



Connections for Development

Feedback Meeting on:

UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration & Development

Report

Drafted by Connections for Development

17th October 2006

1.0 Introduction

This meeting was jointly organised by DfID¹ and CfD² on the 17th October 2006. The meeting aimed to provide a platform for those who attended the September 2006³ UN High-level Dialogue on migration and development, including Baroness Royall, UK government departments and the UK Diaspora delegates to give feedback on the ongoing global debate about the interconnectedness between migration and development.

The meeting was an opportunity for government departments, i.e. DfID, the Foreign Office, the Home Office and migrant communities including Voluntary Sector Organisations to meet and share experiences and perspectives on how best to promote the dialogue on migration from a developmental dimension. Participants were able to share views about the benefits, opportunities and constraints that characterise migration.

The meeting was also about sharing learning and promoting the international dialogue on migration. It enabled DfID to gather thoughts about devising practical migration and development policy options to strengthen the position and work of Diaspora organisations. It encouraged discussions about the possibilities of strategic alternatives for collaborative working and reinforcing the relationship between the Diaspora, government departments concerned with migration as well as development agencies.

Since its establishment in 2003, CfD has encouraged Diaspora-led organisations in the UK that are involved in International Development (ID) to document, publicise and to mainstream their ID activities; recognise the advantages in linking their activities to policy programmes that feed into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)⁴.

¹ The Department for International Development (DfID) Migration Team: www.dfid.gov.uk

² Connections for Development (CfD): www.cfdnetwork.co.uk

³ www.un.org/population/hldmigration

⁴ DEA 2006: Conference Report, Black Voices in Development Education: See the workshop report on MDGs.

CfD has engaged in several policy consultations with its members to boost their engagement in the policy-making processes in the UK.

The High-Level Dialogue has brought the issue of global migration, its benefits and difficulties to another level. It has added strength to the voices of migrants and their advocates. Above all, it has made it very difficult for anyone to ignore the complementarities and/or the interconnectedness between migration and development. Through organising the dialogue the UN has brought attention to the trends of global human development influenced by migration. The dialogue highlighted that migrants (*also referred to as the Diaspora in this report*) the world over, have the potential to be ‘agents of change’ and/or development. They shift the balance of skills, knowledge and capital in the countries they settle in, maintain social links with or finally return to.

At the meeting, it was made clear that, this is also an age in which migration is received with scepticism; especially from the affluent north. Migrants sometimes find it difficult to ensure that their voices are heard. This is where Diaspora-led civil society organisations can play a role in engaging with governments in promoting this dialogue on migration to a global audience.

To strengthen the argument for migration and development, Diaspora groups have a key role to play to feed into the debate. From the perspectives and aspirations of the people with southern as well as migratory experiences, that DfID can develop practical policies that support migration and development.

This report includes summaries of briefings from Baroness Royall, each of the September 2006 Delegates to the UN High-Level Dialogue and general comments made by participants.

.....
We thank Baroness Royall for her contributions at the meeting; Lisa Phillips, Camilla Bowen, Helen Robson, and the entire DfID Migration Team for their support in organising this meeting; Chuku Emeka from AFFORD; Nana Amamoo and Parvin Ali (both Board Members of CfD) for their representation and reports.

For more information about this report, please contact Betty Okot, Policy & Research Officer (CfD), email: betty@cfdnetwork.co.uk

2.0 Briefings

(a) Keynote Comments *Baroness Royall*

Addressing the meeting, Baroness Royall stressed the importance of the High-level Dialogue on international migration to all nations. The meeting had been positive and constructive, and there was evident political will to discuss the issues.

‘...dialogue, showed that world governments are willing to work constructively towards promoting the ongoing debate about migration and development.’

The Baroness confirmed that the UK worked to ensure that UK Diaspora voices were expressed in international debates on migration by funding some Diaspora organisations to attend the meeting. Presently, DfID realises the need for regular dialogue about migration and development with Civil Society and the Diaspora.

Baroness Royall remarked that the September 2006 UN Dialogue, showed that world governments are willing to work constructively towards promoting the ongoing debate about migration and development. Many participants in the meeting stressed the importance of the role migration plays in development; In his opening speech, the UN Secretary General commented that migration is a triple win for sending countries, receiving countries and the migrants themselves.

