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Latin America and the Caribbean in the Spotlight

In Search of Better Migration Governance and Increased Cooperation

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This background paper was prepared jointly by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It was drafted by David Khoudour, Senior Migration Advisor at UNDP, and Oleg Chirita, Head of Programme, Global Initiatives, at ICMPD, under the guidance of Jairo Acuña-Alfaro, Team Leader, Governance, at the UNDP Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean.

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in nearly 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP, or the UN Member States.

ICMPD is an international organization with 17 Member States. Active in more than 90 countries worldwide, it takes a regional approach in its work to create efficient & operation and partnerships along migration routes. Its three-pillar approach to migration management - structurally linking research, migration dialogues and capacity building - contributes to better migration policy development worldwide. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of ICMPD nor the European Union.

Latin America and the Caribbean in the Spotlight In Search of Better Migration Governance and Increased Cooperation

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), within the framework of the "Migration EU eXpertise" (MIEUX) initiative, funded by the European Union (EU), and in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organised, between July and October 2019, a series of four regional workshops in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). These events were held in the framework of Ecuador's Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) 2019 Chairmanship and aimed to directly contribute to the thematic priorities of the 2019 GFMD agenda and the Final Summit, held in Quito from 21 to 24 January, 2020.

The regional events focused on four key aspects of the migration and development nexus:

San José, Costa Rica: Facilitating social and economic inclusion (24-25 July 2019);

Kingston, Jamaica: Harnessing migration for rural development (14-15 August 2019);

Quito, Ecuador: Providing regular pathways from crisis to safety (19-20 September 2019);

Lima, Peru: Supporting arrival cities through policy coherence and multi-stakeholder partnerships (16-17 October 2019).

In total, 334 participants attended the four regional workshops. These events brought together, in an inclusive manner, representatives of 27 governments from Latin America and the Caribbean (countries of origin, transit and destination), but also from the European Union, Asia and Africa; local and municipal levels (including the GFMD Mayors' Mechanism), various civil society organisations (including the Civil Society Mechanism of the GFMD), the private sector, international and regional organisations, as well as researchers and representatives of the academia (in line with the 2019 GFMD Chair's intention to create a stronger collaboration between the GFMD and the academia).

Through these regional events, the 2019 GFMD Chair, the Republic of Ecuador, is committed to bringing GFMD closer to the regions to broaden participation of different regional stakeholders and as an effort to de-centralise the process.

This joint ICMPD/UNDP Background Paper highlights the main findings of the four regional discussions and provides policy recommendations for safe, orderly and regular migration, in line with the 2018 Global Compact for Migration¹, and for increased socioeconomic integration and social cohesion. The note takes stock of the chief migration trends, challenges and opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also highlights the main take-away messages for each event and emphasizes some of the best practices shared by participants from LAC countries as well as from other parts of the world, in particular the European Union. Finally, the background paper suggests some ways for countries of origin, transit and destination in the region to better leverage the development impact of migration.

¹ Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2018: https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/195

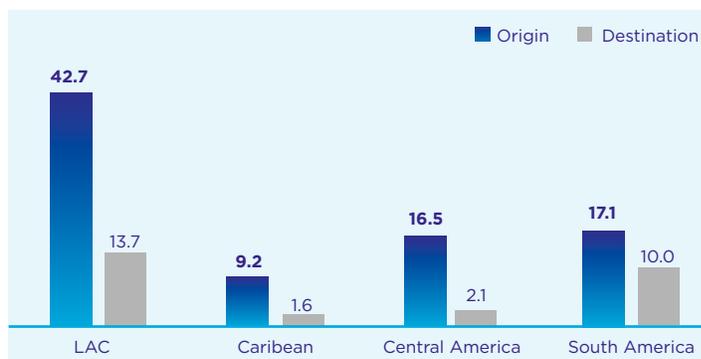
International migration in Latin America and the Caribbean: What is going on?

