

GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT 2011

THEMATIC MEETING

“From evidence to action – Facilitating South-South labour migration for development”

Opportunities and challenges of South-South labour migration

Background paper¹

1. Introduction

Human mobility is an age-old phenomenon that has become an important issue in political and development debates. However, the focus is biased towards South-North movements of migrants, while South-South² migration stocks are about as numerous. Moreover, intra-regional migration and movements to other developing countries are particularly important in sub-Saharan Africa (65% in 2010) and Asia. Over 80 per cent of South-South migration was expected to take place between neighbouring countries in 2005 (Ratha and Shaw, 2007). Mobility among countries in the South is likely to increase further as the BRICS countries (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa) continue to rise in importance in the global economy (Wickramasekara, 2011). Yet immigration in developing countries is a phenomenon that has not captured much attention.

International migration is mostly an issue of labour mobility³ of people moving in search of better opportunities. According to the ILO (2010b), about half of all international migrants are working. Applied to developing countries, about 36 million migrants would have moved to another developing country for employment in 2010. It is important to focus on the needs of this specific group of migrants to leverage their contribution to human development.

Continuing with key figures and trends on regional labour migration in the South in part two, the third section of this paper highlights examples of regional labour mobility frameworks in the South. The fourth section then sketches out opportunities and challenges linked to regional labour migration among developing countries.⁴ The paper closes with a section on important policy issues and recommendations.

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² The definition of UNDP is used here, meaning that developing countries are all those except the ones with a very high Human Development Indicator (see <http://www.acpmigration-obs.org/sites/default/files/South.pdf>).

³ This paper does neither focus on forced migration nor internal labour mobility, although they are important phenomena in particular in developing countries and the latter presents a large poverty reduction potential.

⁴ The links between labour migration and human development, including its impacts, are beyond the scope of this paper. Please see the background papers of previous Global Fora on Migration and Development meetings for a discussion: <http://www.gfmd.org/en/documents-library.html>.

2. Key trends of intra- and inter-regional labour migration in the South

Regional labour mobility has been a feature of life in many developing countries for a long time. Two important types of regional labour migration among developing countries can be observed: firstly, intra-regional mobility systems and secondly migration of workers between two regions or continents. Overall it can be observed that concrete data on labour migrants is difficult to find in particular for developing countries or has not been analysed sufficiently yet. It is important to keep in mind that migration patterns change and are not static (Skeldon, 2010).

Undocumented migration, the increased participation of women as labour migrants, short- and medium-term and cross-border movements are widespread. South-South labour migration also takes place due to environmental degradation, pushing people to move to find fertile ground to sustain livelihoods. Limited land availability to sustain traditional livelihood strategies can lead to migration across borders.

Wage differentials between countries in the South and thus the potential economic gains from labour mobility may be smaller, yet more than four out of five migrants moved to another developing country with a higher human development index (UNDP, 2009). An important aspect to keep in mind is the largely informal nature of labour markets in developing countries (up to 70-80 % in Africa, for example), which has repercussions on how labour mobility takes place and on the rights and working conditions of migrants. The economic and financial crises affected certain destination countries and consequently many foreign workers lost employment (Ratha et al., 2009). The effects on labour migrants depend on the type of sector, their gender and the country they work in.

Sub-Saharan Africa is leading in terms of intra-regional migration. The Maghreb countries are often only considered transit countries for sub-Saharan African migrants on their way to Europe, yet many Maghreb countries have become destination countries as well (Touzenis et al., 2009). In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), intra-regional migration is increasing in importance and more and more feminized (OAS, 2011). Inter-regional migration from and to Latin American and Caribbean countries from other countries in the South also takes place. The Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) are an important destination of temporary foreign contract workers from South Asia, South-East Asia and the Middle East. Women tend to predominantly work as domestic workers in the GCC countries. Nonetheless, they only represent a minority of all international migrants in the Middle East (38 % in 2010, UN PD, 2010). Migrant workers from Central Asian countries predominantly move to the Russian Federation for work. 43 per cent of Asian migrants stayed within the region in 2000, went to Oceania (3 %) or Africa (1%; DRC, 2007). Inter-regional migration also occurs between China, India and Africa (Skeldon, 2011).

