6th Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration

13 October 2016 - Geneva, Switzerland

Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals:

The Role of Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration & of Regional Economic Organizations

SESSION 3. THE PLACE OF RCPS IN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. POTENTIAL AREAS OF COOPERATION AMONG THE RCPS AND THE UN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MIGRATION-RELATED SDGS

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Introduction

1. Statement by the President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson at recent UN High Level Meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants in New York, 19 September, 2016 indicating that during the 71st Session, he would take forward the commitment of UN member states under the New York Declaration to begin a process leading to a Global Compact on Migration as well as one on Refugees, and begin engagement towards preparations for an intergovernmental conference on international migration in 2018, all of this within the push to implementing the SDGs.

2. In addition, the signing of the agreement that formally brings the IOM into the UN system presents an opportunity for reviewing operational systems and strengthening relationships with headquarters, agencies and field offices in support of the realization of the SDGs as a whole, and specifically on migration-related SDGs.

3. Implementation of the SDGs require an integrated approach that acknowledges key dynamics, including the role of ecosystems in sustaining human wellbeing, multiple cross-scale interactions, social, economic and political constraints and policy implementation guided by evidence (Norström et al., 2014).

Thus migration-related SDGs cannot be delinked from the rest of the SDGs all of which emphasize the search for fairer, more inclusive and sustainable approaches to counter growing inequality, insecurity and depletion of the earth's resources.

RCPs

Regional consultation processes (RCPs) act informally, focusing on cooperative dialogue with an emphasis on information exchange and technical cooperation.

The information exchange and confidence-building that occurs in regional processes is quite important in terms of developing links between States and influencing the likelihood of future bilateral and multilateral agreements.

RCPs have been seen by many as largely focused on reducing or stemming irregular migration and managing migration to meet the economic and political objectives of destination countries.

Achievement of the migration related SDGs will require strengthening of regional dialogue using a more binding approach and allowing civil society and non-government organizations to become part of the search for solutions.

RCPs

An alternative approach suggests creating systems of legal migration based on recognition of the interests of all stakeholders and the human rights of all migrants.

This would mean setting up cooperative arrangements (or institutions), which would give a voice not only to stakeholder groups in destination countries (governments, employers, trade unions, and affected communities) but also to similar groups in origin countries and to the migrants themselves.

Such an approach recognizes the reality of irregular migration and the need to counter stereotypes linking migrants to crime, insecurity and terrorism, as well as the invaluable contributions that migrants make to key growth sectors of economies such as agriculture, construction and services, and to the welfare of populations in both destination and origin countries.

Achievement of the migration related SDGs will require strengthening of regional dialogue using a more practical and binding approach and allowing civil society and non-government organizations to become part of the search for solutions.

Some RCPs in Africa

1. IGAD- created in 2008
2. MIDSA – established in 2000

2. 5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean: Established in 2002: Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malts, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia
3. The Migration Dialogue for West Africa or MIDWA - Established in 2001: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leon, Togo
4. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) RCP – MIDCOM: Established 2013: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe
5. Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process);Established in 2006
6. Arab Regional Consultative Process : Established in 2015

7. Migration Dialogue for Central African States (MIDCAS); Established in 2012, endorsed formally in 2014 and adopted by the ECCAS in 2015

ECA AND THE MIGRATION -RELATED SDGS

The ECA can contribute to the implementation of migration related SDGs in a number of ways including:

❑ Designing and implementing policies to achieve the global (Agenda 2030) and regional (Agenda 2063) frameworks, both of which recognize the critical role of migration for sustainable development;

❑ Improving the information base so that African countries, destination countries, and the international community can improve migration policies;

❑ Undertaking analytical work, in partnership with national and regional research institutions where possible, to better understand the implications of migration trends for the continent;

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❑ Promoting coherence among different national policies in line with regional and sub-regional protocols and agreements, and strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to implement policies for the improvement of legal and statistical systems on international migration;

❑ Designing suitable policies on education, skills and training to meet national, regional and international needs and opportunities;

❑ Promoting consultative processes on international migration at global, regional and sub-regional levels, with involvement of countries of destination in the design, implementation and supporting migration-related action plans in countries of origin.

Possible areas of cooperation with RCPs

Some evidence that as a result of RCP membership, states have:

1) reviewed, created and/or amended migration-related legislation. In several cases, participation in RCPs has also led to the improved implementation of existing policies;

2) enhanced capacity of migration officials through regular participation in workshops and seminars which provide training and information to individuals involved in day-to-day migration management operations.

Thus far, ECA as a regional commission has not been engaged directly in RCP processes. But the exchange of information and good practices between RCPs and ECA can greatly improve the knowledge base on migration-related SDGs and their implementation, which in turn is relevant for member states in guiding policy and programmes on migration.

Possible areas for collaboration with RCPs include the following:

❑ ***Data generation:*** We need better data, including disaggregated data, as well as a robust monitoring frameworks for migration. Although the demands for reliable data have increased in recent years, timely and quality disaggregated data on migration are often scarce. This makes it challenging for decision-makers to develop effective and informed migration policies.

❑ ***Coordination of policies and actions on migration***: There is a need for coherence and coordination of policies and actions on migration and development. Migration needs to be mainstreamed appropriately in development planning and strategies.

❑ ***Investments in Youth***: Africa has a large and growing youth population. Africa has a young age structure with about 40% in the age bracket 0-14 years and nearly 20% in the age bracket 15-24 years (ECA & UNFPA 2016). Prioritizing and ensuring quality education and skills, and employment opportunities for youth in Africa can be one of the most powerful measures to enable the continent prepare for its demographic transitions as well as take advantage of its potential demographic dividend, therefore meeting the UN 2030 agenda.

Conclusion

Migration is a cross-border/continental phenomenon that necessarily requires partnerships and offers a key opportunity for the continent and member states, UN agencies, civil society and NGOs to enhance existing partnerships through the RCPs and to build new ones as no single country acting alone can address migration-related issues and challenges.

Partnerships strengthen the overall response as sharing and leveraging our joint knowledge, resources and assets expands our coverage, helps overcome obstacles to reaching people in need, and builds resilience.

-A tangible framework that can lead to effective sharing of responsibilities, and firm partnerships to promote well-managed migration, is needed.

-Hopefully the proposal of the President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly for an intergovernmental conference on international migration in 2018 and a global compact on migration should lead to the development of such a framework.

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