While the total population of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in 2019 represents 8.4% of the world population, about 15.5% of international migrants in the world come from the LAC region (42.7 million people). With 11.8 million Mexicans abroad, Mexico is the second top emigration country in the world after India and, by far, the first one in the LAC region. With the current migration crisis, and about 4.8 million Venezuelan abroad, Venezuela comes second. Colombia (2.8 million emigrants), Brazil (1.7) and Cuba (1.6) are the other main origin countries. Overall, 6.2% of the individuals who were born in a LAC country live today in another country. This is significantly more than the world average: in 2019, the estimated global number of international migrants is 271.6 million people, that is, 3.5% of the world population².

By contrast, immigrants settled in LAC countries (13.7 million people) represent only 5% of all migrants in the world. That means that there are more inhabitants from LAC countries looking for better opportunities abroad, mostly out of the region, than people interested in settling in the region (Figure 1). In this respect, 72.5% of immigrants in LAC come from another country from the region and 30% come from one single country: Venezuela. This situation reflects the prevalence of the negative drivers of migration in LAC: lack of economic opportunities, high levels of inequalities and insecurity, poor governance and civil unrest, among others. It also implies that migrants' demography is changing in host countries.

Emigration has usually been seen as an opportunity for the region, as it represents a safety valve for LAC countries' labour markets. Remittances that migrants send to those left behind constitute a significant source of external financing flows. Thus, the LAC region received 89,579 USD billions as remittances in 2018, that is, 1.7% of the regional GDP. Mexico, with 35,659 USD billions, is the fourth remittance-recipient in

Figure 1. Origin and destination of international migrants from LAC
Millions, 2019



Source: Authors' calculations based on UN DESA (2019)³ and R4V (2019)⁴.

the world after India, China and the Philippines, and the first recipient in the LAC Region (Figure 2). Guatemala, Dominican Republic and Colombia are the three following remittance-recipients in the region. As a share of GDP (Figure 3), Haiti is the main recipient (remittances represent 30,7% of its GDP), followed by El Salvador (21,1%), Honduras (19,9%) and Jamaica (15,9%). These remittances mean a huge development potential for LAC countries in terms of poverty alleviation, access to health and education, and business creation.

² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Population Facts, No. 2019/4: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/populationfacts/docs/MigrationStock2019_PopFacts_2019-04.pdf

³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), International migrant stock 2019: <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp>

⁴ Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela: <https://r4v.info/en/situations/platform>

Figure 2. Top 15 remittance-receiving countries, USD billions, 2018

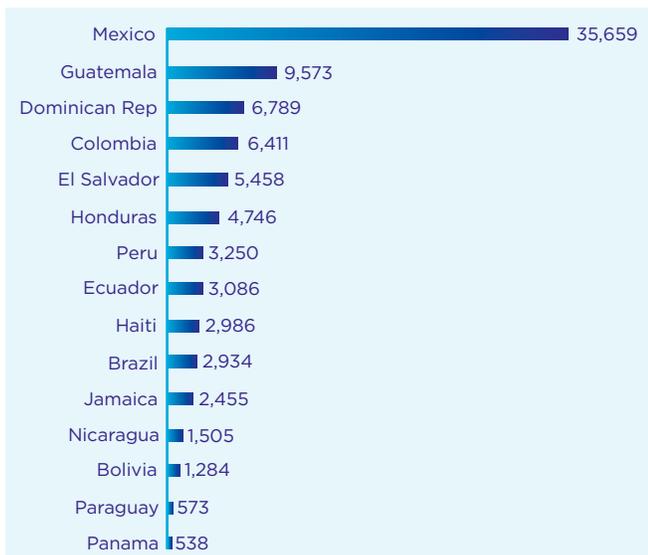
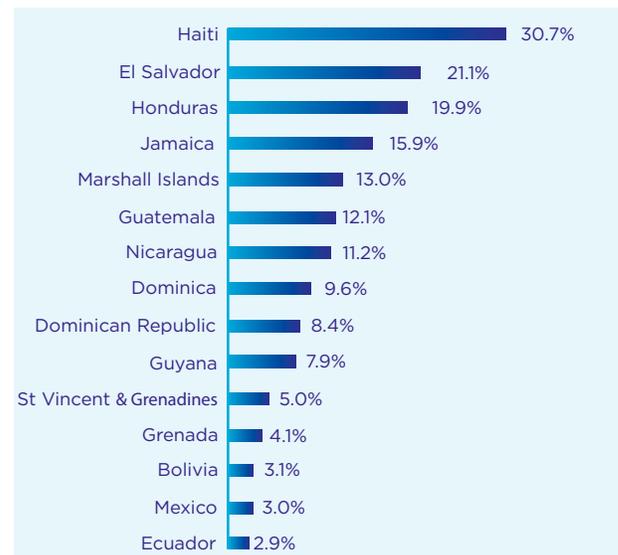