Baroness Royall highlighted five outcomes from the September Dialogue,

- Agreement amongst participants that migration could have a positive impact on development;
- The mood of the meeting was positive and constructive;
- There were calls for migration to be integrated into Poverty Reduction Strategies;
- The discussion was well balanced between legal and illegal migration, and;
- Agreement for continued international dialogue on migration and development

(b) General Comments: The following views were expressed:

- CfD commented that in discussing migration and development, it is essential to address some of the misconceptions about remittances. There are currently several views held about the value of remittances. It would also be helpful to investigate further how the remittances to migrants' home countries improve conditions of the people who receive this money. CfD also said that there is need for more practical solutions about migration, remittances and development to enable people choose the positions they are comfortable with.
- Other participants raised a number of points including: the UK's position on the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families; how more stringent government scrutiny of financial transactions would affect remittances; and; the sincerity of the UK government's commitment the MDGs⁵. Some called for conditions that favour migration.
- Delegates who had attended the dialogue reported that there had not been a 'huge push' regarding migrants' rights, because it was a controversial area. The meeting had instead focussed on common ground. However UK officials took the view that signing the UN Convention on migrant rights was not the most effective way to preserve migrant rights. Encouraging all UN Member States to push for the implementation of the six core Conventions on Human Rights was key.

Further Comments from Participants are Outlined Below:

- It is necessary to work to identify practical outcomes regarding migration and development;
- It is important to raise public awareness about different governments' positions on migration; rallying all migrants to engage with northern and their own governments on matters of migration would be important;
- Most countries now realise that migration must be a dialogue between sending and receiving countries;

⁵ For more about MDGs, see: www.undp.org/mdg/resources_docs/EC.pdf

- Policy decisions about migration must acknowledge that, where migration and development are concerned, poverty is an overall issue. Integrating migration into Poverty Reduction Strategies could help ensure a holistic approach;
- Migrants need to work and there must be clear policy options that allow them to be gainfully employed;
- At the UN Dialogue, there was not enough interaction between civil society and the governments that were represented;
- Policies should link social regeneration and remittances to migration because the way in which remittances get spent has a more regenerative impact on the economy; and

(c) Report on United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration

Chukwu Emeka:⁶

Chuku Emeka, the Chief Executive of AFFORD⁷ shared key outcomes from the September 2006, UN High-level Dialogue on migration. His briefing highlighted specific actions points.

‘.... remittances should not be taken as a replacement for aid; remittances are complementary to aid programmes.’

The speaker stressed that; CfD is well placed to facilitate dialogue and policy debates between the Diaspora, and must play this role in the international dialogue on migration. He observed that; there is no other Diaspora voice, with a wider mandate than CfD in facilitating a UK-wide debate about migration and development.⁸ CfD has the potential to bring together a diverse group of people to facilitate discussions between Diaspora groups and harness their resources to enhance development in the Global South.

⁶ For Report, see www.afford-uk.org

⁷ African Foundation for Development, London.

⁸ CfD (September 2006) The UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration, A Submission by Connections for Development on behalf of UK Black & Minorities Ethnic Diaspora. (In the lead up to the dialogue, CfD consulted Diaspora communities in collaboration with GHARWEG, Southwark Council, AFFORD and ADVAD among others.)

Concerning Human Rights, the speaker asserted that, there is need for a more practical and holistic approach. He stated that, there is a difference between governments that are killing their people and those that are simply corrupt and incapable of meeting the needs of their people. Ghana was given as a practical example of where good governance works. Above all, he pointed out that, this argument should not be taken to mean that Civil Society or the Diaspora engaged in the ongoing dialogue are threatening to question individual government's sovereignty about who they allow or do not allow in their country.

While commenting on the issue of governance in the South, he said that, the debate must focus on their capacity to deliver. This is the only sure way for Northern governments to support their Southern counterparts. In this regard, the debate on migration and development would ensure ways to build Southern governments' capacity to deliver, for example, by building a resource pool of skilled migrants from the Diaspora, which is already a sustainable resource base.

