



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

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Introduction

Social diversity is a defining feature of our world today, much of which (although not all) is a consequence of migration.

I am, therefore, pleased that we have been given the opportunity to discuss how to ensure that our societies are harmonious in the midst of their diversity. I am particularly honored and pleased that the GFMD Chairperson, a distinguished colleague and good friend, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque, one of the leading global voices in the field of international migration is presiding over our discussions.

“Harmony in diversity” this has, of course, a pleasant ring but it’s also a challenging policy objective to achieve.

Diversity can enrich social and cultural life. It can also give rise to challenges. Not all societies are able to cope smoothly with change. Many societies are confronted at the same time with rapid change in age demographics, economic inequalities, technological developments *and* migration-induced diversity. Few areas of public policy are subject to greater neglect or misrepresentation in public and political conversation than international migration. The contemporary discourse is overwhelmingly focused on the crises of the moment. Given the amount of media attention these crises receive, and – more importantly – given their humanitarian dimension, this is perhaps only to be expected. They will probably continue to loom large in our field of vision for some time to come. Regrettably, however, this “crisis focus” dampens our ability to do two important things:

First our ability to understand and appreciate the key role that migration plays in development; and,

Second, our ability to look ahead, and to evolve long-term, comprehensive migration and asylum policies.

I am, therefore most grateful for the opportunity to turn away from our pressing preoccupations of the moment to look at migration from a broader and, hopefully, from a more realistic perspective.

Migration is a mega-trend of our time and likely to remain so throughout this century. There are three important policy challenges that I think will persist for the next three or so decades -- challenges which need to be recognized and addressed now – and these are:

- I. Demography**
- II. Diversity**
- III. Disasters**

I. THE POWER OF DEMOGRAPHY

Let me begin by pointing to demographic realities and trends.

First, the populations of developed countries – the so-called “Global North” are contracting. Northern populations will continue to decline throughout the time period on which this conference is focused – namely, 2016-2050. Put another way, developed countries are facing and will continue to face a decline in birth-rates leading to a “demographic deficit”, leading to steady population decline. Two demographic facts are indisputable: (i) people in the industrialized world are living longer, and having fewer children. (ii) And, fewer children means fewer parents.

Second, these population contingents are ageing and will continue to grow old.

- In 1950s, the current EU Member State share of the world’s population was 14.7%, this share had been reduced to 7.2% in 2010 – over half; and the EU share of the world’s population is expected to drop to **5.0% in 2060** (Eurostat).
- Those aged 65 and over will increasingly constitute a much larger share of the population, rising from 18% to 28%. Those aged 80 and over will increase from 5% to 12% of the population -- becoming almost as numerous as the youth population in 2060.

Third, it follows, therefore, that the domestic labour supply in developed countries is getting smaller and is likely to continue to shrink.

- In the EU area, the domestic labor supply is projected to decline by 14 million workers between 2023 and 2060 or just over **9%**. (Eurostat).
- Labour market shortfalls will be felt particularly keenly in the highly-skilled sectors. Already by 2020 the EU estimates that it will face a shortfall of 1 million highly skilled workers in the healthcare sector alone; and 756,000 unfilled vacancies for highly skilled IT professionals.

In contrast, trends in the developing world are forecast to go in opposite directions. The populations of countries of origin in Africa and Asia continue to grow rapidly, with most of their populations already concentrated in younger age cohorts.

- By 2050, Africa's population is expected to double from 1.1 billion to 2.3 billion. (e.g., when I was Ambassador to Nigeria in the early 90's, the population was 100 million; today, some 20 years later, Nigeria has a population of 160 million.)
- By the year 2050, it is estimated that Africa's working age population (15-65 years old), will reach close to 1.4 billion.
- Along the way (in 2032), Africa will have already acquired a larger working population than China and by 2036, a larger worker population than India.