In terms of skill levels, most South-South labour mobility concerns lower skilled workers and informal job markets. Nonetheless, it is important to note that important immigration poles exist in the South, such as Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Sudan and Tanzania in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2010). The movement of large numbers of skilled migrants, often referred to as 'brain drain', also occurs towards countries in the South (17.5% in 2005), such as the GCC countries (9.6 million in 2000), Malaysia, Taiwan Province of China, Singapore and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China (4 million in the latter

two countries) and South Africa (1.3 million highly-skilled immigrants in 2000)⁵ (Docquier and Marfouk, 2005; Clemens, 2006). The circulation of skills in the South therefore seems an important emerging issue to tackle. In particular young migrants, many of them skilled (Assal, 2010; IOM, 2010), need to be the center of regional labour mobility schemes in the South.

3. Regional labour mobility frameworks in the South

In addition to bilateral arrangements, regional integration with links to migration and development is taking place in different regional groupings all over the world.⁶ Yet the free movement of people often stays merely an objective. Implementation is lacking behind the free movement of goods and trade and labour migration provisions are often missing in mobility arrangements. This potential for deepening regional integration, fostering technology transfers and thus enhancing trade competitiveness presents a vast opportunity by removing obstacles to movement, in particular for labour migrants. Some regional bodies adopted a number of specific instruments to facilitate labour mobility, like the Andean Community (CAN), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), while other free movement provisions only exist on paper.⁷

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is quite advanced in terms of regional integration and freedom of movement of persons, right of residence and establishment, which is enshrined in a Protocol. The ECOWAS Commission adopted its *Common Approach on Migration* in 2008, entailing provisions to foster the harmonization of policies, the protection of migrant workers, promoting regular migration and gender-sensitive policies, among others. Obstacles to an effective implementation of the Free Movement Protocol include the need to harmonize immigration laws; a lack of knowledge of the content of the respective declarations and protocols by administrators, border officials and the wider public; the absence of appropriate structures and resources to apply the provisions; and the need to redefine the regional labour needs as most movements tend to take place outside the legal and policy frameworks (Touzenis et al., 2009).

The Member States of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) adopted the Protocol on free movement of persons, services, labour and right of establishment. Yet Burundi is the only COMESA country that ratified it, highlighting the need to implement the protocol. As part of the tripartite dialogue with the South African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC), a Regional Consultative Process (RCP) is planned to ensure migration issues and harmonization are included (COMESA, 2011a; b).

⁵ Including 1557 doctors and more than 400 nurses from other SADC countries in 2000, plus more than 400 Cuban doctors between 1996 and 2009.

⁶ Examples include the 1979 Protocol Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Annex II of the Common Market Protocol of the East African Community (EAC) which came into effect in 2010, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour and Services, the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Draft Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005), the Andean Community, the Central American Common Market, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Single Market and Economy (CSME) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

⁷ Some examples of good practices are discussed below. The scope of this paper does not allow for a full analysis of all regional groupings.

The Draft Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons of SADC has been signed by nine Member States, yet at least nine need to both sign and ratify it for it to come into effect. With growing intra-regional migration, discussions have refocused on the Protocol in recent years (Crush, 2011b).

Important regional frameworks in LAC countries include the Single Market and Economy (CSME) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), where the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas stipulates the rights to free movement of establishment, the right to provide services and for certain skills categories to seek employment across the region. Between 1997 and June 2010, about 4,000 persons had moved as a result of the freedom of movement in the CSME, countering fears of massive mobility. Positions in key sectors, such as education and health care, were filled through intra-regional mobility, with four out of five migrants having received tertiary education. CSME States are competing with other countries for highly skilled migrants.⁸ At the same time, 75,000 work permits were issued to nationals from outside the Caribbean who filled existing skills shortages (Mac Andrew, 2011). Most are probably from other countries in the South and highlight the need to encourage the circulation of skills among countries in the South.

The Common Market in Southern American countries (MERCOSUR), plus member candidates such as Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia, allows MERCOSUR nationals to be granted residence status and an employment permit solely on the basis of nationality and without having to provide a valid job offer. In addition, Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay regularized undocumented migrants, which mostly concerned MERCOSUR nationals (Ayuso, 2010).