Figure 3. Top 15 remittance-receiving countries, % of GDP, 2018



Source: World Bank (2019)⁵

By sending collective remittances and investing in infrastructure and social projects in their communities, hometown associations and organisations from the diasporas, such as the Mexican 3x1 programme (a matching-fund scheme in which federal, state and municipal governments multiply by three the contributions sent by emigrants) also contribute to local development in origin countries. In addition to money transfers, emigrants also transfer social remittances, that is, the norms and values observed in their host countries, such as good governance and civic participation. Finally, return migrants can bring to their home countries the financial, human and social capital they have accumulated in their host countries.

However, increasing numbers of forced returnees generate significant reintegration challenges for some countries, mostly in Central America and the Caribbean. Thus, between January 2016 and October 2019, 787,185 people were deported, mostly from the United States and Mexico to the northern countries of Central America: Guatemala (44%), Honduras (38.4%) and El Salvador (17.6%). One out of five of these forced returnees were girls and women⁶.

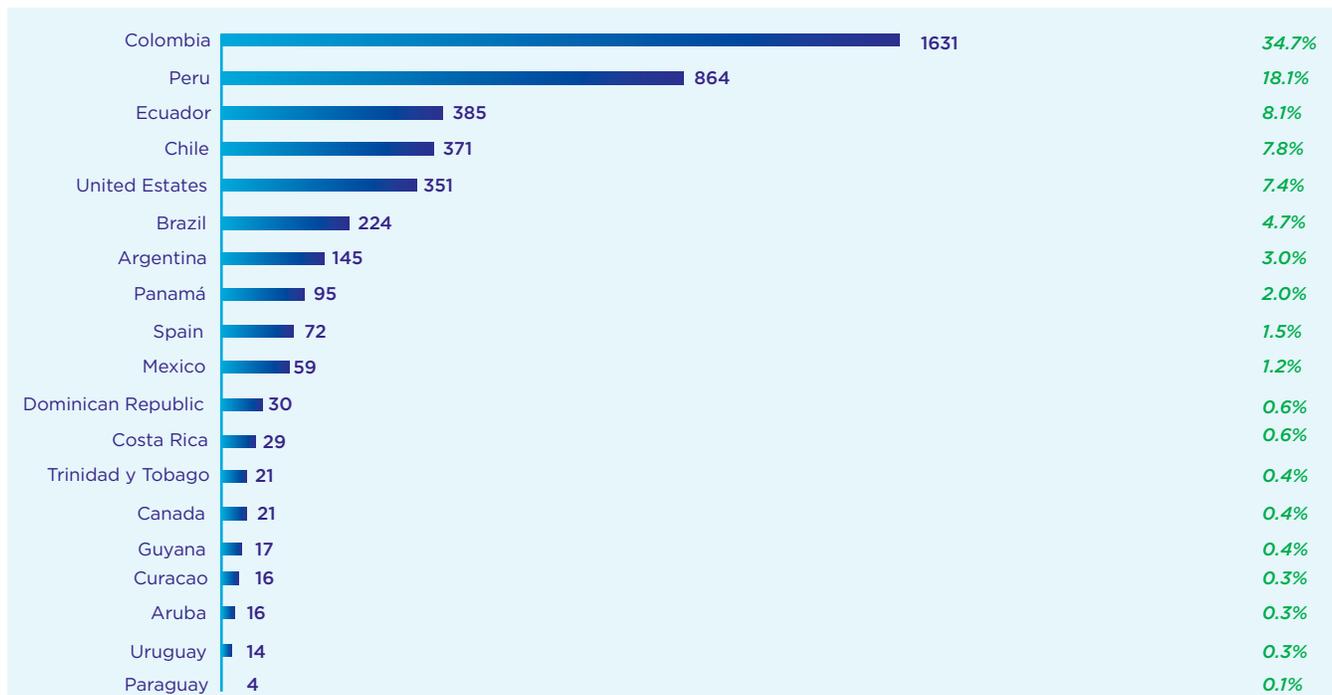
Even though LAC is predominantly a region of origin, the migration landscape is rapidly changing, in particular due to the Venezuelan migration crisis. Since 2015, an estimated number of 4.8 million Venezuelans have left their country as the result of an economic, social and policy crisis. About 85% of them have moved to another LAC country. Colombia hosts 1.6 million Venezuelan migrants (34.2% of the overall Venezuelan migrant population), as well as about 500,000 Colombian returnees from Venezuela. Peru (864 thousand people), Ecuador (385) and Chile (371) are the three main other recipients of Venezuelan migrants (Figure 4). As a share of the population, Aruba (15.1), Curaçao (9.8%), Colombia (3.3%), Peru (2.6%), Panama (2.3%) and Ecuador (2.3%) are the main recipients of Venezuelan migrants. In Colombia, about 48% of Venezuelan migrants are women and 54% are less than 30-years old⁷.