The interplay of these population dynamics, and in particular, the widening gradient between the increase in demand for labor in the Global North and the increase in labor supply in the Global South will give rise to challenging issues for policy makers. For example:

- To what extent could migration help offset the birthrate deficit?
- To what extent could migration help states manage the decline in what demographers term the Potential Support Ratio (PSR), that is, the ratio of the working age population versus the retiree population?
 - In 1950, for example, the ratio of the working age population to retirees was about 12 to 1, that is, 12 workers supporting 1 retiree. By 2050, in many developed countries -- Germany or Japan for example -- this ratio could fall to as low as 1.5 working age persons per one elderly person.
- To what extent could migration help developed states in the Global North manage their projected labor shortages, and enable them to retain their advantages of productivity, competitiveness, and creativity?

There is no ready-made prescription. The overall challenge is to formulate the right blend of migration policies to meet current and future social and economic needs. And, for sure, migration will never be the only answer to these needs. It would be foolish to make such a claim. But there can also be no doubt that migration has to be part of the answer.

As policymakers, our challenge will be to combine migration with development; and humanitarian concern with economic requirements; and to balance and conjugate national sovereignty with individual freedom; and national security with human security. These are the parameters within which migration policy will succeed or fail. This brings me to my second point.

II. THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

If we assume that migration will have an impact on societies of the future and to a certain extent determine their very composition, then governments will need to come to terms with and manage inexorably growing social, ethnic and religious diversity—that is, if their societies and economies are to thrive. (An IMF Study released at last October’s Bank and Fund meeting in Lima, Peru, concluded, in effect, that those countries with migrant friendly policies are more likely to succeed economically than those that do not.)

In 2011, Eurostat reported that **6.5% of the EU population are foreigners and nearly 10% were born abroad**. Among the 3.4 million immigrants during 2013 there were an estimated 1.4 million from non-EU Member States; 1.2 million people with citizenship of a different EU Member State from the one to which they immigrated; some 830 thousand people who migrated to an EU Member State of which they had the citizenship (for example returning nationals or nationals born abroad), and 6 thousand stateless people.

Social diversity and harmony, of course, extend far beyond human mobility. For a wide variety of reasons, including but not limited to mobility, societies all over the world are becoming increasingly diverse:

- Generational differences, for instance, are now much sharper than before; and,
- the social media are giving rise to a multiplicity of communities many of which are trans-national in nature. The trend is unlikely to change. Many past policy efforts have focused on interventions that could eventually make people “more alike”.

The policy challenge of the future may well be how to harness the power of diversity. For example:

- A diverse population can provide a competitive advantage for all types of economies, in particular small to medium economies, seeking to compete internationally.
 - Migrants help drive economic growth through the culture, skills, languages, motivation and experience they bring;
 - Migrants can have -- and historically have had – a positive impact on growth;
 - the “Europe 2020 Strategy” recognizes that migration can be a key to supporting regional economic growth and Europe’s global competitiveness.

At IOM, we see **two main ways** to address the diversity challenge effectively:

A. Change the migration narrative

First, we must find a way to change the current migration narrative which is toxic. As one whose country was built on the backs of migrants, I can attest that, historically, migration has been overwhelmingly positive. We need to return public discourse to a more balanced and historically accurate narrative. We do so through informed, open dialogue -- a dialogue that

recognizes that migration has been an agent of development, that migration and development belong together, and that migration is humankind's oldest poverty reduction strategy.

Broad-based support for migration policies depends on elected leaders and government officials -- at all levels -- taking the initiative to engage in public information and education programs to create a more balanced, overt migration dialogue with their constituents. This includes addressing concerns and explaining the benefits that migrants bring as well as migrants responsibilities.

An open dialogue combined with integration is necessary for political and public support for good migration policies; and this support is indispensable if the industrialized expects to attract and retain talent and benefit from diversity.

