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**A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTEGRATING
MIGRATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
IN THE ESCWA REGION**

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Preface

The relationship between migration and development has long been debated. However, a consensus is emerging that the relationship is complex, multidimensional and multidirectional, affecting economic, social and political life in countries of origin and destination.

In the light of the importance of migration to and from the member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), this paper considers how migration and development are relevant to the countries of the region, and suggests ways in which the effects of migration on development could be managed. It aims to highlight in particular the importance of integrating migration into development strategies.

This paper is part of the Working Paper Series of the Social Development Division (SDD) at ESCWA. These papers are written by ESCWA staff members as part of an ongoing work programme and are intended to stimulate discussion on a given subject.

The research presented in this issue was conducted by Mr. Paul Tacon of the Population and Social Development Section within the context of the work of SDD on population and social development linkage. The research was carried out under the overall guidance and support of Ms. Batool Shakoori, Chief, Population and Social Development Section, and Mr. Frederico Neto, Director, Social Development Division, with the valuable assistance of Ms. Lara el-Khoury, Ms. Diane Zovighian, Ms. Lina Nasser and Ms. Ayima Okeeva, who contributed to and commented on the text.

The research set out in the Working Paper Series is preliminary and has not been subjected to the usual review process for ESCWA publications. Feedback from readers would therefore be welcomed, and comments and suggestions may be made at: <http://www.escwa.un.org/main/contact.asp>.

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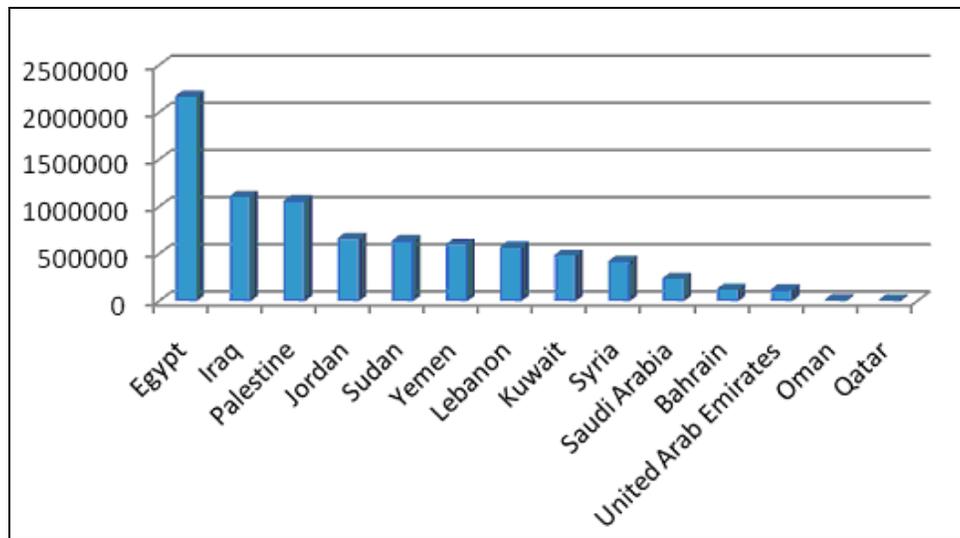
PART I

INTRODUCTION: THE CURRENT STATE OF MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

The countries of the ESCWA region hosted nearly 25 million migrants in 2010, compared with some 20.25 million in 2005; of these, over 10 million live in Saudi Arabia (the fourth largest country of destination in the world) and the United Arab Emirates alone.¹ Seven countries in the region (Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) figure among the ten countries with more than one million inhabitants with the largest proportion of migrants in their population worldwide.²

Emigration is also important for countries in the region. According to the 2000 round of censuses, there were almost 8.3 million people from ESCWA countries living outside their countries of birth.³ Egypt alone accounted for 2.2 million of these, while Iraq and Palestine accounted for a further million emigrants each (see figure I).

Figure I. Total number of emigrants



Source: Global Migrant Origin Database Version 4, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.⁴

Arab countries have shown diverse and changing attitudes towards this migration; in particular, they have often considered such population movements in relation to their effect on development. For the oil-producing countries of destination of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), for example, the promotion of immigration on a large scale has been seen as key to their economic development by providing the large workforce required by these mostly sparsely-populated countries to effectively exploit their natural resources, as well as to provide expertise and labour in the services and government sectors. However, over time, attitudes to these immigrants have changed, with the focus moving to considering the impact of migration on the employment of the growing youth population.

