

To realize Global compacts for safe, orderly and regular migration  
- Basic questions, practical recommendations and philosophical answers from Asia-  
Yasushi Iguchi  
Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan

## 1 Now is “Critical Era” for migration policies

In the first half of this century, difference of time and distance have been dramatically overcome by technological development in transport as well as information and communication (ICT). Interdependence between economies between countries have been widening and deepening through international trade and foreign direct investment.

However, attitudes between social groups or nations as well as those between human minds seem to be rapidly deteriorating in this decade. There are serious facts that we live everyday life as if we have nothing to do with the phenomenon that many people are in danger and leave their home towns or countries or children are losing their lives because of wars and civil wars or natural disasters or violence. There seems to be temptation to overlook such global phenomenon and to remain apart from them .

We seem to be constructing “invisible barriers” between social groups and nations, which are sometimes manipulated by narrow nationalism under limited freedom of journalism. Nationalism often targets at some groups or other nations and intensify conflicts or confrontations, sometimes to maintain oppressive political regimes.

However, we have been accumulating findings and knowledge with evidence as well as creating wisdoms on migration and integration and diversity in overcoming these “invisible barriers” . Migration should not be regarded as a threat to national security but be managed to create trust and overcome segregation.

I am confident that people moving cross-border, experiencing diversities and making friends and acquaintances by themselves, are capable for acknowledging real life and way of thinking of people. It is also crucial for them to have compassion on the “sufferings” of others and to seek for encouragements and collaboration together. This is an important grace brought by migration. In other words, migrants can be common assets of international society who are able to acknowledge their mission.

“Migration crisis” in Europe in relation to West Asia have stimulated backlashes in politics against migration world, Migration has been “mixed migration” of regular and irregular ones which also accompanies explosion of commercial human smuggling. East Asia is not an exception, which has been exposed to international conflicts and the governments take nation-centered policies. While diversity of population is in rising under the strong tendency of regional economic integration, integration policy of migrants is underdeveloped in East Asia especially at national level as temporary migration is dominant.

Therefore, creating trust through wisdom of migration and integration is also indispensable for achieving Sustainable Development Goals through “well-managed” migration policies. Then we discuss on practical responses to the challenges of our time and also make more proactive as well as long-term measures to assure the success of migration policy as a part of SDG as follows:

## 2 Tasks of the discussion on SDG by 2030

It is also estimated climate change, environmental degradation, shrinking natural resources, armed conflict and violence might be additional emigration pressures. Potential migrants might be 1.3 billion according an estimate based upon UN statistics and International Gallup surveys (Chamie J. 2016).

Under such circumstances mentioned above, there may arise three questions which the author is trying to suggest solutions.

Firstly, how can many countries especially in Asia would actively making collaboration for realizing the goals set by SDG by 2030?

Especially, there are many countries in Asia which have not ratifies Refugee Conventions and the related Protocols. Whether or not ratification have been done, legal and safe channels should be created to reduce irregular migration by legal channels.

Secondly, how can migration policy make active contribution to reduce international tensions and conflicts so as to change the nation-centric sentiments and to create trust between people of conflict countries?

There arise imagination that migration creates tensions and conflicts or even terrorism. However, migration can override territory barriers and censorship. Migrants can disseminate information from the spot outside the country.

Mind sets from which conflicts stems may be really changing as the result of migration.

Thirdly, how can we ask governments to make more proactive measure to cope with and accept unexpected migration flows and enable them to make contribution as international cooperation?

Fourthly, how can we create more global consciousness in governments, citizens as well as migrants themselves to take initiatives both for realizing rights and obligations of migrants?

SDG looks so idealistic goals and many governments may regard them as too idealistic and unachievable in many ways. Therefore, it is more important to invite more involvements of governments and the other stakeholders. It is also worth stressing there are no countries in the world which can be elites or privileged to be totally outside the influence of this global phenomenon.

We remember that UN global compact already contained the concept of “circular migration”. It should have created a paradigm change in migration policies. In reality, no. Naturally, the validity of this concept has never forgone. However, the concepts have been differently interpreted and misused in some ways.

