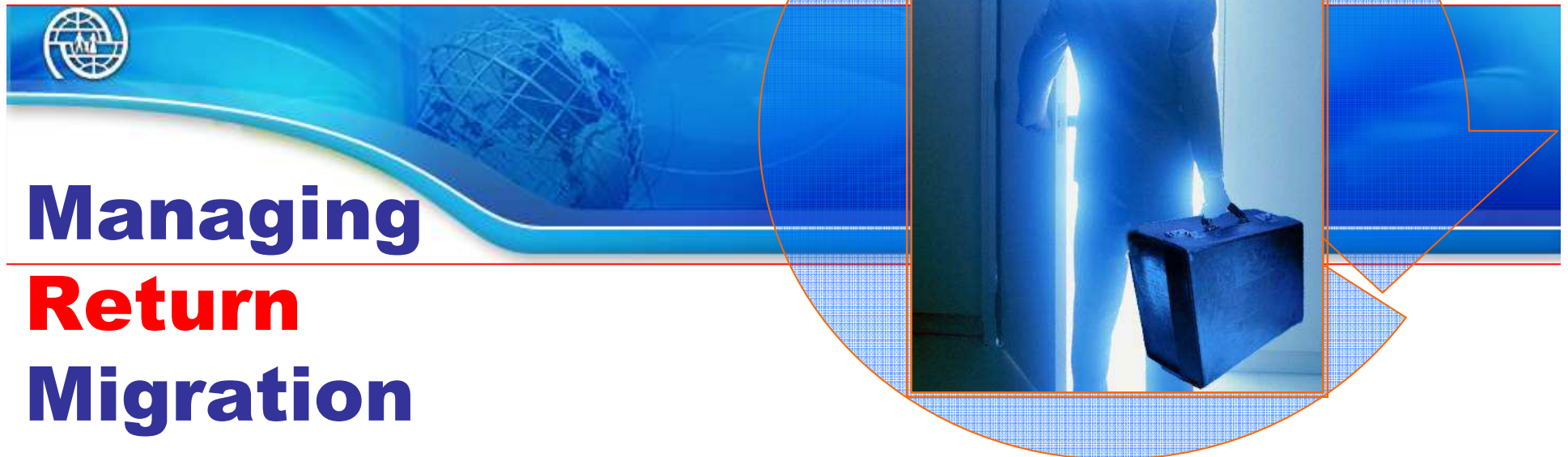International Organization for Migration (IOM)

International Dialogue on Migration (IDM)

Managing
Return
Migration

Challenges and Opportunities

Return migration: secondary phenomenon?

Perceptions		Reality
	Numbers	
Negligible, considerably smaller than outgoing migration		**Considerable**
	Character	
Final Reestablishment of natural order		**Temporary** **New Beginning**
	Complexity/ Challenges	
Less challenging than outgoing		**Just as challenging**

Return migration: seconday phenomenon?

- Complex, dynamic, challenging aspect of migration

- Profound consequences for countries of origin, transit, destination and migrants themselves

- Considerable impact on development, trade, health, security, international relations, human rights

- One of the most interconnected types of migration

Return Migration:
major component of international migration

Return: facilitating factors

○ **Ease of communication and transportation**

○ **Migratory behaviour increasingly complex and diverse:**

- **Shorter-term movement**

- **Circular movement between two countries**

- **Movement to multiple countries**

○ **Return: important element of process for many types of migration**

Return Contexts

- Spontaneous choice for economic, social and/or family-related reasons

- Part of labour migration arrangements: end of temporary period of work abroad

- Post-conflict/crisis situations, including voluntary repatriation of refugees, IDPs and/or prisoners of war

- Part of strategy to address irregular migration and secure national borders

  - **Unsuccessful asylum seekers and other unauthorized migrants**

- Potential returnees may belong to vulnerable groups: require special attention and consideration

  - **Victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors**

Return: phenomenon hard to quantify

➲ **No accurate global estimations of return migration**

- **Differences of definition among different data sets**
- **General lack of data**

➲ **Much return migration initiated by migrant**

➲ **Undertaken without involvement of States or other national/ international actors**

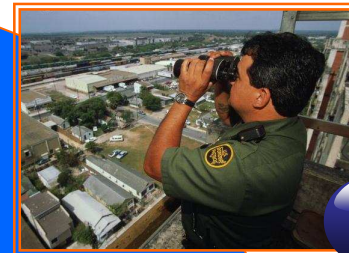**Not necessarily recorded**

A comprehensive approach to return management

Return:
related to all migration stages

Stay

Integration and Reintegration

Entry

Transit

Preparation to migrate

A comprehensive approach to return management

Development

Security

Health

Return Migration

Human Rights

Trade

8

A comprehensive approach to return management

Sovereignty & Human Rights

- Sovereign prerogative of each State to determine which non-nationals enter and remain on its territory, for what purposes, and under what conditions