In Arab countries, a study from 2010 (ALO et al.) concluded that labour mobility has greatly contributed to regional economic and social integration. Nonetheless, demand and supply in Arab origin and destination countries need to be better linked through the existing labour market systems to foster the potential for human development. Demographic growth and low employment rates of young persons necessitate policy actions on integrating the mobility of young people in national and regional development plans. Enhancing student mobility could provide an opportunity to foster regional integration, circulation of knowledge and technology as well as to reduce the vulnerability to irregular migration (ALO et al., 2010).

Other frameworks in the South include Regional Consultative Processes (RCP) such as the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD-RCP), covering the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, that seeks to promote the free movement of goods, services, and people within the sub-region. While not specifically created to address labour migration, many RCPs cover aspects related to the regional mobility of workers.⁹ Global and regional human rights treaties and declarations equally apply to migrant workers.

4. Opportunities and challenges of South-South labour migration

⁸ In other cases, such as artisans and domestic workers, the Caribbean Vocational Qualification system is still being put in place, thus inhibiting workers of these categories to move freely in the CSME.

⁹ Examples include the South American Conference on Migration (SACM), the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA), and for West Africa (MIDWA or Dakar Follow-up), the Inter-Governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC), the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (Colombo Process), the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia (Abu Dhabi Dialogue), and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime in the Asia-Pacific region.

Labour mobility represents an important policy aspect that merits more attention and action in a South-South context. Challenges and opportunities of this type of movement are presented to provide an overview of the issues at stake. Potential challenges include the following:

- Labour migration systems often focus on emigration of workers to developed countries only, which face different challenges. Immigration in the South tends to be forgotten.
- Contrary to public perception, restrictions are imposed by developing countries on immigrants to almost the same degree as developed countries and equally favour the highly-skilled (UNDP, 2009). Certain groups may be barred from movement, such as women in some countries.
- The high degree of informality in many labour markets in developing countries poses particular challenges, in particular for the protection of the rights of migrant workers. The presence of porous borders may pose a security challenge but may also increase the undocumented mobility of migrant workers thereby increasing the tendency for them to enter informal labor markets. The low degree of creation of formal employment, coupled with external shocks, such as food, energy, financial and economic crises as well as political tensions can represent important push factors for migration.
- Social systems are often not developed enough and are difficult to access by migrant workers. However, migration in itself can provide social protection.

South-South labour mobility entails a number of important opportunities that should be leveraged:

- Intra-regional migration entails less distance and less costs. More studies are needed to assess how migrant workers move within the South. Although probably less highly-skilled workers migrate between developing countries, the larger numbers of migrants and the poverty reduction potential of albeit smaller remittances could potentially offset the smaller differences in wages. Porous borders and free movement as part of regional integration could mean higher (informal) remittances, investments in origin countries and lesser social costs through the ability to return more frequently.
- Cultural and possibly linguistic differences tend to be smaller between neighbouring countries, easing integration and potentially reducing psychosocial effects.
- Regional labour markets could offer a new entity of analysis and cooperation linking demand and supply, including through GATS Mode 4 (Murrugarra et al., 2011) (see chapter 5.4).
- The reduction of costs of migration, such as high costs for travel documents and high remittance transfer costs, can imply important poverty reduction gains for larger parts of migrants than those that have the resources to migrate to developed countries.
- Recognition of qualifications may be less of an issue for lesser skilled migration and easier among countries with similar educational systems. Regional integration, such as in CARICOM, can offer an opportunity to address the issue.

5. Programmatic and policy responses: The importance of coherent and evidence-based labour migration policies at national and regional levels

5.1 The evidence base: The need for data and needs assessments on labour mobility

Due to porous borders and large informal movements, labour mobility among developing countries is more difficult to assess. Nonetheless, a number of sources exist that can be exploited. They include official statistics, such as Labour Force Surveys (LFS) and specific migration surveys. LFSs should include labour migration modules, such as the one developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO).¹⁰ Administrative records, consulates and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of both origin and destination countries and employers and private placement agencies can also provide information (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2011; Crush, 2011b; Martin, 2011).