⁵ The World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (updated as of Oct. 2019): <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/988911571664813952/Remittance-Inflows-October-2019.xlsx>

⁶ IOM-OIM, Iniciativa de gestión de información de movilidad humana en el Triángulo Norte - NTMI: <https://mic.iom.int/webntmi/>

⁷ Migración Colombia (2019). Venezolanos en Colombia, corte a 30 de junio de 2019. Bogotá, Colombia.

Figure 4. Venezuelan migrants by host countries thousands and percentage of total, as of December 5, 2019



Source: R4V (2019)⁸

In addition to the Venezuelan crisis, the Northern countries of Central America are affected by both poverty and violence, which translate into growing population movements towards North America. Thus, in 2015, around 417,000 Central American migrants in transit, most of them from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, intended to reach the United States, with the help of the so-called “coyotes” (smugglers). According to estimates, only one out of five transit migrants succeeded. The other 80% were stopped by the Mexican or United States authorities⁹. In a context of increasingly restrictive migration policies, transit municipalities have to deal with the consequences in terms of local absorptive capacities of the continuous flows of migrants from the region, but also from Africa and Asia. Growing numbers of stranded migrants also generate tensions with local populations.

In this respect, countries of transit and destination tend to see migrants as a burden that affects the provision of public services and the national and local fiscal balance, not to mention,

the challenges of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. However, the international experience shows that immigrants, including refugees, also contribute to the development of their host countries¹⁰. But this requires that public authorities, both at the local and national levels, promote migrants’ socioeconomic integration as well as social cohesion.

⁸ Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela: <https://r4v.info/en/situations/platform>

⁹ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Atlas of migration in Northern Central America (LC/PUB.2018/23), Santiago, 2018: https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/44292/1/S1801072_es.pdf

¹⁰ OECD/ILO (2018), How Immigrants Contribute to Developing Countries’ Economies, ILO, Geneva/OECD Publishing, Paris: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264288737-en>

Regional Workshop “Facilitating social and economic inclusion”(contributing to the GFMD Roundtable 1.2), 24-25 July, 2019, San Jose, Costa Rica¹¹

Participants clarified the main concepts by taking into account regional and national contexts. It is true that immigration can represent a challenge for social cohesion, which is connected to solidarity and tolerance, but inequality has a greater impact on it. Inclusion is the process of incorporating both migrants and nationals into various areas of society, such as education, health, employment, housing, and participation in political and civil life. While the inclusion process is heavily dependent on individual factors (age, gender, level of education, social capital...), the absence of inclusion policies can negatively affect social cohesion.

