International Dialogue on Migration

Migration and Transnationalism: Opportunities and Challenges

Geneva, 9 & 10 March 2010
• Overarching theme: **Migration and Social Change**

• 1\textsuperscript{st} Workshop (9-10 March) “**Migration and Transnationalism: Opportunities and Challenges**”

• 2\textsuperscript{nd} Workshop (19-20 July) “**Societies and Identities: the Multifaceted Impact of Migration**”
Defining Transnationalism

- Various definitions exist
- In general: exchanges, connections and practices across borders

⇒ Activities and identities are no longer necessarily contained in a single national space
Focus on Migrants and their Families

Every migrant can be an agent and a subject of transnationalism

- Being in several places at once / Being “neither here nor there”

- Multi-sited lives and cross-border connections and exchanges

- Important role of those who stay behind
Globalization as a context for transnationalism

- New information and communication technologies
- Enhanced ease of transport
- More intense international trade

- Enhanced circulation of persons, goods, information and ideas across borders
- Greater connectivity between societies
Transnationalism: A New Lens

• No new form of migration but a different way of looking at migration

• Angle of analysis for the broader issue of migration and social change

• Focus on the connections which migrants establish between countries
Consequences for Policymaking

Policymakers tend to think within their national spaces

Think outside the box
Transnationalism & Families

Opportunities:
• Multicultural existence → expanded horizons

Challenges:
• Identity issues and family disruption

Policy Considerations:
• Focus on family unity / reunification
• Respond to changing gender roles
• Support to transnational families (esp. children)
• Attention to 2nd and 3rd generation
Transnationalism & Civic and Political Participation

Opportunities:
- Greater contributions by migrants; enhanced sense of belonging; better social cohesion

Challenges:
- Concerns surrounding split loyalties
- Access to rights and benefits

Policy Considerations:
- Facilitate participation at different levels
- Ensure portability of social benefits
Opportunities:
• Harness role of networks as conduits of transnational activity

Challenges:
• Overcome suspicions and create channels for engagement and communication

Policy Considerations:
• Systematic partnerships with migrant networks and diaspora
Key Messages for Policymakers

Thinking and acting transnationally

= focus on cross-border connections created by migrants

= target policies to maximize benefits and reduce costs of transnational activities for migrants, their families and society

= opt for comprehensive approaches that involve all relevant partners

= engage in bilateral, regional and international cooperation
• Transnationalism is a reality

• It needs to be considered as part of comprehensive migration management

• Policies need to go beyond traditional dichotomies of host/home country considerations