



IOM International Organization for Migration

Taking Stock of RCPs' Challenges and Opportunities

Ms. Elizabeth Adjei



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Introducing RCPs

- RCPs are repeated 'regional' meetings of States dedicated to discussing migration
- Interstate processes/consultative fora through which states debate and discuss migration issues

Main characteristics of RCPs:

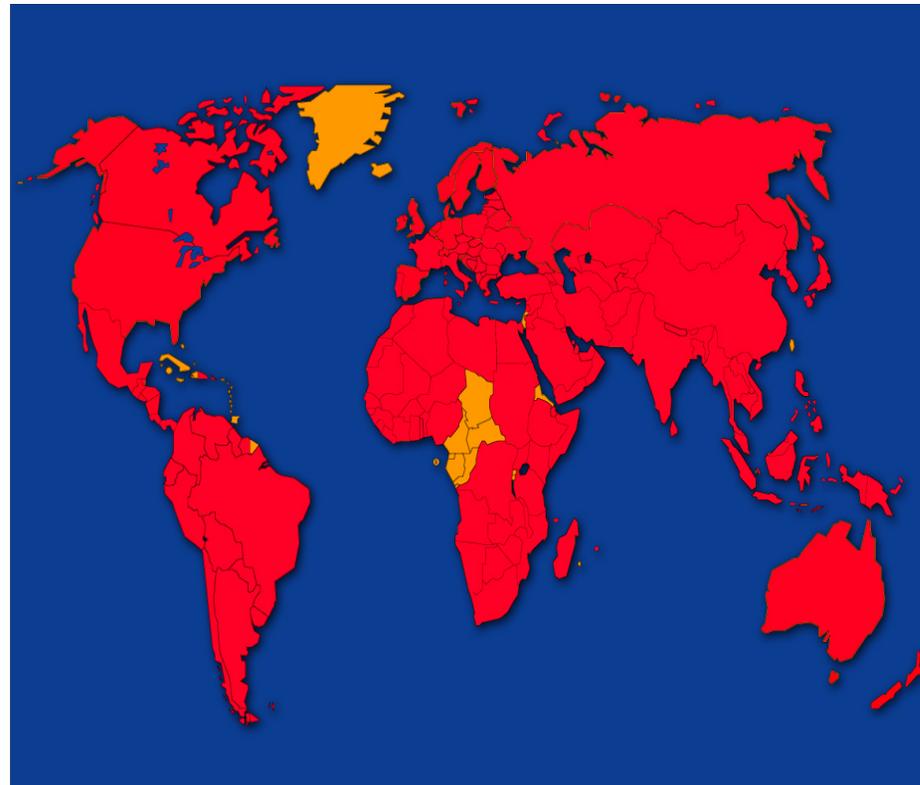
- Geographically or thematically organized;
- Informal & non-binding;
- Migration is sole focus;
- Process oriented and not a one-off event.



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Global RCP Landscape

- ④ Have emerged over the last 20 years
- ④ Specific initiatives and inter state dialogues now present in 5 key regions except Caribbean and C-Africa
- ④ Multilateral frameworks for responding to trans-national migration issues
- ④ RCPs facilitate information exchange, promote dialogue, enhance cooperation among States, and foster sharing of good practices on laws, policies etc





Questionnaire on Challenges and Opportunities: Introduction

- Survey of activities and developments within the principal RCPs.(17)
- Questionnaire sought to identify challenges and opportunities faced in enhancing cooperation on migration.
- Informed by the outcomes to the 2009 RCP Global Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand.
- In respect for the UN High Level Dialogue in 2013
- Responses from the majority of the RCPs (9) identifying the main challenges and opportunities



Summary of Main Challenges

Challenges vary according to the area of focus and context of each RCP. Responses however indicated:

- Lack of good leadership and commitment from states to identify areas of cooperation and subjects for thematic meetings
- Knowledge gap- Dearth of knowledge and capacity at the national and regional levels- *to be able define and set agenda and priorities within the regional context and link to the global debate*
- Lack of human and financial resources to sustain process



Summary of Main Challenges

- Lack of effective coordination due to the often competing interests of RCP participating countries makes it difficult to ensure focus.
- Ever increasing fora and processes on migration related platforms in which RCP participating states are engaged, with often different agendas and strategic objectives means limited engagement by officials of RCP countries and dilute the efforts of RCPs to meet their objectives;
- Limited RCP responsiveness to emerging issues of relevance to RCPs;
- The mobilization of resources to enhance the regularity of meetings as well as the cooperation and coordination with secretariats



Summary of Key Opportunities

- Key opportunities indentified include the following:
- The informal, confidential and process-orientated character of RCPs allows for open and continuous discussions on shared objectives and build trust to enhance cooperation on migration.
- Strengthened cooperation on migration through the sharing of information, good practices and experiences.
- The two-tiered level of engagement (technical and political) offers a comprehensive and practical structure to interactions. Potential to attract high level policy makers to give weight to discussions
- RCPs provide a forum to constructively address complex issues on migration at a thematic and/or regional level and develop the capacities of participating states for the various stages of migration governance
- RCPs create linkages and engagements with other regional/inter-regional and global fora including (RECs), (IRF) and the (GFMD) to influence global debates from regional perspectives.



