



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

International Dialogue on Migration 2014
Human mobility and development: emerging trends and new opportunities for partnerships

Intersessional Workshop • 24 and 25 March 2014

South–South migration: Partnering strategically for development

Summary of discussions

IOM membership selected the topic “South–South migration: Partnering strategically for development” as the focus of the first intersessional workshop, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland on 24 and 25 March 2014¹.

The main objective of the workshop was to examine some emerging global trends of human mobility and assess their impact, focusing specifically on migration between countries and regions of the “Global South”. The workshop was organized under the overarching theme of “Human mobility and development: Emerging trends and new opportunities for partnership”, selected by Member States to guide and frame the two IDM 2014 workshops.

The workshop was attended by 230 policymakers and practitioners from around the world, as well as international experts and representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

The workshop featured a keynote address by Mr Shakeel Ahmed Yusuf Abdul Razack Mohamed, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment of Mauritius, who highlighted the benefits of migration and called for them to be optimized using sound and concerted policies. He encouraged participants to give clear and concrete proposals for improving migrants’ lives and well-being.

The workshop was divided into three main distinct, yet interlinked, thematic areas, addressing South–South migration from the practical, academic and policy levels.

In keeping with the practice of providing a forum for migrants themselves to be heard, the workshop featured a “Migrant’s Voice” session. There was also a session dedicated to IOM programmes and activities relevant to South–South migration.

The main conclusions and key ideas of these two prolific days of discussion are summarized below.

Public Private Alliance for Fair and Ethical Recruitment (PPA) launch

At the first session, IOM and several partners launched the Public Private Alliance for Fair and Ethical Recruitment (PPA), a consortium of likeminded stakeholders from government, business and civil society, committed to the advancement of practical tools to address unethical recruitment practices.

¹ The workshop background paper, agenda and other meeting materials can be found at:
<http://www.iom.int/cms/idmsouthsouthmigration>

The PPA would serve as a community of practice, for stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to fair and ethical recruitment, and develop specific tools, such as the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) for use by governments and the private sector in promoting ethical labour recruitment.

The keynote address emphasized the importance of ensuring ethical recruitment by reducing abuse of migrant workers and included the suggestion that IOM could play a leading role in the creation and development of a method of certification.

All stakeholders were reminded that migrants were key actors in development and economic growth, and that fair and ethical recruitment was a vital aspect of protecting their rights.

The IOM Director General expressed gratitude for the support from governments, the private sector and civil society in launching the PPA and looked forward to future cooperation to expand the PPA's membership and work.

South–South migration: a timely and appropriate discussion

Participants noted that human mobility was increasingly common for a growing number of countries, owing to a broad range of demographic, economic and environmental factors, and would increase in coming years, causing significant changes to global migration trends. The focus on emerging trends was therefore welcomed as a timely and appropriate topic for discussion. Many praised the balanced composition of the panels, which enabled the subject to be considered both from academic and policy perspectives.

Some representatives felt that new trends, particularly mobility occurring in the Global South, should be better studied, analysed and understood, in order to allow policymakers to address their implications and take them into account in policymaking processes at the national and regional levels.

In several presentations and the discussions that ensued, particular attention was paid to the fact that although not a new trend as such, and despite migration flows being numerically equal to those from South to North, South–South migration was still not receiving sufficient focus and attention from the international community. Participants emphasized the importance of studying South–South migration, particularly from a policy perspective.

Challenges and opportunities

There was general agreement among the participants that although South–South migration presented many challenges, it also afforded considerable potential opportunities and gains.

Increased coordination between countries was needed to address the diversity of challenges specific to South–South migration:

- South–South migration took place predominantly within regions, and therefore often occurred between neighbouring countries;
- South–South migration movements often involved irregular migrants, young and less skilled migrants, thus further complicating the issue of ensuring protection for those, and other vulnerable groups of migrants;
- Considerable difficulties were faced in ensuring that migration policies were drafted and implemented consistently between countries.

