



GFMD side-event organised by the Agence Française de Développement and the OECD

Building on migrants' skills: recognizing and promoting them for development

Capitaliser sur les compétences des migrants: les reconnaître et les promouvoir en faveur du développement

Istanbul, 15 October (12:45-1:45pm)

Migration is a growing and dynamic phenomenon. The number of international migrants in the world reached 232 million in 2013, up from 175 million in 2000. Countries of origin have become more diversified over time, while new countries of destination and transit have emerged. Intra-regional migration is on the rise across the world, including within the OECD area and Europe. Structural and conjunctural factors are likely to lead to an increase of migration flows in the future. Persistent differences in economic development across countries, coupled with diverging demographic profiles and increasing unmet demand for skilled or medium-skilled labour in many countries are factors that will determine future migration trends. Geopolitical shocks will also play a significant role in that matter, as is the case currently in the Mediterranean area.

Ensuring that international migration represents an opportunity for the migrants and their families as well as for the countries of origin and destination remains a challenge. Efforts are still necessary to better apprehend the migration phenomenon and eventually formulate policies that will enhance the impact of migration on development. Governments both in origin and destination countries recognise the potential of migrants and wish to adopt policies to help them fully utilise and further develop their skills.

Countries wishing to engage with their diasporas and mobilise their skills for development increasingly realise that permanent return is not the only way that diasporas can contribute to their home countries. Members of the diaspora can make as many ambassadors of their countries of origin around the world and can contribute in many ways when an enabling environment is in place, especially now that technology has eased communication across the world. However, the challenge of how to reach out to diasporas is increasingly shared among countries, irrespectively of their income and development levels.

The lack of precise information on diasporas, whom they comprise, where they are, what they are doing and their aspirations for the future is in many cases a significant impediment to understanding and promoting their role in the development of origin and destination countries. Hence, gathering high quality and internationally comparable data on diasporas and their characteristics is a requirement for the implementation of effective policies by countries on both sides of the migration phenomenon.

This special event will start with a presentation of the profile of diasporas across the world using a variety of data sources including the Database on Immigrants in OECD and non-OECD countries (DIOC and E-DIOC). It will focus on new trends and changes in their profiles that have taken place in the past decade.

A panel discussion will follow which will allow participants to:

- Share some of the challenges they face in connecting with their diasporas, including access to timely and complete information about them and their characteristics.
- Share new and innovative practices in supporting diaspora networks, facilitating communication channels between diasporas and their countries of origin, facilitating skill mobility/brain circulation and use and building on migrants' skills and experience.
- Share experiences of new country partnerships which allow destination countries to attract the skills that are needed in specific sectors and occupations, while strengthening the positive impact on the country of origin through the development of migrants' skills and their use in the country of origin.
- Identify the key conditions of the enabling environment needed to mobilise migrants' skills for development leading to mutual gains

Key questions

- What are the mechanisms to identify the skills of diaspora members in data broadly available?
- Are there innovative ways to mobilise emigrants' skills from the side of the origin country and offset potential loss of human capital?
- What activities can be supported by destination countries to help mobilize/ enhance migrants' skills?
- How should programmes be designed to meet labour market needs in destination countries on the one hand while strengthening the positive impact on migrants and on origin countries?

Opening remarks

Setting the scene: brief presentation based on forthcoming publication "Connecting with Emigrants. A Global Profile of Diasporas 2015"

Ms Theodora Xenogiani, Senior Economist, International Migration Division (OECD)

Mr Cyrille Bellier, Head of Economic and Social Research Unit, French Development Agency (France)

Panel discussion

Ambadress Reina Torres, General Director of Protection of Mexicans Abroad for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mexico)

Mr Pietro Mona, Deputy Head Global Program Migration and Development, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Switzerland)

Mr Tarek Sissou, Head of Division of Multilateral Cooperation, Ministry in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs (Morocco)

General discussion and closing remarks