¹ In this paper, a “migrant” is defined using the definition of the United Nations Population Division, which is that of a person who has been living for a year or more outside their country of birth. This does not take into account citizenship. See: <http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=5> (accessed 10 August 2010).

² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009.

³ Calculation by author, based on Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, 2007.

⁴ Available at: http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global_Migrant_Origin_Database_Version_4.xls.

Arab countries of origin have also had different and shifting stances towards migration and its relationship with development. In Jordan, for example, the official view has for some time been permissive of emigration. The country has benefited from the inward remittances that these migrants send and has entered into bilateral agreements with Gulf countries to facilitate the emigration of its citizens.⁵ Lebanon has established a General Directorate of Emigrants with the aim of attracting the interest and investment of Lebanese people living outside the country. By contrast, Egypt initially tightly controlled the emigration of its skilled nationals, only easing such restrictions in the 1960s,⁶ and Oman and the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen banned emigration entirely for periods of their history.⁷ Box 1 provides an overview of the ways in which views on migration have developed and current government attitudes on the issue.

Box 1. ESCWA member countries – views and policies on migration

The changes in ESCWA member countries' views on immigration and emigration can be tracked over time using the United Nations Population Division *World Population Policies* (ST/ESA/SER.A/293),⁸ which is based on the responses by member countries to surveys asking them to assess their current levels of immigration and emigration, and to give an impression of the policy direction they are taking in this regard (to raise, lower or maintain current levels of migration, or to undertake no intervention).

As can be seen from table 1 below, charting the views of governments on immigration since 1976, the trend is towards more restrictive policies, based on the idea that current levels of immigration are too high: whereas in 1976, 10 governments in the region considered levels of immigration to be "satisfactory", in 2009, this number had fallen to just six, with Bahrain and Oman being the only GCC countries in this category. On the other hand, while four governments sought to raise levels of immigration in 1976 (including Saudi Arabia), no governments indicated wishing to do so in 2009. This suggests that there has been a shift over time to more restrictive attitudes to immigration, both in GCC countries and the countries of the Arab Mashreq.

Table 1. Views and policies of ESCWA member countries on immigration, 1976-2009

Country	Variable	Year			
		1976	1986	1996	2009
Bahrain	View	Satisfactory	Too high	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Lower	No intervention	Maintain
Egypt	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Lower	Lower
Iraq	View	Too low	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Raise	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain
Jordan	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Lower	Lower
Kuwait	View	Satisfactory	Too high	Satisfactory	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Lower	Lower	Lower
Lebanon	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Lower	Maintain
Oman	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Lower	Maintain
Qatar	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Lower
Saudi Arabia	View	Too low	Satisfactory	Too high	Too high
	Policy	Raise	Maintain	Lower	Lower
The Sudan	View	Too low	Too high	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Raise	Lower	Raise	Maintain
Syrian Arab Republic	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Lower

⁵ Di Bartolomeo, Fakhoury and Perrin, 2010, p. 9.

⁶ Ghoneim, 2010, p. 5.

⁷ Secombe and Lawless, 1989, p. 71.

⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), 2010.

Box 1 (continued)

Country	Variable	Year			
		1976	1986	1996	2009
United Arab Emirates	View	Satisfactory	Too high	Too high	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Lower	Lower	Lower
Yemen	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Lower	Lower
Total "Satisfactory"		10	9	8	6
Total "Too low"		3	0	0	0
Total "Too high"		0	4	5	7
Total "Maintain"		10	9	3	5
Total "Raise"		3	0	1	0
Total "Lower"		0	4	8	8
Total "No intervention"		0	0	1	0

By way of contrast, the attitudes of ESCWA member countries to emigration are more nuanced and the trends are not so clear over time. While there has been a slight increase in the number of countries wanting to raise the level of emigration from their countries, there has been a greater increase in the number of countries concerned that too many of their citizens are leaving, particularly among the major countries of origin in the region. Despite this concern, however, only two of the countries who consider emigration as being "too high" (Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic) have a policy of encouraging the return of their citizens, suggesting that the concern over emigration has not always been transformed into action. In comparison, all the GCC countries responded that current levels of emigration are "satisfactory", although Saudi Arabia said it was trying to lower the level.