Speakers noted that South–South migration, when managed effectively, could contribute significantly to development. Contributions could be made by low- and highly-skilled migrants alike. In that regard, South–South migration played a significant economic and social role for many countries of the South, which relied on it in their poverty alleviation processes and poverty reduction strategies.

Since the remittances generated by South–South migration had such an important role to play, high transfer costs in the South (higher than those for transfers from North to South) must be addressed both internationally and nationally. Remittance flows between countries of the South were largely informal and therefore often not registered, which did not allow for an accurate assessment of their impact on development. Furthermore, although the economic contribution of South–South migration in many cases exceeded public aid for development, it should not be considered as a substitute.

Lack of reliable and comprehensive data constituted a real obstacle for governments, hampering the process of drafting appropriate policies to ensure positive development outcomes. In many countries of the South, lack of, or inconsistencies in, structural and technical capacity to gather and use data posed a further challenge to harnessing the full development potential of South–South migration. Participants therefore agreed that more study, research and analysis were needed to provide policymakers with the necessary data for their management of questions related to South–South migration. Some participants pointed out that most of the countries of the South needed support to strengthen their capacities for data production, analysis and use.

Since environmental degradation and climate change were among the major driving forces behind South–South migration, participants called for them to be given greater attention by the global community. Environmental issues should be placed at the centre of discussions about migration in general and South–South flows in particular. It was, however, pointed out that environment-induced migration was generally internal within countries or regions, and could itself have an impact on the environment.

International cooperation and partnerships

During the discussions, several representatives emphasized that no State acting alone could manage the complexities and meet the challenges of migration, particularly South–South migration. Regional approaches could often work where global approaches could not. Some called for innovative approaches to be taken to adapt existing partnership frameworks to emerging trends and changing patterns.

Since South–South migration took place predominantly within regions, subregions and across borders, regional dialogues and consultative processes were considered by all participants to be useful mechanisms for enhancing policy coordination and promoting capacity building. Several called for assistance in strengthening those processes.

Various speakers pointed out that the benefits of South–South migration could be largely lost if policies were not coherent and not efficiently coordinated at the national level, and more importantly at the regional and interregional levels. International and interregional cooperation were required for a better management of South–South migration. A large number of stakeholders – governmental organizations, NGOs, academics, civil society representatives and other actors including migrants themselves – should be actively involved not only in discussion and dialogue, but also at the policymaking level.

Discussion of South–South migration could contribute to improving the public's perception of migrants and migration in general. It was thought useful to draw attention to the breadth of migration, in order to dispel the image of it following an exclusively South–North path.

Some participants highlighted that a good discussion of migration should include the private sector and business leaders, who were key actors in the field of migration. Many speakers cited the launch of the PPA as an example of fruitful cooperation between all stakeholders, including the private sector.

Migrant's Voice session

During the Migrant's Voice session, Mr Moises Uamusse, Secretary General, Association of Mozambican Mine Workers (AMIMO), in a very moving presentation, spoke of his life and personal experiences as a mineworker and later as the co-founder and leader of AMIMO.

Participants expressed their appreciation for the IDM including a Migrant's Voice session, which afforded a unique opportunity for discussion and direct exchange between migrants, policymakers and other stakeholders, and was an important reminder that migration is about individual human beings.

IOM programmes and activities

The discussion on IOM experience and programming provided an opportunity for participants to learn about IOM's activities to assist countries and build their capacities to manage migration effectively. Programmes and activities in the areas of migration and health, migration, environment and climate change, disaster risk reduction, migration and human development were presented.

Presentations were also made on the work of the African Capacity Building Centre (ACBC) and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Observatory. The role of the ACBC in training, capacity building and support to African countries was praised by many participants, who encouraged IOM to publicize its work and extend its activities to cover more beneficiaries. There were calls from some to extend the ACBC experience to other regions.

Many speakers expressed similar appreciation for the role and activities of the ACP Observatory on Migration in the field of research and studies related to South-South migration. They underlined that the ACP filled the data gap, which was indispensable for better management of migration flows between the countries and regions of the South.

Geneva, 25 March 2014