

**Round Table 3 “Migration as an enabler for inclusive social development”
General Rapporteur’s Report¹
by Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco, Mexico**

I will attempt to summarize the rich and productive discussions of Round Table 3: “Migration as an enabler for inclusive social development”. As you know, the Round Table was split in two sessions:

Roundtable 3.1 “Empowering migrants, their households and communities for improved protection of rights and social development outcomes”

The Co-chairs were Ecuador and Greece.

This session explored possible measures to be taken by governments, of both countries of origin and destination, in order to enhance access to social protection mechanisms and social services.

It was considered that Migrant empowerment is built on the pillars of rights and opportunity and that empowerment and positive social development outcomes can only be realized through a legal framework that safeguards migrants’ human rights and a policy framework which allows migrants to claim their rights and access to opportunities.

Beyond that framework, policies to promote the empowerment of migrants, their households and communities, should focus on information, voice and connection.

During the discussions several participants emphasized the need to center public policies in the migrant person, based in the full respect of migrant’s human rights, regardless of migratory status, and acknowledging their role as partners and enablers of development.

A key message early in the session, and to which many speakers returned, was that policies and programs are only effective if well implemented. They also need to be well-designed and built on sound structures, institutions and legal frameworks.

¹ This is a preliminary report from the general rapporteur of Roundtable 3. The final report from the Roundtable will be provided in the Chair’s Report.”

Diasporas can act as agents for empowerment for migrants and form networks and connections, both within the host country and with the home country. As States, we can look on how to support these processes, whether as countries of origin or countries of destination.

States can also create space for cultural expression: this provides connections within the migrant community, across generations, and builds connections with the host communities, also providing them with a voice.

We heard many calls for the need for focus on vulnerable groups, especially women and children, and migrant workers facing exploitation. We also noted the need to address negative perceptions of migrants, through using information, drawing on evidence, and using inclusive language.

A strong role for migrants in decision-making was also raised: states, local governments, institutions should make provision for this. States can do much on their own, but we can do more working together. We also need to work with partners, including diaspora, civil society, and the communities themselves.

Access to *Information* empowers migrants to know what their rights are and how to engage them. An effective public *Voice* is both a signal and a vehicle of migrants' empowerment and *connections* provide a source of strength for migrant communities. Together, these capabilities can empower in ways that are greater than the sum of the parts.

A set of general conclusions were identified:

- An underlying theme of the discussion was the changing and evolving dynamic of migration. Countries are observing second or third generations of migrants looking for ways to reconnect with their origins. As economies mature, we also see changing patterns of remittances and changing relationships between those who migrate and those who remain at home.
- Participants explored tools to enhance empowerment of migrants and recognized that empowerment encompasses the ability to make informed and meaningful choices about one's life (including the choice to migrate).
- Protection and promotion of human rights should be the basic principle in the cycle of Migration.
- Policies should be gender-sensitive and include reproductive health services.

- The greater the access of migrants to rights is, and the more choices they have, the more they are likely to play an active role as agents of social as well as economic development.
- As a result of migrants' transnational connections, a virtuous circle is becoming evident: empowered migrants empower other migrants.
- When migrants can exercise their rights and take advantage of opportunities, they share assets, create associations, and transfer their knowledge and skills to their countries of origin.
- The main challenge is to implement practical measures of empowerment, based on the pillars of rights and opportunities.

Roundtable 3.2 “Migrant asset transfers and their effects on health and education”

The Co-chairs were El Salvador and United Arab Emirates.

This session explored how policies and bilateral or multilateral cooperation can improve positive development outcomes from migration in the areas of health and education, taking into account gender equality.

The main points of the discussion were:

Remittances may fund the costs of education, but may also distort education systems to be more oriented towards destination countries than countries of origin.

Brain drain is slowly turning into brain gain, not only through migrant returns, but also through various kinds of diaspora engagement.

Migration leads to increased access to health services and changing attitudes towards health.

Health and education are both means and ends for development.

Spending on health and education should not be considered as consumption, but as investment in human capital.

All stakeholders (migrants, governments, local authorities, unions, home towns, etc ...) are co-responsible for maximizing the positive impact of migration on health and education: their responsibility should be shared.

Remittances are private, and the civil society is very sensitive about the flow and use of remittances. However remittances can contribute concretely to development.

Education about migration should be introduced in both origin and destination countries in order to increase awareness on its impact

Emphasis on engaging women who are the major recipients of remittances to invest in education and health

Migrants should be aware of how their remittances can align with national development priorities

The need to link the demand and the supply of health workers (through language and education skill certification, and harmonization of curriculums) between origin and destination countries

A call upon Turkey, as incoming chair of the GFMD, to stay engaged with remittances, especially to gain more evidence about the impact of social remittances

The session produced a set of recommendations as a general measures:

- To increase knowledge of viable models for directing migrants' social and financial remittances for positive health and education outcomes.
- To establish policies and practices that encourage the diaspora (and returning migrants) to actively participate in development strategies of the countries of origin, including improvement of the quality of life regarding access to education and health.
- To establish and promote voluntary principles and practices for the ethical international recruitment of health personnel.
- To encourage incitement systems to facilitate circular and temporary migration of health personnel.
- To recognize the potential offered by temporary return opportunities and the removal of barriers of circular mobility, including allowing portable benefits, particularly relating to pensions and medical and life insurance.

- To strengthen the health and education systems in low-income countries including through training and incentives to retain high-skilled personal and by attracting back professionals that have migrated.

Overall conclusions of RT 3

The discussions in both sessions of this Round Table were very substantive. Several national experiences were shared. As a common conclusion we can highlight that:

1. Migrant's role as partners and enablers of development should be acknowledged.
2. We must go beyond the issue of remittances and consider as well the costs of migration for countries of origin.
3. The underlying message through the Round table was that the best way to empower migrants is to recognize their valuable contribution to both counties of origin and destination, and that public policies addressing this phenomena should be centered on the person, in full respect of its human rights.

Moving away from the script, my final words are to pay tribute to a very successful Swedish chairmanship of the VII GFMD.