Table 2. Views and policies of ESCWA member countries on emigration, 1976-2009

Country	Variable	Year			
		1976	1986	1996	2009
Bahrain	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	No intervention	No intervention
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	No	..
Egypt	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too low	Too low
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Raise	Maintain
	Encouraging the return of citizens	No	..	No	Yes
Iraq	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Lower
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	..	..
Jordan	View	Too high	Too high	Satisfactory	Too low
	Policy	Lower	Lower	No intervention	Raise
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	No	No
Kuwait	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	No intervention	No intervention
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	No	No
Lebanon	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Lower	No intervention
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	Yes	Yes
Oman	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	No intervention
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	..	No

Box 1 (continued)

Country	Variable	Year			
		1976	1986	1996	2009
Qatar	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	No intervention
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	..	No
Saudi Arabia	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Lower
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	..	Yes
The Sudan	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Too high	Too high
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	Lower	Lower
	Encouraging the return of citizens	Yes	..	Yes	..
Syrian Arab Republic	View	Too low	Too high	Too high	Too high
	Policy	Raise	Lower	Lower	No intervention
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	..	Yes
United Arab Emirates	View	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Maintain	No intervention	No intervention
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	..	Yes
Yemen	View	Satisfactory	Too high	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Policy	Maintain	Lower	Raise	Raise
	Encouraging the return of citizens	..	..	No	No
Total "Satisfactory"		11	10	9	7
Total "Too low"		1	0	1	2
Total "Too high"		1	3	3	4
Total "Maintain"		11	10	4	1
Total "Raise"		1	0	2	2
Total "Lower"		1	3	3	3
Total "No intervention"		0	0	4	7

These different responses to migration can, in part, be said to have been conditioned by different views on how migration (both emigration and immigration) can affect development. Broadly speaking, some countries consider the effects of inward or outward migration to be a threat to their development and so aim to limit it, whereas other countries see migration as a boon for development and seek to maintain or increase it. Despite these different approaches to the migration and development question, however, the growing consensus suggests that all these effects, positive and negative, can be considered within the same framework of the complex, context-dependent, multidimensional, multisectoral impact on development; and that rather than seeing migration as either beneficial or harmful, it should be considered in a more nuanced way, in order to maximize its benefits and minimize the negative aspects. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006 (New York, 14-15 September 2006) crystallized the many different and often contradictory understandings of the relationship between migration and development that have developed in recent decades, by adopting a consensus which acknowledges the importance and complexity of the relationship and the need for further research and dialogue to better understand it. Participants also agreed that, in order to effectively understand and act on migration, it should be integrated into national development strategies.⁹ This debate has continued in the years since the High-level Dialogue, for example in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) process and the United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report*, the 2009 edition of which was devoted to the theme of human mobility and development.

⁹ United Nations General Assembly, A/61/515.

In the light of this ongoing debate, this paper sets out the key features of the state of knowledge on migration and development, with particular reference to its relationship to the experience of ESCWA member countries. The following sections will therefore outline the main effects of migration on development, before showing how the policy context in particular can help shape the development outcomes of migration. The paper will conclude that mainstreaming migration into development strategies and international dialogue can provide optimal support to Government efforts to maximize the benefits of migration for development and minimize the negative effects.

PART II

THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON DEVELOPMENT: THE CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORK

Migration, as defined in the *United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*,¹⁰ involves people changing their “country of usual residence” for a purpose other than “recreation, holiday, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage”, either for the short- or long-term. The reasons for this movement vary and the change of residence may be more or less freely-chosen.¹¹ However, labour migrants, that is, people who have moved for the purposes of employment, were estimated to represent almost half of all migrants in the world in the year 2000; the fact that many of these labour migrants also have accompanying dependents means that migration for work is probably the largest single migratory phenomenon globally.¹²

