <http://www.un.org/migration/>.

⁴ See <http://www.gfmd-fimmd.org/>.

⁵ *World Migration Report, op. cit.*, Chapter 12.

Mapping labour migration needs and trends

11. Effective strategies for migration management at national, regional and global level depend on the ability of policymakers to have reliable and up-to-date data on current and future labour migration and labour market trends, and on their relationship to the global economy.⁶ How to ensure that countries of destination and origin respectively are able to identify current and projected labour supply shortages and surpluses by economic sector, occupation, region and province, and that this information is comparable and readily available?

Managing migration in a comprehensive manner

12. Migration management strategies must take into account the fact that migrants do and are needed to occupy the full range of skill levels, migrate for a variety of purposes and may stay in their host country temporarily or permanently, or in the case of circular migration may repeatedly move between their home and host countries.⁷ Moreover, each stage of the migration process (i.e. pre-departure information gathering, recruitment, training, employment, travel, integration and, in some cases, return) requires active policy measures to ensure that it is facilitated and regulated. In view of its complexity and multifaceted nature, migration can only be effectively managed through comprehensive approaches. How can migration management strategies be devised in a way that comprehensively addresses the many facets of migration?

13. Because migration policies affect and are affected by policies in a number of other spheres – such as labour, human resource development, trade, security, health and environment – comprehensive migration management implies policy coherence with related sectors. How best to secure sufficient consultation and coordination among government ministries whose work directly or indirectly involves migration, in order to ensure that their respective policies are complementary rather than potentially contradictory?

Ensuring optimal complementarities between labour migration policies and human resource development strategies

14. As labour migration takes on growing importance in the global economy, countries of origin increasingly seek employment opportunities abroad for their workers and endeavour to ensure their adequate protection, while working to maintain an adequate local workforce able to meet national labour market needs. Successful foreign employment policies operate in the context of a carefully planned approach to human resource development, one which ensures that potential migrants have the skills and training in demand on the international market, today and in future. The development of human capital is becoming an international issue, calling for cooperative approaches. How can individual governments and the international community ensure that adequate numbers of workers are trained to meet national, regional and global demand, particularly in those sectors where demand is projected to increase?

15. Practical steps must be taken to prepare migrant workers for the different stages of the migration experience: from pre-employment sessions to pre-departure orientation, through travel, arrival and adaptation to life abroad, and finally reintegration into the home environment

⁶ *Ibid*, Chapter 9.

⁷ Chapters 2 to 8 of the *World Migration Report* explore the many types of contemporary mobility for economic purposes. In addition to mapping out the magnitude and distribution of migratory movements, these chapters address the key policy challenges relating to the various types of contemporary mobility for economic purposes and discuss possible responses.

on return. Challenges arise at each stage; for instance, how can countries of origin and destination collaborate to develop relevant pre-departure training in areas such as work competencies, language and cultural skills?

Protecting the human rights of migrants

16. Protection of the human rights of migrants, which they enjoy as human beings and as workers, is an essential component of orderly and humane migration. Indeed, countries of origin and destination alike have recently expressed real concern at the threat of “commodification” of migrant workers in the increasingly global labour market.⁸

17. It is unquestionably important to formulate and implement minimum legal standards of protection, but to rely solely on those standards is to overlook the great potential of practical measures in this area. Measures such as preparing migrants so that they understand their rights and obligations and promoting greater transparency in migration policies and regulations can go a long way towards protecting the human rights of migrants. Perhaps most significantly, the opening of legal channels for migration can help prevent labour supply and demand from being matched through irregular channels, a practice which often puts migrants in a vulnerable situation and increases the likelihood that they will be exploited. To this end, perhaps renewed and innovative efforts to develop or expand temporary and circular migration channels constitute one promising approach for all involved?

Continually evaluating, reviewing and adjusting migration policies and programmes

18. Today’s global economy changes quickly, and contemporary migration patterns and flows seek to respond accordingly. As discussed above, migration is now far more complex and diverse than in the past, due in large part to the increasingly globalized economy. States which were once primarily countries of origin may find that they are now primarily countries of destination, and vice versa. What mechanisms can migration policymakers put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of their policies and programmes and to keep them under regular review to ensure that they correspond to current realities? How can policymakers incorporate flexibility into these policies and programmes to ensure they remain relevant in rapidly evolving circumstances?