Main findings of the Workshop’s working groups:

- The group on **access to services** found that the main barrier for migrants, including refugees, in most LAC countries, is the lack of information on immigration procedures, which may lead to legal irregularities, lack of valid documents, hence vulnerability. Participants also highlighted the informal nature of the labour market, the lack of appreciation of migrant vulnerability, the dearth of policies aimed at this community, staff and services that are not ready to cope with the special migrants’ needs, and negative attitudes towards migrants in host communities.

- The group on **mobility in the labour market** addressed the barriers to access public and private services for foreigners and the issues associated with informal and under-employment. Insecure labour and the lack of social security cover is a huge challenge not only to the inclusion of both migrants and nationals, since far more than 50% of such groups, within the second group as well, may be employed in the informal sector. Informal employment arrangements may also arise through a lack of awareness by employers of the sorts of residence permits that enable foreigners to work, such as asylum seeker residence permits that are issued in some countries.

- The main factors that promote **xenophobia** are misinformation (‘fake news’), fear and ignorance. Another issue is the fact that information and campaigns against xenophobia do not always reach those communities that generate greater flashpoints of discrimination.

- The working group on **political participation** suggested that the main restrictions on migrants and refugees taking part in a country’s political life stem from the applicable legislation in many countries in LAC that lays down conditions on taking part in political life based on residence and registration. In some cases, restrictions on participation in politics are reflected in the legislative framework, the assumption being that the political participation of this population could change the political arena of the country.

- The group on **family reunification** discussed the challenges faced by families, such as the problem of legal procedures that are impossible to follow, which then lead to migrants following irregular paths and also to labour trafficking and other form of modern slavery. One of the main problems faced by migrant families wishing to regroup is the financial requirements that may be placed on them. The absence of inclusion and reunification procedures can lead to parallel societies that never integrate.

Despite the many challenges identified, participants concluded that migration in the current context of LAC is also an **opportunity to rethink how to improve public policies** and to build societies in which social and cultural diversity are positive values in the region.

¹¹ The full summary report of the San Jose workshop can be find here: https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/ecuador_iii_gfmd_rt2_en.pdf

Regional Workshop "Harnessing migration for rural transformation and development" (contributing to GFMD Roundtable 3.2), 14 -15 August 2019, Kingston, Jamaica¹²

This event offered a platform to participants to debate practices, challenges and opportunities that migration may bring for rural development. Discussions acknowledged the challenges rural movers face at points of origin and destination and argued that governments need rethink how best to respond.

Main findings of the Roundtable's working groups:

- In terms of **employment in rural areas**, the following challenges were identified: (i) distance from urban centres have led to these areas having less access to capital and infrastructure, while having large unused or underdeveloped agricultural territory; (ii) remittances assist in replacing the lack of capita, but there are clear difficulties in channelling them for productive purposes; and (iii) migration from rural areas is composed of mainly young workers, reducing the available labour force in the rural communities and increasing the median age of workers. Consequently, remittances are likely used to assist ageing family members than developing new industries.
- The group on **health and education** identified that rural migrants and their sending families/communities do not have the same access to opportunities (e.g. educational and health) than in urban settings. A lack of state support for rural communities and limited labour opportunities exacerbates the challenges migrants face. With limited information, migrants tend to make the assumption that the gap between rural and urban life cannot be bridged.
- With regards to **climate change**, access to social services or response capacity in the case of climate-related crises were described as problems. Real or perceived saturation of services might produce xenophobia, while cultural and social differences between public servants providing the services and the communities can also lead to discrimination.

Resources or planning to deal with long-term displacement and long-term impacts of climate change are limited. As such, planning and aid tend to focus on local population, not on migrants, increasing their vulnerability.

- On **access to financial systems in rural areas**, limited access to technology, banking, and challenges around opening an account or accessing financial support were cited as obstacles to rural development. Combined with the high cost of remitting and investment capital, further limits rural investment by the state, NGOs and diaspora communities.
- The **relationship between migrants and their community of origin** is accompanied by a series of challenges, including the mistrust of the government and the inability of return migrants to reintegrate into their home/rural communities that, in turn, limits the role they can play in development and policymaking.
- The discussions on the **entrepreneurship and investments in rural areas** led to the conclusion that most business created through remittances in the home country end up as part of the informal economy. In addition, lack of access to financial services, infrastructure, and education impact rural cultures and mindsets, whereas gendered characteristics of rural agricultural work negatively influence the possible development of local entrepreneurship.