Tackling the poor quality of most information, as well as the lack of human and financial resources and institutional capacity to exploit them, need to be part of the approach to foster the evidence base (Shitundu, 2006). Key recommendations include making better use of existing sources, design new sources disaggregated by sex, age and occupation, capacity building and improve inter-institutional coordination and cooperation on labour migration statistics and data sharing among countries in a region (Schachter, 2009; Martin, 2011). When devising a new labour mobility initiative, links need to be made to existing policies and development plans. The ILO developed the [International Standard Classification of Occupations](#) to ensure comparability between countries (Martin, 2011), which is often still missing in practice. Providing national data according to this classification could increase comparability.¹¹

Migration Profiles, first developed by the European Union and prepared for countries in Africa, the Mediterranean, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Balkans and Black Sea countries by IOM, ICMPD and the European University Institute, are a useful tool and include information on labour migration trends and policies. The Organization of American States (2011) just released a first report of the Continuous Reporting System on International Migration in the Americas (SICREMI in Spanish) with OECD. The report contains information on labour migration and could be a model for other continents. To assess good practices and potential obstacles to labour migration within the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol, the ACP Observatory on Migration is commissioning a regional study at the end of 2011. The findings of the study can serve as lessons learned for other regional groupings aiming to enhance labour mobility among them.

5.2 Strengthening legal access to labour markets

To effectively link demand and supply, labour markets need to be assessed at national, municipal and local level prior to developing a labour mobility strategy. Job openings can provide an indication of current needs, while training needs will provide an insight into the needed planning and development of a human resource strategy. Matching labour needs with supply can entail a win-win situation for migrants and countries involved. Based on the demand identified, skills can be fostered in an overall human resource strategy. In particular lower skilled workers and the poor should be targeted to maximize the poverty reduction potential of South-South labour mobility, which is still largely underutilized (Murrugarra et al., 2011). Labour market observatories, such as the [Regional Labour Observatory for Central America and the Dominican Republic](#) and the [Interactive Map of Temporary Employment Programs for Migrant](#)

¹⁰ See the “Labour Migration Module” for National Household and Labour Force Surveys: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/migmmain.showPractice?p_lang=en&p_practice_id=42.

¹¹ Examples include the *Répertoire Opérationnel Africain des Metiers et Emplois* (ROAME, African Operational Directory of Occupations and Employment) in francophone West African countries and the Accueil-Emploi online database in Senegal, Mali, Benin and Cameroun.

[Workers](#) (*MINPAT* in Spanish) launched by the Organization of American States, are good practices that can be replicated in other countries. Dissemination of information on international vacancies is crucial for any labour migration strategy.

In addition to identifying needs and demand, bilateral, multilateral and regional programmes and approaches can be developed to enable legal labour mobility. Key stakeholders beyond public local and national administrations in origin and destination countries need to be consulted and involved in a transparent way. They include representatives of the private sector, civil society and migrants themselves. Mutual trust is an important precondition for effective cooperation, which also applies to the involvement of other international actors (IOM, ILO and OSCE, 2008). Objectives, interests and procedures need to be clearly defined in the overarching regional or bilateral regulatory framework and interventions be coherent throughout the migration cycle to foster realistic expectations (Holzmann and Pouget, 2010).

More coherence is needed to avoid duplication of efforts and jeopardizing the sustainability of initiatives by different international donors and international organizations. To increase synergies, a national or regional inter-institutional entity on labour mobility can be founded, which is in charge of coordinating multilateral and bilateral projects as well as mainstreaming into national and regional development plans (Martin, 2011).

5.3 Decreasing costs of migration and fostering remittances

As South-South migration tends to involve less costs due to shorter distances, other existing barriers to mobility for in particular the poor need to be lifted. Geographic distance and remote locations can increase the costs for migration. Access to loans with adequate interest rates for the poor can provide a possibility to ensure that even those usually 'unbanked' and living far away from economic centers can participate in labour mobility.

High costs to obtaining travel documents can further impeditment large parts of societies to move. Passports can cost over USD 300 and in some countries their costs can make up between 10 and 60 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product per capita, which acts as an obstacle to migration. Other procedural constraints, such as long waiting times and only centralized entities issuing passports in origin countries and long and expensive visa granting procedures in destination countries, can hinder the possibility to take up employment abroad. Processes can further be prone to corruption for speeding up lengthy procedures, further contributing to high costs for migration (Murrugarra et al., 2011).

In some cases, certain groups of society are inhibited from moving freely and legally abroad, such as women. These limitations disproportionately affect poorer parts of society and lifting them could entail significant improvements to the opportunities for them (Murrugarra et al., 2011).

