



Submission of the Inter-governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) to the President of the General Assembly

High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

Introduction

The December 2012 modalities resolution for the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (A/RES/67/219), in Operative Paragraph 17, invited UN Member States, through appropriate regional consultative processes, to contribute to the HLD. The Inter-governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) is one of the longest-standing inter-regional consultative processes (RCPs) on international migration. Established in 1985, it is a forum in which generally like-minded countries¹ exchange information on refugee, asylum, and migration issues in an informal and non-binding way. In addition to convening regular meetings under its annual work plans, the IGC often holds ad hoc meetings on topics of current interest.

IGC Participating States have been actively engaged in preparations for the HLD, taking part in a number of preparatory meetings, *inter alia* in Geneva, capitals, and New York. IGC Participating States believe the HLD provides an excellent opportunity to take stock of recent efforts on international migration and its links to development. Well-managed migration at national, regional and global levels is the overarching goal and considered a precondition for maximising the benefits and minimising the challenges of international migration, and to move forward on concrete issues that enhance the well-being of migrants, respect the human rights of all migrants regardless of immigration status, and recognise that migrants make significant contributions to the cultures and economies of their host countries. IGC States additionally believe that there are many more issues that countries have in common than there are issues that divide them, and they are committed to advancing the debate on important substantive issues that all countries, developed and developing, can agree upon.

To this end, the IGC convened a workshop in March, 2013 on International Migration Engagement to discuss the HLD. The objectives were to identify migration-related policies and areas of mutual interest that are most likely to be shared by a broad range of countries, and therefore could provide the basis to advance the international migration dialogue in the most constructive and positive way. The workshop resulted in an inventory of substantive issues that might form part of the deliberations of the HLD.

¹ The IGC is constituted by the following Participating States: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.

In developing this inventory, IGC Participating States recognised that a great deal of excellent work has already been accomplished and will continue to be driven very effectively in various international forums including the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the International Organization for Migration led policy discussions, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Regional Consultative Processes on migration, and the Human Rights Council, to name a few. In considering what issues are ripe for discussion in the HLD, IGC States attempted to identify those that (1) would build on this prior body of work; (2) represent new or emerging trends; and (3) by their very nature lend themselves to partnerships among many states rather than solely bilateral discussions.

It is important to note that the inventory of ideas set forth below does not represent a policy position of the IGC or of its Participating States. The IGC does not take formal positions on policy issues. Rather, the inventory is intended only as a set of ideas for positive, constructive dialogue and a potential "road map" for continued partnerships and dialogue within existing fora for all stakeholders.

Inventory of Substantive Issues

IGC Participating States have identified a set of practical issues of shared interest to all countries that fit into the four HLD roundtable topics. This inventory aims to support a constructive dialogue at HLD on concrete initiatives and partnerships in order to address, in a practical way, real challenges and opportunities related to migration.

Roundtable 1

“Assessing the effects of international migration on sustainable development and identifying relevant priorities in view of the preparation of the post-2015 development framework”

1.1 Developing a Better Understanding and Promoting the Links between Migration and Development

In recent years, extensive efforts have been undertaken by various stakeholders to better understand and articulate the links between migration and development and the potential relevance of migration to the post-2015 Development Agenda. In order to capitalise on these tremendous efforts, HLD roundtable 1 could be used to identify an agenda for concrete action and agree on these specific objectives:

- i) Consider the inclusion of migration in the Post-2015 development agenda, potentially as an enabler for development, with indicators to monitor change (for example, increase labour mobility, explore more safe regular and orderly processes of migration, promote the preservation and portability of social security entitlements, seek to match skills to migration needs, promote migrants as agents of development in countries of origin and destination, lower recruitment and remittance costs, protect the victims of human trafficking including those subjected to exploitation, and develop migration and mobility partnerships with other states and development actors);
- ii) Identify with greater precision the aspects of development that can realistically be linked to migration;
- iii) Acknowledge the significance of migrant remittances to development and continue efforts to reduce the costs to migrants of sending funds home and promote productive and social use of remittances;
- iv) Support policy coherence for development and the inclusion of migration, including refugee and returnee reintegration, in national poverty plans of developing states, for example, through the use of frameworks and tools such as Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning Strategies and Migration Profiles;
- v) Promote policies to enable diaspora groups to contribute to social and economic development and to be effective and recognised actors in development, for example by strengthening the diasporas’ potential to function as a bridge for trade and investment, as well as skill transfer.