In terms of opportunities, the most direct opportunity of emigration in rural areas is, despite the challenges, the availability of remittances both financial and social. There was agreement among the participants that remittances can help bring new skills and experiences, assist in the development of technical training institutions, connect migrants to communities, and support and overall jump-start rural areas.

¹² The full summary report of the San Jose workshop can be find here: https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/ecuador_iii_gfmd_rt2_en.pdf

Regional Workshop "Providing regular pathways from crisis to safety" (contributing to the GFMD Roundtable 1.1) 19-20 September 2019, Quito, Ecuador¹³

The event stressed the importance of increased international cooperation and support for the countries that are most affected by large immigration inflows. Whereas developing regular pathways and sustainable integration measures is a challenge to governments worldwide, the panels highlighted the current Venezuelan displacement crisis, and the hospitality and generosity of receiving governments in South America, as well as the need for more international support.

Main findings of the Workshop's working groups:

- On **existing and/or new regular pathways for migrants**, the participants highlighted that the lack of documentation and the need to identify different migrant profiles and their needs for different types of documentation. Limitations to regular routes increase irregular immigration and expose migrants to becoming victims of human trafficking, and exploitative people smuggling. Moreover, the importance of ensuring the safeguarding of human rights of migrants during their migration journey, at arrival, and during the integration process, including their access to education and healthcare, was stressed out. An opportunity identified is making more effective use of migrant networks and organisations for the purposes of information sharing.

- The groups on **vulnerabilities** identified a number of challenges in protecting the rights of migrants, and especially of vulnerable migrants. A key challenge is that the paradigm of national security very often trumps that of migrants' rights in national migration debates. Regarding the provisions of services to migrants, a main problem is the centralisation of national budgets which are often inflexible and do not allow for the rapid allocation of funds to cater for needs of vulnerable migrants, especially in emergency situations.

- As far as the **coordination mechanisms at regional, national and local levels** are concerned, the following needs were mentioned: (i) the need for more coordination between national actors, including authorities, civil society organisations, and academia, among others, in public policy discussions and the development of sustainable immigration policies; and (ii) the need to strengthen local governments in the creation of (re)integration measures. It is necessary to allocate adequate and flexible budgets to local governments. In addition, local governments need to be accompanied in developing xenophobia prevention mechanisms. In this context, it is key to make local governments understand that migration is an opportunity, which can only be achieved if they feel supported by the national government.

- The groups on **access to labour markets and public services** found that regularisation grants fundamental rights, but does not guarantee they can be exercised. It is however important to ensure the protection circle (health, education, housing) through regularisation. In many LAC countries, large informal labour markets, as well as inaccessible public service systems, represent a barrier to integration. Other services, such as opening a bank account, are often very difficult for foreigners, even when they have regular status. Likewise, the recognition of foreign degrees is also a challenge for both immigrants and the national population. In a context of increasing social conflicts between host and migrant communities, it is crucial to fight against discrimination, xenophobia, exclusion and self-exclusion. In a number of LAC countries, asylum seekers are not allowed to work, or employers do not know that they can legally employ asylum seekers and refugees.

¹³ The full summary report of the Quito workshop can be found here: <https://gfmd.org/news/providing-regular-pathways-crisis-safety-3rd-regional-gfmd-workshop-quito-ecuador>

Regional Workshop “Supporting arrival cities through policy coherence and multi-stakeholder partnerships” (contributing to the GFMD Roundtable 3.1) 16-17 October 2019, Lima, Peru¹⁴

The starting point of the event was that migrants not only move to destination countries, but rather to specific cities where they live and work. Migrants also pass through border cities and communities, which often bear a disproportionately high burden, especially in the context of displacement crises. It was therefore pointed out that it is often the pressure on cities in terms of migrants selling or even living on the streets and competing for local jobs that negatively impact public opinion on migration.