It has long been recognized that this movement (which now represents over three per cent of the world’s population, an estimated 214 million people) has an impact beyond the individual level. As the understanding of, and interest in, migratory phenomena have grown, and conceptions and understandings of development have changed, moving from a focus on economics to human development, debate around the impact of migration on development has resulted in an appreciation of the importance and complexity of what is referred to as “the migration-development nexus”.¹³

Brain drain

Perhaps the most well-known impact has been the “brain drain”. Although there is no common definition for this term, it is generally held to refer to the emigration, traditionally seen as permanent, of highly-educated and skilled individuals, usually indicated by a migrant having completed tertiary education, with the implication that this kind of emigration has a negative impact on the development of the country of origin.¹⁴ The question of the effects of highly-skilled emigration is of particular relevance to ESCWA countries: in 2000, “more than 50% [sic] of migrants to OECD [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development] countries from other countries, including Egypt, ... Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan [had] tertiary education”.¹⁵ Lebanon represents a particularly extreme case, with slightly less than 40 per cent of its total tertiary-educated population living in OECD countries alone in 2000.

¹⁰ ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/58/Rev.1. DESA, 1998, p. 17.

¹¹ UNDP, 2009.

¹² Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and International Labour Office (ILO), 2007, p. 11.

¹³ The migration-development nexus works in two directions, as processes of development also affect migration: the generation of job opportunities in a country, for example, may contribute to creating inducements for migration to that country. As with the impact of migration on development, the relationship is not necessarily clear or direct. However, as the focus of this paper is on integrating migration into development planning, the issue will not be explored further here. For further details, see, for example, de Haas, 2008.

¹⁴ See, for example, Beine, Docquier and Rapoport, 2003.

¹⁵ Özden, 2006.

The assumed impact of the brain drain is that such emigration represents lost investment in training by countries of origin, lost tax revenues and, in particular, a loss of human capital and skills in key sectors of the economy and Government for the country of origin, restricting economic growth and delivery of key services such as health. The OECD notes that in 2005, there were 4,564 doctors trained in the Syrian Arab Republic working in OECD countries alone; this compares with a total of 10,342 doctors working in the country between 2000 and 2007 (equivalent to 5 per 10,000 population).¹⁶ It is to prevent such losses that some ESCWA countries have in the past limited or even banned emigration.

However, the extent to which highly-skilled emigration is considered problematic has been challenged over time. Questions of causality have been raised: rather than being a cause of underdevelopment, it is argued that the emigration of the highly-skilled is a symptom of the inability of the country of origin to provide them with an environment in which they can make use of their skills; thus it is open to question whether they would have been able to contribute to the development of their country of origin if they had stayed. Beyond this, it has also been argued that rather than being seen as a drain on national skill stocks, the incentive of higher returns on education through emigration can be a spur to acquire skills, and since most of the highly-skilled do not emigrate, the aggregate result is that there are often more highly-skilled people in the country of origin.¹⁷ Finally, as will be discussed later, it is not always the case that the highly-skilled are “lost” to their countries of origin.

Debate around this question remains: concerns about brain drain still exist and should not be dismissed; in particular it is not clear at what point a “desirable” level of highly-skilled emigration becomes undesirable.¹⁸ Nonetheless, it seems that the emigration of the highly-skilled can have an impact on development in their countries of origin in both positive and negative ways, depending on the particular situation under which such emigration takes place.

Remittances

Another impact of migration on development, indirect but tangible, is the receipt of remittances by the countries of origin. Remittances, “the monies acquired by non-nationals that are transferred back to their countries of origin”¹⁹ have attracted major interest in recent years, although the study of remittances and their impact on development has been ongoing for some time. In part, this has been spurred by the discovery of the scale of remittances: the World Bank estimates that countries for which they have figures received almost US\$414 billion in official remittances from nationals working abroad in 2009, of which developing countries received the vast majority (some US\$316 billion), making remittances the second-largest financial flow to developing countries behind foreign direct investment (FDI), and far ahead of aid.²⁰ If remittances not sent through formal channels are included, this figure is likely to be much higher. Countries in the ESCWA region for which data are available received an estimated US\$23.5 billion in official remittances in 2009.²¹ Although this represents a decrease from the high of 2008, due largely to job losses among migrants as a result of the global economic crisis, nonetheless, as figure II shows, most countries still received more remittances than in 2006.

