

Report of the “International Meeting on Diasporas’ Contributions and Knowledge Transference”

Mexico, City August 31st – September 1st 2009

The International Meeting on Diasporas’ Contributions and Knowledge Transference was held in Mexico City on August 31st and September 1st 2009 and co-organized by the Government of Mexico and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

I. INTRODUCTION

The contribution of diasporas to the development of both origin and destination countries has gained considerable attention in the debates of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Previous meetings of the Global Forum in Belgium and Manila stressed the need to analyze other diaspora contributions beyond the traditional focus on remittances. The Third Meeting of the Forum, to be held in Athens, Greece, will focus on strategies to build effective partnerships between governments (from origin and destination countries) and diasporas (as individuals or as groups).

According to IOM information, the international migration of qualified people has significantly increased its size. Additionally, OECD and SELA studies indicate that while the total number of migrants between 1990 and 2007 grew 68.2%, qualified migration grew 111.3%, from 12.2 to 25.9 million. This growth creates enormous challenges, but it also creates opportunities for origin and destination countries.

Highly qualified diasporas generate tangible benefits for countries of destination. The implementation of effective public policies can also enhance the contributions of these diasporas to the development of their countries of origin, but this requires the joint work of a number of players. To identify the impacts and challenges of this type of migration and to identify best practices and policies to facilitate their contributions, the Government of Mexico and the International Organization for Migration organized this International Meeting on Diasporas’ Contributions and Knowledge Transference.

This paper identifies the main outcomes of the meeting, which the Government of Mexico presents as a contribution to the works of the Third Meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are annexed.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- . The current economic crisis represents an opportunity for countries to reconsider their migration's politics and policies. Governments may also take advantage of this juncture to incorporate the knowledge economy principles into their national development strategies.
- . From the perspective of the knowledge economy, innovation systems can play a key role in addressing the economic crisis. In this context, skilled migration can share their knowledge and experiences for the development of strategic sectors, as key development actors.
- . **It is essential to change the "brain drain" paradigm to a "circulation of talent" paradigm**, highlighting the benefits for development that countries of origin may achieve.
- . Countries of origin cannot impede the departure of qualified migrants or demand their return. To strengthen the relationships between governments and their diasporas, countries of origin should insist on the importance of respecting qualified migrants' rights, to ensure fair treatment in the countries of destination labor markets.
- . **Countries of origin cannot make migrants responsible for the development of their countries.** Instead, countries of origin should recognize the autonomy of diasporas, and develop policies, strategies and incentives to encourage diasporas' voluntary contributions.
- . Considering that the return of highly qualified migrants is unlikely, especially if they have secured a good situation in their countries of destination, we suggest the creation of links that do not imply the definite return of migrants (e.g. virtual links; short visits; internships at their countries of destination; etc).
- . **Considering the benefits for sending and receiving countries, bilateral cooperation should be central in the implementation of diasporas' programs.** Success stories

must be taken into consideration while developing bilateral programs.

- In order to maximize their potential contributions, it is important to reassess the value of diasporas and to promote studies about their background, interests and achievements.
- Diaspora philanthropy may produce good results to some extent, but it also has limits. **The challenge is to engage diasporas into national development policies.** For that purpose, the following actions are suggested:
 - Promote the recognition and certification of studies and degrees for migrants, as it is agreed in multilateral mechanisms.
 - Implement a flexible visa regime to facilitate migrant's circularity.
 - Facilitate labor recruitment schemes that protect migrants' basic rights.
 - Strengthen diaspora investment in science and technology.
 - Generate more equitable conditions for highly qualified women.
 - Develop differentiated policies for different occupational groups (engineers, technicians, professionists, students, academics, scientists, etc.)
- **In order to enhance benefits from diasporas' programs, governments should restructure their innovation systems and recognize the role of entrepreneurs, in particular of transnational entrepreneurs.** These innovation systems can be enhance through the experience of qualified diasporas and through the attraction of experts from other countries.
- Migration procedures should be modified to facilitate the entry and the departure of migrants.
- It is impotant to improve the research and quantification of the contributions of migrants in both origin and destination countries in order to design public policies that comprehensible adress this phenomenon.
- **We need to continue studying the successful experiences.** These studies should analyze what was circumstantial in its success and what can be resumed to generate

recommendations for future programs. It is also important to increase the promotion of successful experiences.

- Further research is needed about incentive schemes for circular migration, involvement of migrants in local development initiatives and the impact of outsourcing of global I+D chains on sending and receiving countries.
- Particular attention should be given to the role of qualified women in transnational labour markets.
- The use of information technology for knowledge transfer and communication between migrant communities and home countries should be further explored.
- Close monitoring of hiring practices, options of double nationality and transfer of social security benefits will improve working conditions and mobility of qualified migrants. The Multilateral Framework for Labor Migrations (ILO) provides orientation.

ANNEX 1

International Meeting on Diasporas' Contributions and Knowledge Transference

Mexico City, August 31st – September 1st, 2009

Program

Monday, August 31st

9:00 - 9:45 **Opening session**

- **Amb. Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo**
Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Juan Artola Belvis**
Head of IOM Mission in Mexico

10:00 – 13:00 **Session 1. Globalization and qualified and highly qualified migration.**

This session will focus on analyzing the impacts of globalization for qualified and highly qualified migration, in both origin and destination countries, as well as the challenges that these impacts implies. This session will highlight the contributions of diasporas to development in destination economies and societies; the living and working conditions faced by migrants in host countries; the costs and benefits of emigration for origin countries; and the implications of the feminization of migration in host and origin societies.