Main findings of the Workshop’s working groups:

- The process of **mainstreaming migration into local/urban development plans** needs to secure commitment from different ministries and local governments to achieve the institutionalisation of services for migrants, as well as the improvement of social services for all, the need to develop multi-annual strategic plans with fixed budgets, in addition to cooperation with international organisations, at local level, and the importance of learning from other cities at domestic, regional and global levels. The importance of tackling the human side of migration and culture of peace was also discussed, especially in the context of forced displacement due to non-State violence, such as in the border region between Colombia and Venezuela, and working with non-State actors such as NGOs and churches.

- The major challenges identified to **ensuring access to services and opportunities for migrants at local level** were: lack of information on legislation and requirements amongst both employers and migrant employees, labour exploitation and – in this context – employers’ preferences for irregular immigrant workers. It was also stressed the need to understand integration barriers from the migrants’ perspective (e.g. the structural barriers that prevent migrant children from attending school). A key take-away of the group revolved around framing migration and integration in

public discourses and the media reporting: if immigration is seen as a threat, it will be treated as a threat, whereas if immigration is seen as an opportunity, we can turn it into an opportunity. At the same time, building trust between immigrants and public institutions is important to guarantee immigrants’ inclusion at local level.

- With regard to the **cooperation between the local level and the private sector**, the participants, including the representatives of municipalities and cities located at the border, discussed the great development potential they see in immigration, but at the same time the need for sensitisation programmes and information exchange (e.g. regarding the matching between migrant labour supply and labour demand in the private sector). In practical terms, it was outlined that diverging interests and the lack of communication between local, regional and central government, home communities and investors, could pose problems when it comes to attracting investments and funds at local level. In terms of emerging practices, ProBarranquilla a private agency from Colombia, offers free and confidential services to national and foreign companies that wish to invest in the city of Barranquilla. In the context of the Venezuelan displacement crisis, the agency has started to focus its work on enabling the inclusion of Venezuelan immigrants through the positive reformulation of the narratives about their arrival and potential economic contribution.

¹⁴ The full summary report of the Lima workshop can be found here: <https://gfmd.org/news/arrival-cities-4th-regional-gfmd-workshop-lima-peru>

○ Addressing migration challenges and opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean

The migration landscape in the LAC region is changing and it brings strong implications on the economies and societies of the countries of origin, transit and destination alike. As a result, public authorities, both at the national and local levels, should adopt policies that enable them to increase the development potential of migration.

To allow people to migrate by choice and not by force, it is important to reduce the weight of the adverse drivers of migration in LAC countries:

- By investing in welfare states that provide quality education and health to most citizens, guarantee access to social protection and decent jobs, and promote gender equality.
- By fighting effectively against soil degradation and food insecurity and offering labour alternatives in rural areas.
- By fostering state-of-the-art rule of law and good governance mechanisms that help create stable policy and social environments.
- By promoting civic security and actively fighting against violence and organised crime.
- By encouraging dialogues, civic coexistence and social cohesion at national and local levels.

Countries of origin need to create a policy environment that help them make the most of emigration:

- By reducing the negative effects of emigration, such as the loss of labour associated with the departure of part of the active population, in particular in rural areas, as well as the impact of family disintegration for children left behind.
- By lowering the costs of sending remittances and developing financial mechanisms and training programmes that enable recipients to make a productive use of remittances.

- By tapping into the potential of migrant diasporas and encourage them to invest in local development initiatives.

Countries of transit and destination must protect migrants' rights and promote access to services:

- By ensuring that migrants are aware of their rights and that local authorities in transit and destination areas have the human and financial capacity to protect such rights.
- By fighting actively against all forms of discrimination and forced labour, in particular in areas with a strong concentration of migrant populations.
- By helping host communities with a high concentration of transit migrants and immigrants develop public services and infrastructure to deal with rapid population increases.