It is of great importance really to create the migration management targeting at SDG in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in place of our mindset based upon combination of just nation-centric migration management stemming from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In making answers to the four questions above, we should be based upon enormous scientific findings related to migration and development. Especially important are our findings on:

- 1) In-country economic disparities affected by informal sector employment and migrant labor abroad
- 2) Economic integration creates labor demands for both high and low skilled migrants but less middle skills
- 3) New migration chains have been created by status changes of foreign students, who also make business startup
- 4) With economic development, source regions of migrants age changing to more underdeveloped ones
- 5) Diasporas invest to home countries and returning while their volume is relatively small for example in India
- 6) Internal and international migration relate with each other both in depopulation area and agglomeration area
- 7) Migration-trade link and migrant-investment links are perceivable in Chinese and Korean settlement cases
- 8) Effectiveness of labor arrangements with MOU or RD have been differentiated according to source countries

### 3 Practical responses necessary to the questions

To the question 1:

#### (1) Without huge burden on refugee recognition system, alternative legal channels for migration should be developed in many ways

Accepting irregular migration because of refugee recognition is often burdensome and risky for many of the governments. Therefore, there should be alternative legal channels to be offered to this movements.

One is allocation of refugee resettlement through UNHCR, second is acceptance and supports to refugee students who have been raised in refugee camps. Third is acceptance of trainees from disaster stricken areas and granting worker's status after finishing training and acquiring official certificate of the qualification. Fourth should be family reunification to the persons accepted.

Even when the country has not ratified the Geneva Convention (1951) or New York Protocol (1967), it is also recommended to take actions to accept resettlement refugees through UNHCR together with

There may be recommendations for IOM member countries to create multilateral cooperation plan for refugee resettlement in East Asia for example.

Because of difficulties for funding or capacity building as well as cooperation with the civil societies, it is recommendable for the governments to ask municipalities, NGOs and communities of the migrants in these municipalities to setup contracts to make collaboration.

IOM and UNHCR are requested to lead this planning process internationally and internally in cooperation with governments, municipalities and NGOs as well as enterprises.

#### (2) Make bilateral labor arrangements legally binding and transparent in receiving and sending countries

Especially in Asia, effectiveness of labor arrangements are so different. Commission of regular channels are often too costly and irregular channels are cost effective (UNODC 2013). Even under the legal channels, there might be payment requested by the administration which are not stipulated in the concluded documents.

In order to create safe, orderly and regular migration, competitiveness of legal channels should have to be enhanced in comparison with the irregular channels. Firstly, MOU or RD should have legal basis both in sending and receiving countries and secondly, their implementation should have to be monitored and their obligation should be detected and improved or sanctioned if the situation is not normalized as soon as possible.

Sanctions based upon labor agreements are economically not high. The prescriptions of penal code on trafficking are not often used. The penal code should be effectively utilized when the evil conduct can be regarded as trafficking.

(3) Workers' education and hot line for rescue in case of evil conduct of employers should function

Institutional arrangement cannot be complete. It is of greater importance to find human rights violation by the migrant workers themselves and notification should be made at the early stages of violation. If the violation is held long time, the situation will be more serious.

Firstly, worker's education on immigration laws and labor laws as well as international agreements should be undertaken before starting employment.

Secondly, hotlines for migrant workers using their native language should function when they find any violations or infringements of human rights.

Thirdly, this mechanism should be supplemented not only by state authorities but also by municipalities or NGOs at the local level which are located near the spot.

Social integration of migrants at the local level should also prevent human right violation and safe and orderly working life of migrants.

(3) Creating employment opportunities for migrants by filling mismatches in the local labor markets

Employment of foreign workers can be justified and accepted by the receiving countries without damaging the employment opportunities of natives. In developed and emerging economies, there are increasing labor market mismatches caused by fertility decline and internal migration irrespective of labor market policies. The speculation that migrant workers easily substituting native workers are lacking in theoretical and empirical evidences, so far as they are filling the vacancies in the local labor markets (Iguchi 2015).

Even in the field of highly skilled, flows are regulated by requirements for them. In the unskilled labor, rotation principle and labor arrangements as well as quotas may function.

However, in the field of middle skilled workers, who should have finished high school, taken part in training for two or three years and successfully passed examination for public license, labor mismatches are gradually increasing and courses of training should have to be squeezed. Mechanics, electricians, automobile repair technicians as well as elderly care professionals are examples in several developed countries.

Because of expenditures for human resource investment and licenses, these markets are not accessible for migrants workers (Iguchi 2012, IMI 2016). However, it is promising for refugees accepted in developed countries to take actions for “integration through qualification (IQ in Germany, 2015).