Key Considerations

- Six key points were raised for analysis:
 1. Ensuring that the right people attend RCP meetings;
 2. Achieving the set goals;
 3. Dealing with sensitive issues;
 4. Links between RCPs and regional economic communities (RECs) and other regional political or formal processes;
 5. Cross fertilization of ideas and practices – RCPs and the GFMD;
 6. Engaging with Civil Society



Questionnaire on Challenges and Opportunities: Having the Right People

How do you ensure participation of the right people?

- Manage the knowledge gap -build capacity of and train officials to improve the quality of the participants. Migration is a new administrative field and knowledge is scant
- Processes should avoid extremes- find a balanced membership of technical and political actors.
- Improve internal coordination mechanisms-government must play a strong coordinating role for all agencies dealing with migration and development
- The use of formal mechanisms such as Working Groups, Task Forces, Steering Committees and other ad hoc platforms have emerged



Questionnaire on Challenges and Opportunities: **Achieving the Goals**

- Dialogue is key to RCPs as a platform to formulate policies, implement plans and organise capacity building workshops. This overall goal has largely been accomplished by most RCPs
- The key challenge for several RCPs however is sustaining this dialogue on an ongoing basis and lack of follow up or action on outputs and decisions.
- How to ensure that decisions taken enter the policy regime



Questionnaire on Challenges and Opportunities: Addressing Sensitive Issues

- Difficulty in addressing issues in a multilateral setting-
- Migration is politically sensitive and RCPs create the opportunity to discuss those issues to ease governments' reluctance to deal with them
- Informal and non-binding interactions at RCP meetings can encourage trust-building
- Open discussions in a confidential and secure framework help to identify common interests and find solutions
- RCPs help to create a network of officials to facilitate harmonisation of positions of member states



Questionnaire on Challenges and Opportunities: Linking Up with Formal Networks

What would be Benefits and disadvantages of an association with formal economic or political organizations be?

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ more operational | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ compromises the informal nature of RCPs interaction |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ provision of support and follow-up structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ may impact negatively on the “circle of trust” within the RCPs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ support in resource mobilization for the RCP | reluctance on the part of RECs and political bodies to work with RCPs because of their flexible approach |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ political leverage of the regional organizations/entities | Creates greater bureaucracy and makes RCPs less agile and responsive |



Cross fertilization of ideas and practices RCPs and the GFMD

- Growing interest among states and other actors to explore the possibilities for synergies and complementarities between RCPs and GFMD
- Linkage is necessary to influence the global debates with regional ideas and perspectives. Exchanges serve as platforms for mainstreaming of regional priorities (Mex)
- Member countries interact independently but can explore strategic links for effective governance of migration and development



GFMD and UN HLD Preparatory Discussions and Topics of Interest

Thematic areas of interest:

- Harmonization of labour legislation;
- Management of labour immigration;
- Development of national and regional retention strategies/policies to curb brain drain;
- Bilateral and multilateral framework for migration;
- Protection of migrants' rights/ lowering of migration costs in the countries of origin and destination;
- Mixed migration flows;
- Responding to complex emergencies;
- Climate change and migration/displacement;
- Management of student mobility and health challenges of migrants.



Questionnaire on Challenges and Opportunities: Engaging Civil Society Organizations

- Important connection to grass root levels.
- Help to table concrete issues.
- Important role in advocating for migrants.
- Networking.



Challenges and Opportunities





Conclusions

- In the absence of an overarching global regime for migration governance, RCPs play an important role to build mechanisms for managing migration
- RCPs provide the building blocks for global migration governance and have the potential to translate their activities into a global body
- RCPs can play a complementary role to more formal bodies.



Conclusion

- RCPs are a relevant platform for continued engagement on the cooperation on migration and despite the presence of several challenges there are a wealth of opportunities for RCPs to explore and harness;
- Dialogue and capacity building to enhance cooperation on migration happens within and between RCPs as well as between RCPs and other fora or processes;
- Consider existing forums before undertaking new ones.
- Flexibility in responding to emerging issues of importance take place and enable RCPs to adapt.



THANK YOU

ELIZABETH ADJEI

director@myzipnet.com