To turn immigration into a driver of development, public authorities should prioritise the strengthening of national and local absorptive capacities towards migrants' socioeconomic integration:

- By adopting flexible regularisation mechanisms that enable migrants to benefit from education, health, housing, etc.
- By investing in training and education programmes to increase migrants' employment opportunities and reduce skills mismatches.
- By facilitating migrants' access to labour markets, which implies improving labour matching schemes, as well as skills and degrees recognition mechanisms.
- By financially spurring entrepreneurship among newcomers and host communities.
- By fostering financial inclusion through awareness campaigns for banking institutions and financial literacy programmes.

Because female migrants suffer from gender-based violence and discrimination, it is important to develop specific policies to reduce gender gaps:

- By adopting anti-trafficking mechanisms, protection protocols and psychosocial guidance to provide support to the specific needs of vulnerable migrant girls and women.
- By developing gender-sensitive capacity-building programmes for civil servants and other national and local actors dealing with migrants.
- By investing in care infrastructure to ease the access of women to training, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- By adopting affirmative action mechanisms to promote the socioeconomic inclusion of female migrants.

Socioeconomic integration policies need to come with dedicated measures to promote civic coexistence and social cohesion, in particular at local level and within host communities:

- By fighting against xenophobia, in particular through public awareness campaigns to inform about why people had to leave their countries and how they can contribute to host communities.
- By investing in language courses for migrants as well as introductory courses to the institutions, social norms and culture of their host countries.
- By promoting voluntary work that contribute to improving living conditions in host municipalities, as well as the perception that local communities have about migrants.
- By encouraging, including with financial support, cultural activities that foster interaction between migrants and host communities.
- By including vulnerable host communities into programmes designed to support migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, to avoid resentment and xenophobia.

Public authorities in origin, transit and destination countries need to provide a coordinated and coherent migration and development response:

- By creating migration coordination groups that involve a wide range of public institutions as well as representatives from the private sector, civil society organisations and international cooperation.
- By mainstreaming migration into national and local development planning to make it a priority across different sectors, such as labour, agriculture and rural development, training and education, social protection, youth, gender...

Finally, the success of migration and development policies requires that countries from the region - and beyond - improve cooperation mechanisms:

- By fostering regional cooperation to face current migration challenges in LAC, in particular the Venezuelan migration crisis, transit migration in Central America and Mexico, and migrant smuggling in the Caribbean.
- By preventing non-cooperative migration policies and adopting regional regularisation mechanisms.
- By promoting labour inclusion at the regional level, for instance through joint mechanisms of recognition of degrees and skills, or regional labour matching schemes.
- By making the international community more aware of the current migration challenges in the region and encouraging international cooperation to go beyond humanitarian aid and increasingly invest in migrants' socioeconomic integration.

By way of conclusion

The migration landscape in Latin America and the Caribbean has rapidly changed over the last decade. Even though LAC is still predominantly a region of origin, the number of immigrants has significantly increased as a consequence of restrictive migration policies in high-income countries, which have translated into more regional flows. This is especially the case in Central America where a small proportion of transit migrants eventually reach the United States. But the main change has been the Venezuelan migration in recent years, which has contributed to turning most countries in the region into transit and destination countries.

Public authorities therefore need to adjust to new migration challenges, ranging from regularising growing numbers of immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, to guaranteeing their rights and providing access to services, such as health, education and housing. One important challenge in a region characterised by high levels of inequalities, labour informality and unemployment is to promote migrants' socioeconomic integration, while fostering civic coexistence and social cohesion. Host communities sometimes see newcomers as potential competitors for resources, jobs and services. The response of national and local governments, as well as of the civil society organisations and the international cooperation, should therefore address host communities' concerns and include vulnerable local populations into their programmes.

In this respect, the GFMD Final Summit in Quito in January 2020, should be the opportunity for the international community to address better the new migration challenges faced by LAC countries. Besides humanitarian aid, countries in the region need to invest to create opportunities for institutional transformations to cope, adapt and respond to new migration dynamics and demography; increase investments in income generation programmes to enable host communities and countries to integrate local populations with migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers. They also require massive investments in infrastructure and local development to help create jobs that can absorb both migrant and host populations. But, because this implies financial resources that most countries in the region do not have, international cooperation needs to upgrade its support to LAC countries and help them make migration an opportunity for development.