Lack of capacity

19. Lack of capacity is perhaps the greatest challenge that States may be faced with in effectively managing migration. While lack of capacity is often a particular challenge for less developed States, it is not restricted to them, especially given the need repeatedly to revise policies to address the frequently changing nature of migration.⁹

20. There are many areas in which migration management capacity may need to be built or improved. For example, States may lack capacity in their administrative infrastructure, operational systems, data-collection and analysis capabilities, legal/regulatory frameworks and human resources. How can States attain the capacity they need to manage migration more effectively, especially given the rapid economic and social changes that globalization brings and the unfortunate reality of limited resources?

⁸ *Ibid*, Chapters 10 and 11.

⁹ *Ibid*.

Cooperative approaches to policy issues and challenges

Inter-State cooperation

21. Inter-State cooperation at various levels can be a good means of addressing many of the challenges relating to migration management.¹⁰ For instance, bilateral labour migration arrangements can generate more predictable labour mobility flows, for the benefit of countries of origin and destination. Bilateral arrangements on labour mobility also have the potential to achieve broader migration management goals. Where the level of irregular migration is high, the arrangement may include a commitment on the part of the country of destination to confer preferential access to lawful employment opportunities and/or to regularize the status of undocumented migrants if the country of origin cooperates to stem irregular flows. What other types of bilateral partnerships could serve to manage migration, and what obstacles might arise?

22. At the regional level, as discussed at IOM's recent International Dialogue on Migration workshop on "Free Movement of Persons in Regional Integration Processes",¹¹ States are increasingly working together to manage mobility through regional integration or trade regimes that take the form of regional free movement or facilitated movement regimes. In addition, Regional Consultative Processes on migration offer informal and non-binding settings in which to exchange promising practices and to cultivate the confidence and information sharing required for greater regional and inter-regional cooperation.¹² For example, the Colombo Process¹³ has helped further the efforts of recruitment agencies in Asia to better liaise with employers and governments looking to employ Asian workers in safe and secure ways. Which areas of migration management are most conducive to inter-State cooperation at the regional level, and how can regions best learn from the experiences of other regions?

23. At the global level, the most formalized approach to managing mobility has been Mode 4 of the World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which deals with the temporary movement of service suppliers.¹⁴ However, Mode 4 remains limited in scope and number of commitments to a select category of highly skilled workers. Are bilateral and regional approaches to inter-State cooperation more feasible than global approaches, at least today and in the near future?

The role of the private sector and other non-governmental stakeholders

24. The private sector, diaspora associations, workers' organizations and other non-governmental stakeholders have an essential role to play in migration management.

25. For example, by consulting these stakeholders, governments can design labour migration policies that respond to sudden changes in local labour markets and identify new markets and innovative practices. The support of private employment agencies can make for more ethical

¹⁰ Chapter 13 of the *World Migration Report* offers an assessment of the principal bilateral and regional economic integration and trade regimes providing for a degree of free movement for the purpose of employment and explores the relationship of these regimes to global labour market developments.

¹¹ Organized jointly with UNCTAD in Geneva in June 2007. To access seminar materials see <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/1805>.

¹² *World Migration Report, op. cit.*, Chapters 10 and 13.

¹³ The Colombo Process focuses on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour for countries of origin in Asia, and now brings in as observers destination countries from the Gulf, Europe and other key regions. See <http://www.colomboprocess.org>.

¹⁴ *World Migration Report, op. cit.*, Chapter 13.

international recruitment, serving to reduce “brain drain”. Trade unions, for their part, can help prevent the exploitation of migrant workers by ensuring that their interests are taken into account in activities to support local workers.

26. Migrants themselves are promoting home country development by forming hometown associations and other forms of diaspora associations. Through these associations, migrants can steer remittances and other diaspora contributions to social capital and job market growth.¹⁵ International and non-governmental organizations, along with other non-State actors, can help to mobilize public support for improved migration management. What mechanisms can be put in place to tap the valuable contributions each of these stakeholders can make to migration management?

27. It is clear that in an increasingly globalized world and in an era of growing mobility, enhancing the gains from migration and facilitating their more equitable distribution will require flexible and comprehensive governmental policies, robust capacity building and renewed cooperative efforts between and among States and non-governmental stakeholders.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, Chapter 12.