Given that intra- and inter-regional mobility in the South is as important as South-North movements, but differs in terms of skills levels and type of mobility, remittances are probably severely undercounted. Due to porous borders, cross-border migration, large informal labour markets and high transfer costs for using official transfer channels, these migrants tend to resort to mostly informal means of sending money and in-kind transfers, such as goods. Innovative practices exist, for instance through mobile phone transfers and savings as used in Kenya, enabling electronic transfers, fostering financial literacy and access to financial tools for

migrants and their families, developing specific financial tools tailored to the needs of women and men and strengthening diaspora bonds (Melde and Schicklinski, 2011).¹² Lowering the fees for monetary transfers can benefit either the migrant not having to pay high fees or the receiver as the person(s) will be able to access larger amounts, with a potential pro-poor effect if access to knowledge and banking products is given (McKensie and Gibson, 2011).

5.4 Fostering the protection of migrant workers for human development

Human rights and migration are closely linked. Grave human rights violations and absence of human rights protection are important drivers of migration. On the other hand, human rights of migrants directly influence their ability to realize the human development potential of mobility for migrants, host societies and families in the country of origin (Wickramasekara, 2010).¹³

People on the move tend to be more vulnerable in terms of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases; to violence, especially women; to labour exploitation; to smuggling of migrants and/or trafficking in persons and to social exclusion, discrimination, racism and xenophobia. This highlights the need to devise special measures for migrant workers in the country, with a gendered approach, enabling them to access basic social services such as health care and to avoid stigmatization, exclusion and xenophobia. Origin countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs can play an important role in supporting and protecting the rights of migrant workers. A good practice are the 'consular cards' issued by Nicaraguan consulates in Costa Rica, which enable migrants to access education and health care and acquire residence status (Martin, 2011).

Domestic workers, due to their hidden and often unregulated work space, need particular protection. The majority are women and girls, with many of them being migrant workers (ITUC, 2010). The recently adopted ILO Convention on Domestic Workers and the accompanying Recommendation¹⁴ need to be enforced accordingly to protect this 'invisible' workforce.

There are also other means of protection, such as dissemination of information on labour migration procedures to migrants in a language they understand and in a way they can access this information,¹⁵ regulating private recruitment agencies, promoting codes of conducts for private employment agencies of migrant workers,¹⁶ establishing an enabling legislative framework safeguarding the rights of migrant workers and mechanisms to monitor and enforce these regulations, using skills development and learning as a tool to empower migrants and enabling family reunification to counter negative social impacts (IOM, ILO and OSCE, 2008).¹⁷

¹² For more recommendations please see the background note on '[Remittances in ACP Countries](#)' by the ACP Observatory on Migration.

¹³ For more background information, please see <http://www.gfmd.org/en/documents-library/docs-protection-rights-empowerment.html>.

¹⁴ For the text of the Convention, please see http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100thSession/reports/provisional-records/WCMS_157836/lang--en/index.htm and http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100thSession/reports/provisional-records/WCMS_157835/lang--en/index.htm for the Recommendation.

¹⁵ Good practices include Migrant Resource Centers, such as the Migration Information and Management Centre ([CIGEM](#)) in Bamako, Mali, funded by the EC.

¹⁶ Such as the Kenyan Association of Private Employment Agencies (KAPEA).

¹⁷ For more details, please see <http://iom.ch/jahia/Jahia/pid/2056>.

Social security is another important aspect of protection and a return incentive. Complementary social security agreements can be devised, covering the portability of pensions, social security and health benefits (IOM, ILO and OSCE, 2008). A good practice is the regional Agreement on Social Security by CARICOM with the aim to harmonize social security legislation in Member States (CARICOM Secretariat, 2010).¹⁸

5.5 Gender-sensitive policies

The needs and realities of women and men migrating may differ to a great extent. Any labour mobility approach therefore needs to be based on sex-disaggregated data and taking into account the different challenges faced by men and women. In the case of South Africa for instance, a study found women migrant workers to be more likely to work in the informal sector and carrying out unskilled work. This entails important repercussions on the stability of employment. The seasonal nature of work can also lead to women not being counted in statistics. Higher risks can also include vulnerability to HIV as temporary workers in the informal sector (Williams et al., 2011). Differences also include sending patterns of remittances (UN Women and IOM, 2010). These aspects highlight that a universal approach to migrant workers is not possible to ensure gender equity and equality.