1.2 Engaging with Diasporas

Diaspora resources and engagement in support of development back home is an important aspect of efforts aimed at maximising the benefits of migration for development. Building on the impressive work that has been done so far on this topic, roundtable 1 could further review strategies to facilitate remittance flows and better understand the role and use of remittances and Official Development Aid (ODA), and to identify ways to support and engage with diasporas as agents of development in their home country.

- i) Promoting a better understanding of the role of diasporas as development actors in their countries of origin;

- ii) Strengthening the capacity of both governments and diaspora organisations and promoting diaspora initiatives;
- iii) Encouraging governments and other stakeholders to reduce costs and barriers to remittance transfer and set incentives and policy frameworks for sustainable investment, while noting that they are private funds that complement, not replace ODA.

1.3 Identifying and Understanding New Trends in Global Migration

While many positive efforts have been made to better understand migration-development links, the evidence base on migration trends and linkages with development is still weak, and this has a potentially negative impact on how much progress can be achieved in the migration and development dialogue. A robust evidence base is critical to advancing efforts to better link migration and development, including in the context of the post-2015 Development Agenda. Roundtable 1 could, therefore, examine practical ways to:

- i) Strengthen the evidence base and understanding of the phenomenon and implications of North/South migration, intra-regional migration (including South-South), migration to emerging markets/BRICS, and other “migration futures” scenarios;
- ii) Reinforce understanding of migration through the development of more coherent and consistent data capture and management, including through strengthening national capacities and cooperation;
- iii) Map and evaluate existing initiatives to promote the positive contribution of migration to development and to reduce its negative effects.

Roundtable 2

“Measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants, with particular reference to women and children, as well as to prevent and combat smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and to ensure orderly, regular and safe migration”

2.1. Safeguarding the Human Rights of Migrants

The well-being and human development of migrants and their ability to contribute to both countries of origin and destination depends crucially on whether the migration is regular or irregular, whether their human rights are safeguarded, and whether they are protected from abuse, exploitation and discrimination. HLD roundtable 2 could take stock of effective practices and successful partnerships in the following areas, building on existing tools and frameworks:

- i) Maintaining robust human rights protections and support for improving the implementation at all levels;
- ii) Continuing efforts to counter human trafficking and smuggling including assistance to victims of trafficking in persons and their families;
- iii) Strengthening measures to combat xenophobia and hate crimes;

- iv) Acknowledging the "feminisation" of migration and seek ways to protect women and girls, who are especially vulnerable to human trafficking and other abuses, including through gender-sensitive migration and protection policies;
- v) Improving the protection of migrant children and adolescents;
- vi) Ensuring appropriate processes are in place to protect refugees in "mixed flows" scenarios;
- vii) Increasing partnerships at the inter-governmental level and between governments and other non-State actors to recognise the importance of all migrants for development.

2.2. Improving the Perception and Well-Being of Migrants

Perceptions of migration and migrants, whether positive or negative, have a significant impact on the well-being of migrants and their ability to contribute to their full potential to their country of origin as well as the country of destination. This issue could benefit from discussions under roundtable 2 and encourage the examination of practical initiatives in the following areas:

- i) Promoting effective integration policies through sharing good practices and policies and encouraging increased and diversified integration stakeholders;
- ii) Strengthening measures to address discrimination and xenophobia;
- iii) Raising awareness of the positive contributions that migrants can and do make to host and source societies;
- iv) Fostering welcoming communities;
- v) Promoting effective dialogues on readmission and reintegration programs in view of States' obligation to admit, reintegrate and protect their own nationals;
- vi) Targeting information toward potential migrants to increase understanding about the challenges of migration and to help them avoid scenarios of exploitation and abuse.