- Exercise of prerogative must be consistent with human rights standards

- Considered in light of the right of each person to return to his/her own country

- Sovereignty & human rights: not an adversarial relation

Consensus on importance of human rights for return migration

Different perspectives on best modalities to ensure protection

A comprehensive approach to return management

Key issues for further thought:

- Policies relating to each stage: complementary and mutually supportive

- Anticipate and prepare for return, even in early phases such as preparation to migrate and entry

- Barriers to successful incorporation of return migration into overall migration policy frameworks and practices

Voluntary & Forced Return

- Essential tools of migration management
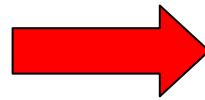
- Both necessary and legitimate

- Strong link between them

Link Between Forced & Voluntary Return

If forced return not
rapid and successful

➡️

Fewer people will choose to
return voluntarily

Voluntary return less likely to be
viable alternative

Key issues for further thought:

- Measures to ensure that forced return fully consistent with international, regional and national standards

- Making forced and voluntary return programmes complementary and mutually supportive

Voluntary Return

Returnees

- Takes account of migrant's decision
- Allows preparation for the return

More sustainable

- Ensures respect for human rights
- Avoids stigma of forced return and negative repercussions for reintegration
- Provides counselling, financial and/or logistical & reintegration support

Returning governments

- Generally more cost effective
- Administratively less cumbersome
- Helps avoid friction with national and international partners
- Opens way to genuine partnerships with countries of origin and implementing partners

Countries of origin

- Ensures the rights and dignity of their nationals
- May include reintegration assistance for individuals and/or their communities
- May provide future opportunities for legal migration

Voluntary return

Key issues for further thought:

- **Specific and detailed information provided to potential returnees to make an informed decision**

- **Provider of return counselling: State agencies, NGOs, IOs?**

- **Additional measures to ensure that voluntary return is truly voluntary**

Forced Return

- Combined with other measures: deterrent to irregular migration

- Clear message to traffickers and smugglers that governments are determined to combat irregular migration

- Can help preserve integrity of asylum and migration management systems

- Must be carried out in full respect of international law and human rights

Forced Return

Key issues for further thought:

- **Measures to ensure that forced return fully consistent with international, regional and national standards**

- **Making forced and voluntary return programmes complementary and mutually supportive**

- **Monitoring of return operations: yes, no? by whom?**

Sustainability of Return

Reintegration Support

- Return migration can pose serious challenges to the reception and integration capacities of countries of transit and origin

- Return migration can be difficult for returnees

Where push factors not addressed: ➡️ **Substantial number of returnees will emigrate again**

Issues for further thought:

- Building adequate reception and integration facilities in countries of transit and origin

- Measures to avoid the vicious circle of further irregular migration

- Interventions to ensure that future migration is a matter of genuine choice and under legal migration schemes

Sustainability of return

Assistance

Assistance for the economic, social and cultural reintegration of the returnee, including health care

Cash grants, service referrals, vocational training, small business development

Educational support and follow-up

Assistance to the communities of return

Key issues for further thought:

- Stakeholders best situated to provide reintegration assistance

- Balance between cash and in-kind assistance

- Types of reintegration support to ensure sustainability of return without creating pull factors/incentives for irregular migration

- Post-return monitoring: how much, by whom?

- Additional research on sustainability of returns for policy makers

Capacity issues

Countries of destination

- Provide adequate accommodation pending removal

- Issue travel documents

- Execute expulsion orders

- Implement voluntary return programmes

- Bring national legislation on return into compliance with relevant international and regional standards

Capacity issues

Countries of origin and transit

- **Difficulties in receiving returnees**

    - **In large numbers**

    - **In post-conflict situations**

    - **Situations involving significant environmental degradation**

    - **Situations involving vulnerable migrants**

- **Particular challenges in addressing situation of intercepted or stranded irregular migrants**

Capacity issues

Countries of origin, transit and destination

- May lack capacity to manage their borders

- Ensure the security of identity and travel documents

- Establish identity where identity documents are missing or destroyed

- Adequately warn potential migrants of the risks of irregular migration

One-size-fits-all approaches to managing return migration are not the most effective

Key issues for further thought:

- **Tailoring return and reintegration programmes to country-specific circumstances**

- **Tailoring reintegration assistance to the needs of individual returnees**

Tailoring return and reintegration assistance policies

Issues related to vulnerable groups:

Victims and potential victims of trafficking   **Victims and potential victims of torture**

Refugees   **Unaccompanied minors**   **Women**

Elderly people   **People with serious health conditions**

Key issues for further thought:

- Limitations on ability of States to return these categories

- Adapting return and reintegration procedures to their special needs

- Types of special services and assistance needed upon return

Towards a cooperative approach to return migration

Different perspectives and priorities

- **For most destination and transit countries**
  - Integrity of their national migration management systems
  - Legal migration schemes and the institution of asylum

- **For many countries of origin and transit**
  - Large influxes of returning migrants challenge their capacity to "absorb" returnees and socio-economic stability

- **Countries of origin**
  - Re-gain talented nationals with new skills
  - Reduction in remittances

Towards a cooperative approach to return migration

Most successful return activities: most inclusive ones

Key Issues for further thought:

- Roles and possible contributions of countries of origin, transit and destination in return migration management

- At national level: inter- ministerial coordination - ways to best achieve it

- Roles and possible contributions of non-state actors

- Forms of partnerships to make effective return policies and practices possible

  - Bilateral cooperation between governments
  - Active engagement of local communities, diasporas, and civil society

Towards a cooperative approach to return migration

NGOs, International Organizations

Important roles to play in return policy and practice

- Return counselling and information dissemination

- Help to ensure that voice of migrants is heard

- Help meet special needs of vulnerable persons

Towards a cooperative approach to return migration

Informal consultation mechanisms

- **5 + 5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean**

- **Cluster Process initiative between the South Caucasus countries and several Western European countries**

- **Migration Dialogue for Western Africa (MIDWA) &**
  Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA)

- **Regional Conference on Migration in the Americas (Puebla Process)**

- **Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime**

Identified common interests

Joint actions taken

Towards a cooperative approach to return migration

Key issues for further thought:

- Bilateral or regional readmission agreements to facilitate safe, orderly, dignified and sustainable returns

- Cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination to assist in establishing identity and obtaining travel documents

- Assistance of returning governments to build capacity of countries of origin and transit to receive returnees, particularly in large numbers

- Other types of support:

  - Development assistance for education, health, infrastructure
  - Visa facilitation for nationals of the country of origin

Concluding Remarks

- **Return migration receiving more focused attention**

- **View of international community on return shifting**

    - **Recognition of centrality of return to effective migration management for countries of origin, transit and destination**

    - **Growing interest in temporary labour migration with its inherent return element**

    - **Impact on and relation with other areas of activity, in particular development**

Concluding Remarks

Return migration: strong case for migration management

Security

Irregular migration

Human Rights

Bi-lateral and int. relations
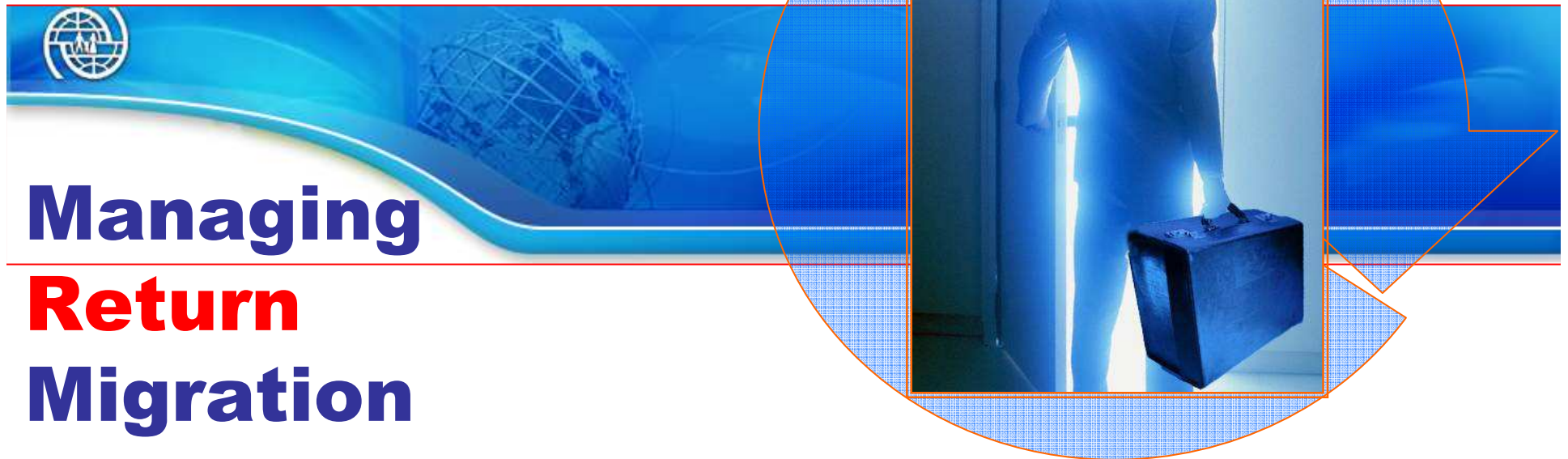
Regular Migration

Skills Transfer

Development

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