Panel:

- (DICOEX)
- **Anita de Aguirre Hoffa**
Director for the Chilean Community Abroad
 - **Thomas Wissing**
International Labor Organization
 - **Raúl Delgado Wise**
Autonomous University of Zacatecas and Executive Director of the International Network on Migration and Development

Rapporteur: **Elena Zúñiga Herrera**

13:00 - 13:30 Conclusions and recommendations of the session

13:30 - 15:00 Lunch

15:00 - 18:00 Session 2. Motivating the involvement of qualified professionals in projects in their countries of origin.

This session will analyze the actions that some countries have implemented for triggering the impacts of development in their countries of origin, through the involvement of their professionals abroad in the design and execution of projects in their areas of expertise. Likewise, participants will share their main challenges while involving Diasporas in this process.

Panel:

- . **Kwabena Asante Donkor**
Deputy Director of the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, Ghana
- . **Juan Artola**
Head of IOM Mission in Mexico
- . **Fernando Lozano**
Regional Centre of Interdisciplinary Studies,

UNAM

Rapporteur: Rodolfo García Zamora

18:00 - 18:30 Conclusions and recommendations of the session

18:30 -20:00 Cocktail

Tuesday, September 1st

9:00 - 12:00 Session 3. Best practices and policies to facilitate the circulation of talents.

This session will take into consideration the diasporas' perspective while debating the best practices and policies that could be implemented by origin and destination governments to facilitate and promote the circulation of talents for the benefit of all. This session will also analyze the risks and challenges faced by migrants in the context of the current global crisis.

Panel:

- . **Ximena Botero**

Program	Coordinator of the “ <i>Colombia nos Une</i> ”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonia Plaza Senior Economist on the Prospective Group, World Bank • Sylvie Didou Centre for Research and Advanced Studies, National Polytechnic Institute • Itzel Nayeli Ortiz Zaragoza National Coordinator for “Paisano” Program, National Institute of Migration. • Amb. Carlos García de Alba Executive Director, Institute for Mexicans
Abroad	
Rapporteur:	Jorge Zavala <i>México-Silicon Valley Technology Business Accelerator</i>
12:00 - 12:30 the session	Conclusions and recommendations of
12:30 – 13:00	Closing session

ANNEX 2

Participants of the International Meeting on Diasporas' Contributions and Knowledge Transference

Governmental representatives

Vice-ministry for the Salvadorians Abroad
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1. Azerbaijan

Mr. Javanshir Salehov
Third Secretary
Embassy of Azerbaijan in Mexico

Mrs. Marisa Angel
Ministry-Counselor
Embassy of El Salvador in Mexico

2. Chile

Mrs. Anita de Aguirre
Director for the Chilean Community Abroad (DICOEX)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

6. Ghana

Mr. Kwabena Asante-Donkor
Deputy Director
Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora

3. Colombia

Dr. Ximena Botero
"Colombia nos Une"
Program Coordinator
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

7. Nigeria

Amb. Alex Chike Anigbo
Permanent Secretary
Secretary to the Government of the Federation

4. Egypt

Mr. Ragai Nasr
Chargé d'Affairs, a.i.
Embassy of Egypt in Mexico

Mrs. Maimuna Nasir
Ajanah
Director of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO)
Secretary to the Government of the Federation

Mr. Abdel Hamid El Rafie
Second Secretary
Embassy of Egypt in Mexico

5. El Salvador

Mr. Juan José David García

8. The Netherlands

Mr. Han-Maurits
Schaapveld
Director for Migration and
Alien Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

International organizations

- 1. International Labour Organization (ILO)**
Mr. Thomas Wissing
Office for Mexico and Cuba
- 2. International Organization for Migrations (IOM)**
Mr. Juan Artola Belvis
Head of Mission
IOM Mission in Mexico
- 3. World Bank**
Mr. Yevgeny Kuznetzov
World Bank Institute

Civil Society Organizations

- 1. Mr. Mario Santillo**
Director
Centre for Latin-American Migratory Studies
- 2. Mr. Jorge A. Zavala**
Executive Director
Mexico – Silicon Valley Technology Business Accelerator

Academics and experts

- 1. Dr. Sylvie Didou**
Researcher
Centre for Research and Advanced Studies
National Polytechnic Institute
- 2. Dr. Raúl Delgado Wise**
Director
International Network for Migration and Development
- 3. Dr. Rodolfo García Zamora**
Researcher
Autonomous University of Zacatecas
- 4. Dr. Fernando Lozano**
Researcher

Regional Centre for Multidisciplinary Research – UNAM

5. Dr. Elena Zuñiga

Director

Information System for Migration and Development (SIMDE)

Development Studies Academic Unit, Autonomous University
of Zacatecas

National Authorities (Mexico)

1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE)
2. National Institute of Migration (INM)
3. Ministry of Public Education
4. Ministry of Labour and Social Security
5. Ministry of Social Development