5.6 Youth unemployment, informal labour markets and the creation of employment

In most developing countries about half the population is younger than 25 years (UN PD, 2010). Many migrants in developing countries are young and educated, yet as a consequence of the global economic and financial crisis, joblessness among young people has increased even more (Byung-jin et al., 2010; ILO, 2010a). Underemployment and lack of jobs can make mobility an opportunity for furthering studies and skills development, yet also a necessity if no other options are available. This can force young persons to use dangerous routes and fall prey to transnational organized crime, including smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons and cross-border recruitment for armed conflicts (UNOWA, 2006). Child labour is a linked issue as children risk being trafficked for labour exploitation. Making migration safe for children above the minimum working age can greatly protect them (van de Glind, 2010).

The large degree of informality in many labour markets necessitates different approaches as most employment strategies seem to be targeted to the rather limited formal jobs sector. Creating employment, tackling corruption and creating an enabling environment for productive activities, in particular for young people, is critical for making mobility a choice (UNOWA, 2006). Realistic information on the risks of mobility can help to decrease the negative effects on young people guided by 'migration myths'. Social media and communication tools can help to enable young people to make informed choices (Casco, 2011). Engaging the private sector, non-state actors and cooperation among higher education institutes can be key tools, including at regional level.

Trade in the framework of the World Trade Organization is another area that can help to foster jobs creation, economic growth and increased foreign direct investments. Mode 4 of the General

¹⁸ Model legislation was developed by the CARICOM Secretariat to support the equality of treatment of residents of the CARICOM States. The Agreement applies to employees of transnational companies, workers on ships and other international transportation enterprises, diplomatic personnel, officials of international organizations and self-employed workers (Caribbean Community Secretariat, 2010).

Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) enables the temporary movement of natural persons for the provision of services. Mode 4 could be used for negotiations within and among regions to widen the scope of movement for lower skilled migrants as they represent the majority in developing countries and most States already face a shortage of highly-skilled workers (Panizzon, 2010; Melde and Ionesco, 2011).

5.7 Fostering networks and engagement of diasporas in the South

Transnational links have proven to be very beneficial for migrants generally. Social networks are a way of decreasing costs in terms of better access to up-to-date information, providing loans to finance migration, offering assistance upon arrival and mitigating the social impact of mobility. The larger the network and over time mobility becomes accessible for also poorer parts of society, enabling an important complement to pro-poor policies (Murrugarra et al. 2011).

The circulation of human and social capital and skills among developing countries has not been recognized yet. Outreach needs to include diasporas residing in the South. The bias towards South-North migration has left the potential of diaspora members and their contacts and transnational engagement largely out of sight (Crush, 2011a). The topic is starting to generate more interest¹⁹. There is a clear need for outreach and dialogue with diasporas in the South to enable an exchange and transfer of human and social capital, skills, ideas and technology.

6. Open questions for discussion

- Can labour migration systems based on South-North and North-North migration patterns apply to South-South contexts with their high degree of informality in the labour market?
- How can youth unemployment and underemployment be addressed through labour mobility?
- What are best practices for promoting gender-sensitive labour migration schemes?
- How can demand and supply within regions and between two countries better be linked?
- Do regional integration and the facilitation of the freedom of movement of persons lead to a lesser ability to assess labour migration as nationals do not need to register when moving?
- Is circular migration a concept more fitting for intra-regional migration in the South than South-North mobility due to less (effective) barriers?
- Should intra-regional labour mobility be promoted through regional or bilateral initiatives? What are the opportunities and challenges of both?
- How can the mobility of lower skilled migrants be enhanced? Which destination countries in the South are facing shortages and demographic decline?
- How can foreign domestic workers be effectively protected? What good practices exist?
- How can competition between local and foreign workers be addressed, in particular related social protests and policies aiming to restrict the labour force to nationals?

¹⁹ See for instance Chikanda, A., 2011. 'The Engagement of the Zimbabwean Medical Diaspora', *Migration Policy Series No. 55*, the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP), Idasa, Cape Town and Southern African Research Centre, Queens University, Toronto. The ACP Observatory is currently [launching studies on the diasporas](#) in ACP countries from Nigeria and Kenya.

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