On the question of remittances, the speaker commented that, remittances can be made more useful, but there is need for more research, which focuses on practical deliverables. Also, he pointed out that, remittances should not be taken as a replacement for aid; remittances are complementary to aid programmes.

He concluded by saying that, there is need to build the capacity of Diaspora organisations to deliver. Aid and the language of international development were very much a 'Western ideology' of development. This sometimes conflicted with how Diaspora organisations strategise and fund raise for their overseas projects. Moreover, the Diaspora if brought together is the biggest investor in the development of their home countries and therefore had lots of potential to be an agent for change.

(d) General Comments: The following points were made:

- There are a range of responses, especially community based responses to the dialogue on migration. Some felt that restrictions on immigrants, sometimes because of their immigration status put them under a lot of stress;
- Mention was made, of the constraints endured by migrant-led organisations in this country, including the difficulty experienced in finding adequate funding to enhance Diaspora organisations' capacity to deliver;
- Diaspora communities are more interested in success of international development policies, but were sometimes sceptical of them.
- Migration raised some difficult issues, including the question of human rights. However, governments could succeed in addressing this problem and all other matters related to migration and development, if they engaged with the Diaspora interactively: There are benefits in accepting the *'Diaspora as a critical friend in such matters.'*

(e) Migration & Women: A Global Overview Parvin Ali⁹

Parvin Ali reported to the meeting that she and Nana Amamoo both represented CfD at the September UN meeting in New York as observers because CfD had prioritised the issue of migration.

“Most countries are affected by the issue of migration.”

Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UN (September, 2006)

In her feedback, she observed that, the dialogue illustrated that migrant women have more issues and suffer more prejudices compared to men. Some thought that the MDGs do not appear to be equally addressed for women.

The speaker reported that the global migration landscape showed that women migrate more than men because migration offers better opportunities that allow women to improve their individual or family circumstances. However, the downside to this phenomenon was that when women moved in search of employment or education for example, the families they left behind split-up. Sometimes migrant women fell prey to

⁹ Parvin Ali (17 October 2006) Presentation at a DfID-Led meeting: Post UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration, CfD Offices, and London. (Paper attached)

unscrupulous people who trafficked them to serve in the sex industry. Because of such problems, receiving countries sometimes experienced increasing sexual health problems, including unwanted pressure on their health services. There was need for greater collaboration between countries and a global legal framework to protect migrant women where appropriate.

Globally, female migrants' needs are not properly incorporated within receiving country policy frameworks. As a result, migrant women of a 'certain' educational or social status easily become victims of organised crime e.g. sex trade because they are either less culturally focused or linguistically inappropriate.

Parvin Ali closed by saying that; September 2006 highlighted what steps the world ought to take in tackling some of the questions of migration and development. It would be important to clarify whether the civil society will be party to the Brussels meeting and to work to ensure a full role for them.

(f) General Comments: The following views were expressed:

- The EU should recognise that migrants are agents for change;
- Migrants would stay in their home countries but can't compete due to major trade issues;
- Remittances are not only financial, there are social, political and entrepreneurial skills transferred;
- The ongoing dialogue must address issues of brain drain and recognise that skilled people have always been on the move. Migrant receiving countries must acknowledge and appreciate the useful skills and knowledge they tap from those they allow into their countries. Receiving countries must realise that migrants move in search of opportunities and would invest their skills in their home countries if they had better choices;
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organisation (WTO) entrenched trade rules were referred to as part of the causes of migration. As a result of these rules, the global economic spectrum makes it difficult for educated people to gainfully invest their skills in their countries of

origin. Moreover, unfair trade regulations mean that, the poor are kept poor even when they are being helped¹⁰.

- One of the participants pointed out that, some migrant doctors from the Philippines retrain as nurses in order to be employed here.

(g) The Impact of Female Migration on Development: The Case of Ghana - Nana Amamoo¹¹

Nana Amamoo's report broadly summarised the following aspects of female migration in Ghana:

“According to the Bank of Ghana (2005), remittances by Ghanaian migrants rose from US\$ 290m in 1999 to US\$ 1.4bn in 2004.”¹²

Historically, female migration is embedded in the social, economic and political fabric of Ghanaian society. The geographical proximity of the country has facilitated female circular and cross-border migration with the neighbouring countries of Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. There is historical evidence that Techiman¹³ market in Ghana was a key commercial centre on the Trans-Saharan Trade route. This provides further evidence of how migration impacts on development as well as women's places in society. Compared with women in other African countries, Ghanaian women have always been encouraged to take part in, and have access to activities that promote economic self-sufficiency.