2.3. Addressing Migrants in Crisis Situations

Large-scale, complex migration flows resulting from a crisis involve significant vulnerabilities for the individuals and communities affected. The issue of migrants in need of assistance in situations of crisis has garnered strong consensus for practical action within the international community. In support of collaborative initiatives in this area, roundtable 2 could further consider appropriate means of:

- i) Providing assistance to migrants caught in crisis situations, considering lessons learned from the Libya crisis for example;
- ii) Ensuring protection is provided to refugees in keeping with the UN Refugee Convention and its protocols;
- iii) Managing and responding to mixed migratory flows, in particular effective ways to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking;
- iv) Promoting regional protection programmes and securing development initiatives targeting both refugee communities as well as host communities and host countries.

Roundtable 3

“Strengthening partnerships and cooperation on international migration, mechanisms to effectively integrate migration into development policies, and promote coherence at all levels”

3.1. Partnering More Effectively with all Actors Involved in Migration

Promoting the concept of well-managed migration and recognising the importance of the contribution of all stakeholders to addressing the opportunities and challenges related to migration, HLD roundtable 3 could identify specific actions for strengthening partnerships among States, UN agencies and international organisations, as well as with civil society, private sector actors and local authorities, by focusing on ways to:

- i) Seek to better understand and define the responsibilities and obligations of source, transit, and destination countries alike toward migrants and migration flows;
- ii) Consider ways of improving coordination among UN agencies and international organisations dealing with migration, particularly the Global Migration Group (GMG), as well as to strengthen their interaction with Member States;
- iii) Seek ways of strengthening the partnership with civil society that embraces their expertise and experience particularly in providing services to migrants on the ground and through their advocacy strategies;
- iv) Engage and strengthen the accountability of the private sector, including inter alia employers and recruitment agencies;
- v) Consider ways of broadening engagement with local actors of influence where migrants live and work – e.g. local governments, cities;
- vi) Seek to develop a jointly-understood vocabulary among migration actors and encourage trust-building.

3.2. Promoting and Strengthening Existing Institutions and Frameworks

Roundtable 3 could further identify good practices and mechanisms for effective collaboration at the inter-state, regional and inter-regional, and global levels and agree on key objectives:

- i) Recognise and support the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the leading inter-governmental organisation in the field of migration;
- ii) Recognise the role and achievements of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) as an effective global mechanism for progressing migration issues;
- iii) Promote Regional Consultative Processes that provide targeted and focused approaches to finding solutions between groups of stakeholders;
- iv) Promote the comprehensive approach of regional and bilateral migration policies, including by strengthening the migration policy capacities of states through capacity building;
- v) Recognise the significant contribution of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration and Development, and consider a clearer articulation of the role with regard to supporting and strengthening GMG coordination;

- vi) Call for progress in relation to coordination and coherence of migration issues across the United Nations and other international organisations; in particular by addressing the role of the GMG in effectively meeting states' needs;
- vii) Encourage greater cooperation and communication among States with respect to States' expectations of international organisations.

Roundtable 4

“International and regional labour mobility and its impact on development”

4.1. Optimising Labour Migration

Labour migration is central to the migration and development nexus. Among key interests are labour rights, skills recognition, effective job matching, pension portability, and brain drain and waste. In many countries the dynamics in labour migration have changed in recent years, with the private sector's role increasing and that of states decreasing, the feminisation of the workforce, diversity of skills levels and needs, an increase of short-term employment and temporary migration, and the need to balance between control and facilitation. In addition there is the contribution and policy challenges of integrating other migrants into the labour market, including those who have moved on family or humanitarian grounds. HLD roundtable 4 could discuss the following topics with the objective of identifying practical solutions to maximise the benefits of labour migration for all:

- i) Ensuring employment and labour rights in national migration policies;
- ii) Fostering well-managed labour and mobility programmes, offering access to labour markets through regular channels, including circular migration and pathways to permanent migration;
- iii) Ensuring gender sensitive labour policies which would take due consideration of the role of women in the labour force and their particular vulnerabilities;
- iv) Regulating and monitoring the role of migration consultants, agents and intermediaries.
- v) Encouraging governments and other stakeholders to reduce costs and barriers to remittance transfer.