¹⁶ OECD, 2010 and World Health Organization, 2009, p. 102.

¹⁷ Beine, Docquier and Rapoport, 2003, p. 5; see also Chappell, Angelescu-Naqvi, Mavrotas and Sriskandarajah, 2010, p. 79.

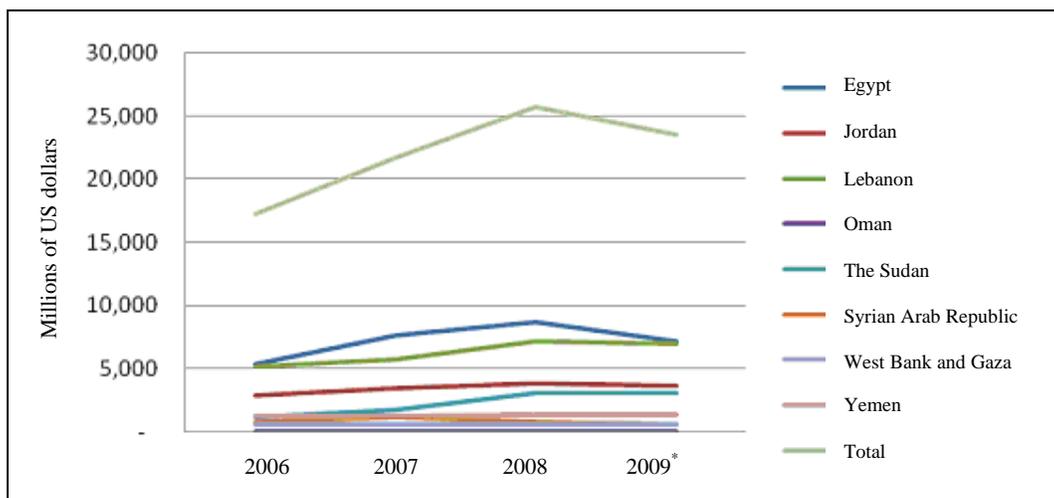
¹⁸ Ibid, p. 79.

¹⁹ IOM, 2004, p. 54.

²⁰ World Bank, 2010b.

²¹ World Bank, 2010b.

Figure II. Remittances received by countries in the ESCWA region, 2006-2009
(In millions of United States dollars)



Adapted from: World Bank Migration and Development Brief 12 (April 2010).

* denotes estimated figures.

The US\$7 billion that Egypt and Lebanon received in remittances in 2009 put them in the top 20 remittance-receiving countries in absolute terms worldwide. When remittances received in 2009 are measured as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP), Lebanon (over 25 per cent) and Jordan (19 per cent) both show a high level of importance to the national income, the seventh and twelfth highest proportions in the world respectively. Remittances to ESCWA countries are therefore significant phenomenon.

These large inflows of money have an impact on development goals. Perhaps most clearly, as remittances are sent directly to beneficiaries, they affect individual and household poverty: households receiving remittances consistently show a lower incidence of poverty than those not receiving remittances. For example, in Egypt, a 2002 survey²² found that the incidence of poverty was far lower for households receiving remittances than for those which did not (10.78 per cent, compared with 20.67 per cent). Moreover, remittance-receiving households reported less difficulty in buying food, and covering rent, medical, clothing and educational expenses. In Lebanon, although the data are insufficient to make a decisive analysis, it would seem that local disparities in poverty correlate with differing levels of integration into Lebanese emigration systems and thus the number of households who receive remittances, with the regions with the highest rates of poverty being those which are least integrated, and with traditionally poor but well-integrated (and presumably remittance-receiving) areas showing surprisingly low levels of poverty.²³

Beyond this direct impact on poverty, however, remittances have other consequences for development. In providing income to cover basic expenses, it has been found that remittances lead to increased expenditure on health and education: Nassar notes that 62.4 per cent of Egyptian remittance-receiving households received educational services as against 58 per cent of non-remittance-receiving households, while 80.8 per cent of remittance-receiving households received health services compared with 73 per cent of non-remittance-receivers.²⁴ Moreover, remittances appear to increase the construction and ownership of homes, as well as having the potential to be channelled into business creation, savings and even community

²² Nassar, 2009.

