

European Commission Presentation – IOM IDM Workshop on South-South Migration, 24 March 2014, Geneva

- The European Commission welcomes the decision of IOM to include a focus on South-South migration in the 2014 International Dialogue on Migration.
- Discussions on international migration have for too long focused primarily on migration from developing to developed countries. We must redress the balance, and initiatives such as this workshop can make an important contribution.
- However, given ambiguity concerning which countries are in the 'South,' we have a preference for the term 'migration between low and middle-income countries'.
- In 2013, the EU substantially revised its policy framework through a new Communication on 'Maximising the Development Impact of Migration. A major objective of this revision was to give greater weight to migration between developing countries.
- This presentation will focus on; i) reasons for the revised EU approach and the need for greater attention to migration between developing countries from a donor perspective, ii) key orientations for future action to maximise the development impact of migration between developing countries.

Reasons for revising the EU's approach to migration & development

- The EU migration and development agenda when first defined in 2005 focused on maximising the development impact of migration to Europe for **countries of origin** through action in a limited number of issues (remittances, diaspora, brain drain, circular migration).
- Work in these areas **remains a priority** for the European Commission. However, from a development cooperation perspective, we must go much further if we are to fully address the potential of migration as a development enabler.
- Our focus on migration to Europe did not allow the European Commission, and DG DEVCO in particular, to fully address the potential of migration as a development enabler.

- This is because we were giving insufficient attention to the highly significant development impacts of South-South migration:
 - Almost half of all international migrants reside in low-and middle-income destination countries. The majority of African migrants reside in other African countries.
 - This migration has significant positive and negative impacts on the development of these **developing destination countries**. However, many of them lack the governance frameworks to effectively manage migration for their benefit and adequately protect migrant workers.
 - South-South migration also has important consequences for **countries of origin**. For example, at least 20-30% of all remittance transfers are between developing countries. Furthermore, as migration within the developing world is cheaper, it may be more accessible as a poverty reduction strategy than migration to the EU/US, which is often an elite phenomenon. It is important to recall that the majority of migrants in the EU are from high- or middle-income countries. Less than 10% of migrants in the EU originate from the poorest region in the world, sub-Saharan Africa (which accounts for 34 out of 50 LDCs).
- We have therefore found that in many partner countries, the main concern in terms of development is linked to South-South flows. This meant that from a development cooperation perspective, failing to address these types of flows meant that in many cases our programmes were not always addressing national priorities or the most important migration-related development issues in partner countries.
- The Commission's **Communication of May 2013** on 'Maximising the Development Impact of Migration' therefore aimed to pave the way for a more comprehensive approach.
- We set ourselves the objective of ensuring that our external cooperation takes **full account of the development impacts of migration on all three pillars of sustainable development** – economic, social and environmental for low- and middle income countries of origin and destination.

- This means putting the **development perspective first** in our work on migration and development, rather than focusing on certain migration flows in our choice of priorities.
- The Commission calls for the EU to:
 - Work towards **mainstreaming migration** into EU development cooperation, focusing on sectors strongly influenced by demographics such as employment, health etc.
 - Assist partner countries to effectively address migration in national development plans and sectoral policies;
 - Continue EU support for capacity building in all aspects of migration governance for partner countries.
- The Communication also identifies a number of areas in which a **strengthened evidence base and new policy orientations** are required to implement a broadened approach to the development-migration nexus. The majority of these are of specific relevance for South-South flows. I will end my presentation by highlighting some of these areas.

Priority areas for maximising the development of South-South flows

1. Deepening understanding of the links between migration and economic and social development in developing destination countries
 - The lack of attention to South-South migration in recent years means that the impacts of migration to low-and middle-income **destination countries** remain very poorly understood.
 - At the same time, **governance frameworks** for labour migration in many low- and middle-income destination countries are still weak and should be strengthened to promote the development impact of migration and ensure adequate protection and decent working standards for migrant workers.
 - To address this, the Commission has recently launched an initiative with OECD and ILO on ‘**assessing the economic contribution of labour migration in developing countries as countries of destination**’. The study should result in the development of a methodology for assessing the economic contribution of labour immigration. This methodology will then be applied with 10 low/middle-income countries. The resulting

comparative analysis will inform policy dialogue and future work on this issue of both the EU and partner countries.

2. Promoting remittance flows and diaspora engagement in South-South context

- We will also work on promoting the broader development impact of South-South migration for **countries of origin**.
- There is still a great deal of work to be done in this area, particularly in Africa. Indeed it is estimated that for the continent, about 67% of incoming flows are from migrants living in other African countries, with the majority of these flows being informal. Formal remittance transfer costs in this area remain far too high for South-South flows.
- Priority will be attached to **extending the work** the Commission has already been doing on remittances and diaspora to the South-South context. This means identifying means to **facilitate remittance flows** between developing countries and supporting research to **better understand the role of diaspora residing in low- and middle-income countries** as development actors in their countries of origin.
- We will also aim to promote the sharing of the significant experience already gained in these areas at EU level and by our Member States with partner countries.

3. Addressing the nexus between refugees and development

- The large majority of refugees are in the developing world, with an unacceptably large proportion in **protracted situations** which present significant challenges for host communities. But the presence of refugees and other forced migrants can also result in new opportunities and benefits for national and local economies through refugees' human capital, including by providing labour skills and creating demand for goods and services.
- However, refugees in the developing world are too often viewed as a humanitarian rather than a development issue. The Commission is therefore working towards the **integration of refugee situations into the development agenda**. We believe that measures to harness the potential of refugees to drive development improve their self-reliance, and thereby strengthen the quality of refugees' protection and benefiting host communities.

- For example, the Commission will soon launch a **Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP)** for the Middle East, targeting Syrian refugees. The project is implemented in partnership with a number of EU Member States and will be led by Denmark. It foresees measures to i) enhance economic opportunities and general development of local host communities to mitigate negative impacts and maximise opportunities arising from the presence of refugees; ii) sustain and develop the livelihood capacity and self-reliance of refugees in urban and encamped settings.

4. Addressing the links between climate change, environmental degradation and migration

- The Commission's has produced a policy paper (SWD) on this topic which highlighted that although climate change is likely to impact significantly on population movements, most of these flows will take **place either within or between developing countries**, rather than towards OECD countries.
- Migration in the context of climate change will present both major challenges and opportunities to developing countries.
- Where climate change leads to involuntary **displacement**, it may expose migrants to significant vulnerabilities and place a burden on host communities that might be ill-placed to accommodate new arrivals. Greater attention is therefore required for how Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change adaptation measures can contribute to allowing persons unwilling to migrate to remain in their regions of origin.
- **Labour migration** and increased mobility can however also make a positive contribution as a climate change adaptation strategy in its own right. For example, it can allow the diversification of income sources and reduce pressure on scarce environmental resources in regions of origin.
- The Commission is currently continuing efforts to **identify how best to address the many links between migration and climate change adaptation/DRR**.
- For example, we have recently launched the project 'Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy' (MECLEP) with the IOM. The overall objective of this action is to contribute to the global knowledge base on the relationship between migration and

environmental change, including climate change, and the formulation of related policy options with particular emphasis on migration as an adaptation strategy. A number of research-related activities will be conducted in a selected number of partner countries, including household surveys.