B. Promote migrant integration

Effective integration is essential to managing diversity effectively. Key elements include:

(a) Pre-departure or post-arrival cultural orientation (IOM has conducted cultural-orientation effectively for a number of countries over several decades);

(b) Language classes upon arrival;

(c) Livelihoods as soon as possible after arrival (once a migrant has a job, they cease being a migrant and become a productive member of the host community);

(d) Access to public services (healthy migrants make healthy communities, and educated migrant children grow up to contribute to the community); and,

(e) Public education and public information programs as well as community-based activities that help host populations learn about migrants, develop mutual respect for each other's rights and responsibilities, and include migrants in their communities.

Integration also requires us to embrace and manage various kinds of diversity: **to accept that migrants, like their hosts, have multiple identities**, and can retain their roots and interests in countries of origin while becoming part of host societies and investing in them. Integration requires the full participation of all actors -- migrants and host communities alike. Migrants and non-migrants alike can be brought to share some common interests and core values – interests and values that can glue diverse societies together. Furthermore, there is no contradiction between the integration of migrants, on the one hand, and their remaining an active diaspora contributing to their countries of origin and families back home.

III. THE HUMANITARIAN DISASTER CHALLENGE

Unfortunately, I cannot end my remarks today without going back to the on-going crises that beset many countries today – crises which I believe will continue to haunt us tomorrow. More people are on the move than in any other time in recorded history: one in every seven persons in the world.

Unfortunately, among these are 60 million forced migrants, the largest number since World War II -- driven by an unprecedented number of simultaneous, complex and protracted disasters and conflicts -- interlinked humanitarian emergencies across an “Arc of Instability” and humanitarian suffering stretching from the Western bulge of Africa to Asia.

Desperation compels people to migrate under dangerous circumstances: already, some 200,000 irregular migrants arrived in Europe by crossing the Mediterranean, the Aegean and land borders in Europe this year. On land and at sea, these migrants have left a “trail of tears” -- victims of criminal gangs of smugglers who torture, extort and dehumanize their victims. These “travel agents of death” are responsible for the death of some 1,400 migrants already this year. Those are the ones whose bodies have been recovered; many more lie under the sea or in the desert sands. The world’s crises have uprooted 20 million refugees, and internally displaced 40 million persons.

I do not see any immediate resolution to the ongoing crises and conflicts, apart from the hope that the cessation of hostilities in Syria will hold and lead to peace. Even if the fighting were to stop today, the effects will reverberate well into the future.

Moreover, the effects of climate change -- intertwined with those of wars, social and political unrest and entrenched poverty – will exacerbate human insecurity at the global level. Least developed countries will be most affected as they have fewer resources with which to adapt. Climate change poses pernicious, slow -- yet long term -- threats to the well-being of populations, endangering livelihoods through desertification, water stress, droughts and food shortages.

Some 75 million people live just one meter above sea level, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that much of this coastal land may be under water within the lifetime of the present inhabitants, placing these populations at significant risk of mass displacement. Kiribati, whose 32 atolls are threatened, is already buying land in Fiji for those likely to be displaced -- giving rise to a new definition of “statelessness”, namely, one loses one’s state.

Now is the time to plan for ways to use adaptation measures to offset current and future adverse impacts of climate change. Addressing climate change, adaptation, and mitigating its effects will be crucial to protecting people, including migrants and displaced persons.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by highlighting IOM's migration thesis: For us, increased migration is:

- **Inevitable**, due to demography, disasters, environmental deterioration, the digital revolution, distance-shrinking technologies and other drivers;
- **Necessary**, for durable and equitable economic growth; and,
- **Desirable**, if well-governed.

As I always say, large-scale migration is here to stay: so rather than seeing migration as a problem to be solved, we regard migration as a human reality to be managed. As we face the continuation of simultaneous, unprecedented and complex emergencies, people will continue to flee and resort to migration as a coping mechanism, or a poverty reduction strategy.

In sum, (i) demographic trends and realities (ii) coupled with continuing disasters – anural, political and climate – and (iii) increasing diversity will present us all with challenges and opportunities. And, the choice is ours, how we wish to manage these.