(4) Modernizing and/or reducing urban informal sectors as a pool of low skilled migrants

Low skilled and low paid family workers are so common in South East Asia, as a result of abundant supply of such workers as a part of urban informal sector employment in sending countries. Wages level remains very low, because of the existence of unpaid family work, with exception of migrant workers with high proficiency in English and having finished tertial education. Migrant workers engaged in family work are so vulnerable in receiving countries, because of language barriers and because they have to live together with the host family. The protection of such workers cannot be undertaken by the government authorities.

Urban informal sector employment is the source of such migrants as domestic workers. It has proven to be one of the reasons of “middle income country trap”, which maintains low paid employment without human capital investment.

It is important, especially for young workers, to get education and vocational training, acquire qualification and go out of informal sector employment. In this meaning, informal sector employment should have to be modernized, so that pool of migrant workers to be sent abroad might be squeezed. It may lead to less human rights infringements and accidents of migrant workers abroad.

To respond to the question 2:

(5) Improving employability of international students abroad and inland

International students may have reached 800 thousand in the United States and three million in OECD countries (OECD 2016). These students, mainly youngsters, have great potential in creating mutual understanding and taking bridging roles should have to be regarded as “common assets” of the international society.

However, there are imbalances between two respective countries concerning international students reflecting their employability after finishing study or taking degrees in the host countries. The government authorities are not paying attention to imbalances and their futures of exchange students. They meet with difficulties in finding and continuing jobs and then they have to take low-paid unstable employment. The quality and recognition of studies abroad should have to be amended by international cooperation for example by introducing double degree system with guarantee of its quality and creating competitiveness in the labor market.

(6) Utilizing ICT technology in matching and business but creation of non-discriminatory world

ICT is affecting not only migration process and business. It is important to pay more attention to its potential on migration policies. In addition, ICT can be very important in creating common space for ICT workers without discrimination in terms of nationality, race, sex, origin, social status or religion.

(7) Diasporas policy should be more systematically conducted to realize long-term development

Systematic diaspora policy has not been undertaken with a few exceptions. Diasporas are expected to make return migration and investment in the country of origin. Behavior of diaspora is not exclusively economic perspectives but also ethical consideration. Investment in their home country should be encouraged to make long term strategies through diaspora. Even when diasporas are successful in an foreign country, they do not intend to make contributions to the home country.

However, with the bridging activities of diasporas, migration between two countries may be more intensified with diversifies status and activities. It is therefore recommended to establish diasporas policy together with institutional economic integration between the two countries.

(8) Tourism as vehicle of changing international relations and public consciousness

Recently, with the expansion of inbound tourism, especially from emerging economies, consumption of international tourists has reached enormous volume, which have contributed to maintaining economic activities and income in many countries. However, this movement should not be seen from economic standpoint. The mutual images on neighboring countries such as Japan-China or Korea-Japan have shown substantial improvements, because Chinese and Korean tourist visiting Japan have enormously increased and disseminate information on the real situation in Japan through internet.

To respond to the question 3

(9) Establishing integration policy in parallel with immigration policy is proactive investment

Especially in Asia, majorities of migration movements are temporary and the share of permanent residents in the foreign inhabitants are relatively small in comparison with Europe and North America.

Therefore, migration policy at the national level in Asia has limited to immigration policies. These countries including Japan did not understand the necessities of investing in creation of integration policies. With the growing economic integration and exchange of people, permanent residents are steadily growing. However, governments in Asia do not understand that investing in integration policy especially in language training, education, housing and employment is necessary. Therefore, local initiatives are very active in Asia to strengthen integration policy while the national governments do not make enough supports.

However, it is requested for IOM to make strong recommendation to Asian countries to establish migration policy with the two pillars as immigration and integration policies. Many governments do not understand the necessities and they depend upon the initiatives at the local level. This is an obstacle for these

countries to accept refugees and people with humanitarian needs. I am afraid that Rohingya has not been welcome by the neighboring countries so far.

To respond to the question 4

(10) Creating more global consciousness on suffering of migrants, encouraging migrants and compassion on diversity

In achieving “Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration”, it is essential to make efforts to make prevail more global consciousness on “suffering of migrants”, “courage to live for the future” and “compassion on diversity”. These kind of consciousness are based upon Asian traditional wisdom on the transient life of creatures and upon Western wisdom on the dignity of human beings as well as critical thinking on the sustainability of the world.

Without such consciousness, I fear, Global compact of IOM cannot be earnestly taken and be regarded as necessary with high priority by the governments, citizens and the other stakeholders. (End)