



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, DECENTRALIZATION
AND E-GOVERNANCE



Global Forum on Migration and Development

Third meeting, Athens 2009, Closing Ceremony

General Report of Roundtable 1:

How to make the migration-development nexus work for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

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Mrs. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be with you today. I have been given the difficult task to present the summary of the discussions of Roundtable 1. Roundtable 1 covered three sessions, and I will

try my best to share the key points of the deliberations and hope that the report captures the different views expressed in the discussions at the Roundtables.

Mrs. Chair, These sessions were directly inspired by the overarching theme of this GFMD meeting which has as title *“Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All”*.

More specifically, during these sessions, we aimed at finding practical and concrete ways for making the ‘migration and development’ nexus work for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, we have also paid attention to the deliberations of the civil society group, not just during the opening ceremony, but also at sessions level.

Mrs. Chair, We are now at two-thirds level of our journey to the achievement of the MDGs in 2015, and the challenges ahead are still important. Therefore, all policies, ideas and support are welcome and should be put to use.

The MDG challenges should be faced for their own sake, not just for their relation to migration. Migration is not just an

economic issue, but it also about men and women on the move to improve their overall quality of life. Therefore, even if migration can complement development efforts, we have to prevent its “instrumentalization”.

Also, our purpose was not to curb migration through development but rather to explore how development efforts can make people migrate by choice and not out of necessity. In addition, we looked at properly managed regular migration as a way of creating ‘triple win’ situations, which benefits not just countries of origin and destination, but also the migrants themselves.

We are of course all aware that there is no “automaticity” in this relation, but that this should be achieved with appropriate policies. In fact, we do not consider migration as a substitute for development, nor development as a substitute for migration. But our aim is that both policies, working together, enhance their respective positive impact.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Throughout the work of Roundtables, we addressed the potential benefits of the ‘migration and development’ nexus on the MDGs from three different perspectives:

The first session looked at mainstreaming migration in development planning. More specifically, it looked at how to integrate migration considerations into development planning and at how migration can contribute to development, identifying strategies to be implemented, actors to be engaged and instruments to be used.

From this session, the following key recommendations for action were noted...

- Migration should be integrated into National Development Plans (NDPs), but also in Poverty Reduction Strategies. These must be complemented by policies, concrete actions and programmes at all levels. Their operationalization can lead to a win-win-win situation for both countries of origin and destination, as well as migrants.

- There is need for policy coherence and coordination at the National level between relevant Ministries and agencies.
- Based on the European Commission (EC) migration profiles, participants agreed that they can be beneficial to development and recommended that more countries adopt them. The profiles however need to be regularly updated, owned by the concerned countries and be used as a tool for coherence between migration and development policy. It is suggested that migration profiles include relevant data and analysis concerning countries of origin and destination. Interested countries and international organizations are invited to liaise with the EC regarding improvements they wish to bring to migration profiles to be reported at the GFMD 2010.
- Bilateral agreements and regional initiatives can reinforce effectiveness of partnerships. Comprehensive partnerships between countries of origin and destination promote managed and regulated migration to the benefit of development.

- Information should be provided to migrants at all stages of the migration process. In parallel, awareness raising campaigns in the destination countries should inform the public about migrants' contribution to their development.

In addition, the issues of diasporas, brain drain and remittances were raised with regard to their contribution to development.

In the second session, we discussed concrete strategies for governments of countries of origin and destination to engage with diasporas for development.

To that end, this session has introduced a “road map” on diaspora engagement, to fit the many elements of a diaspora policy into a coherent strategy and that must be adapted to the circumstances of different countries and diaspora populations.

From this session, the main recommendations are ...

1. Establish a handbook containing lessons learned on and practical guidelines for engaging diasporas in development activities.
2. Engaging diasporas starts with knowing your diaspora. Therefore, a concrete suggestion was to further include diaspora data in migration profiles.
3. To create a common discourse between diasporas and governments on intentions, options and actions for cooperation aimed at building and / or sustaining trust.
4. To support the capacity of diasporas organisations and institutions working with diasporas for development.
5. To engage diaspora organisations in development planning of both countries of destination and origin, with particular emphasis on procedures, and to study the contributions of migrants to the well-being of destination countries.

Finally, our discussions also took place against the backdrop of the global economic crisis and one specific session was

dedicated to this issue and its relation to the root causes of migration.

From this session, the main recommendations are ...

- There must be a coordinated, unrestricted, transparent data sharing and sharing of experiences of the impact of relevant policies, so that policy responses to the crisis can be based upon the best available evidence.
- Establish partnerships between countries of destination and countries of origin to deal with the varied manifestations of the economic downturn in coordination with each other
- Work together in the recovery of the crisis taking into account the realities, benefits and challenges of the migration development nexus.
- Serious consideration of the impact of climate change on migration should be given and consider joint efforts to face this challenge.
- The need to have a particular focus on managing xenophobic tendencies and discrimination in times of economic crises and job losses.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, During the last three years, from Belgium to the Philippines and now Greece, we have been building something new and concrete. No one can contest the fact that there has been a ‘before’ and ‘after’ the GFMD in the global migration debate, and from here on its link to development can no longer be overlooked.

Let’s now hope that there will be a ‘before’ and ‘after’ this meeting in the MDG debate, where the potential positive impact of migration as a complementary tool for their achievement will be taken into account.

Of course, the GFMD is an informal process and its recommendations are non binding. However, to face the challenges ahead, these recommendations, resulting from our collective work, should now lead us towards action. Whatever has been left out of this report will be captured in the detailed report of the Forum which will be made available on the GFMD website in due course.

Athens is a beautiful city and the Greek hospitality was excellent, but I hope that we will not leave from here just with souvenirs. We should leave with a resolution for action.

I wish to express my to all the participants, rapporteurs and note takers for a good job done. I want especially to acknowledge the Coordinator of the Roundtable, Romeo Matsas, for his dedication and diligent work. I commend the Greek government for hosting this forum with such class and the proverbial hospitality.

I thank you for your attention.