In the post-colonial era, President Nkrumah's Pan-African policies had encouraged 'inward' migration across the West African region and beyond, and by the 1960s immigrations made up 8.3 % of Ghana's population.¹⁴

¹⁰ This was said in line with aid and international support of the poor by Donor Countries and International Aid Agencies

¹¹ Nana Amamoo (17th October 2006) Presentation at a DfID-Led meeting: Post UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration, CfD Offices, and London. (Paper attached)

¹² Ms. E.Adjei: (2006) Director of Ghana's Immigration Service at the UNFPA/IOM Presentation to an Expert Group Meeting.

¹³ A local market in Brong Ahafo region- Ghana, said to date as far back as the 15th Century: Also was an active 'port of call' during the Trans-Saharan Trade.

¹⁴ See (Adjei E. 2006) in Nana Amamoo (2006): The Impact of Female Migration on Development: The Case of Ghana.

In the Ghanaian case, there were three major categories of women migrants, namely; the independent economic migrant; rural-urban migrant; and spousal migrant. However, the majority of Ghanaian female migrants have always been independent migrants. Although, the current increase in international labour recruitment meant that many women follow their spouses to the western world.

Also, some of the causes of migration were highlighted. For instance, the economic crises of the late 70s and early 80s and bad governance were mentioned as some of the causal factors for migration. Hence, by 2001, nearly 3000 nurses were said to have left the country. This wave of specialist migration also reduced Ghana's capacity to train more nurses to replace those who had migrated.

Without doubt, Ghana like all migrant-producing countries registered both positive and negative effects of migration. In the Ghanaian case, migration benefited women in several ways particularly through advancing their social and economic independence. Ghana has become an example of how female migration empowers women and transforms them into agents for change. Through their new economic status, migrant women are able to remove gender imbalances, make decisions about family matters and how resources are spent, or at least have a say in how these decisions are made.

According to the Bank of Ghana (2005), remittances by Ghanaian migrants rose from US\$ 290m in 1999 to US\$ 1.4bn in 2004. (Adjei E.2006). Ghana has therefore included Migration as a key component of its Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Immigration Service is compiling gender and other related data on migration to inform policy making.

Ms. Amamoo concluded that migration has socio-economically emancipated Ghanaian women and helped them challenge deep-seated gender prejudices that had characterised society.

(h) Conclusive Remarks, DfID Migration Team: *Lisa Phillips*

Following the presentations above, Lisa Phillips made the following observations about the future of the dialogue and how to progress the work on the current dialogue on international migration. It was important for Diaspora and civil society groups to be engaged in influencing the debate about migration and development and the High Level Dialogue had provided a good opportunity for this. DfID would continue to work to engage the Diaspora in its work, both the Migration Team and working with specific country teams¹⁵. It would be important to work together to identify practical solutions for taking this work forward.

(i) Next steps

Steps from this meeting would include or at least attempt to address the following issues:

- Preparation for the global forum which will follow up the High-Level Dialogue on international migration, which was due to take place in Belgium, possibly in July 2007;
- Work together to develop a positive agenda and action points for Brussels 2007 and preparation must focus on concrete outcomes; and
- Brussels was expected to provide more details about the global forum on 30 October 2006. After this, it would be possible to begin to prepare our agenda for the forum.

(j) Three Action Points

Finally, it was agreed that:

- A small practitioner group for the Brussels event would be set up, made up of; government, Diaspora and civil society;
- The date for a practitioner meeting to discuss the Global Forum would be set in about two- three months, following the October meeting;
- CfD would Act as the Secretariat for the practitioner group and would organise the progress meeting in close collaboration with the DfID Migration Team.

¹⁵ This might involve liaison between the Diaspora and the DfID Migration Team, the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and their Country Desks where necessary.