²³ Samra, 2010, pp 79-80.

²⁴ Nassar, 2009, p. 24.

development schemes.²⁵ Finally, on a macroeconomic level, the consumption brought about by remittances can boost domestic growth, while the remittances themselves can offset balance of payments deficits, providing a source of foreign exchange;²⁶ indeed, in the case of Lebanon, they have contributed to the credit integrity of the country and have enabled it to borrow on the international capital markets.²⁷ Given that these remittances are generally driven by non-investment goals, ranging from altruism and familial obligation to repayment of debts, such flows of money are often much more stable and resilient than other forms of external financing, such as FDI.²⁸ This is particularly relevant in contexts of crisis, whether economic or otherwise. For example, the volume of remittances received in Egypt fell by 9.5 per cent between 2008 and 9 as a result of the global economic crisis; however, this compares with a drop of over 38.5 per cent in FDI during the same period, while in Jordan the drop in remittances was slightly over 5.25 per cent, compared with a 25 per cent drop in FDI.²⁹

However, it should also be noted that such remittances are not without their potential downsides: as these flows are private in nature, sent to recipients on the basis of personal factors such as obligation or altruism rather than overall societal need, their benefits are not always optimally-distributed, and there is thus the potential for them to increase inequalities both between individuals (vertical inequalities between receivers and non-receivers of remittances) and groups (households which do and do not receive remittances), especially where migration largely concerns households which are already better-off. Such inequalities can also manifest themselves between countries; the least-developed countries of the ESCWA region (the Sudan and Yemen) do not benefit as much as other, medium-income countries.

The multiplier effects from these remittances may also be limited by the fact that recipients rarely invest this money in business creation, expansion or improvement. A study of the behaviour of remittance recipients in Egypt, for example, found that only 20 per cent of recipient households used some part of their income from remittances for productive investment.³⁰ Moreover, depending on the context, remittances can also fuel inflation and currency appreciation. The positive impact of remittances for balanced development, therefore, is not automatic; they can come with negative side-effects and may even themselves cause a negative impact elsewhere in society and the economy.

Diasporas

A third area of impact of migration on development that has seen an increasing focus since the 1990s has been that of the diaspora. Traditional views of migration have seen emigration as a one-way process: people leave their country of origin to work and live abroad, ending their links to and influence on their countries of origin beyond occasional visits to family. However, the processes of globalization, and in particular those relating to the facilitation of mobility and multiple citizenship, have somewhat eroded this view.

Benefiting from factors such as cheaper airfares, dual citizenship laws in countries of origin and destination, cheap Internet-based methods of communication and discourses on integration in many major countries of destination which have tended to shy away from assimilation to acceptance of at least certain aspects of migrants' own cultures,³¹ research suggests that migrants (and their descendants) increasingly lead "transnational lives". Transnational lives "depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders"; they thus maintain identities that are "configured in relationship to more than one

²⁵ Chappell, Angelescu-Naqvi, Mavrotas and Sriskandarajah, *op. cit.*

²⁶ OECD, 2006, p. 156.

²⁷ Nassar, 2010, p. 29.

²⁸ OECD, 2006, p. 156.

²⁹ Calculation by author, based on World Bank, 2010a, p. 29, table B4.2.

³⁰ Jureidini et al, 2010, p. 8. It should be noted, however, that what can be classed as consumption (paying for school fees or healthcare costs) could also be classed as human capital development, leading some to call into question the opposition of consumption and investment, while consumption of local goods may also be beneficial for local economies. Finally, it has been argued that increasing consumption by the poor is itself an equivalent to poverty alleviation, and hence a development goal in itself.

³¹ Ionesco, 2006, pp. 60-61.

nation-State”.³² Where these communities are not located in a single country of destination, but are spread among multiple countries, and where the relationships involve links between individuals and communities established in these countries of destination as well as with the country of origin, based on a common identity organized with reference to the country of origin, it can be said that a diaspora has formed.³³

Many countries of the ESCWA region have significant diasporas. The Lebanese diaspora, for example, has a long history dating back to the late nineteenth century, and has “always maintained some sort of a link with Lebanon, especially in the domain[s] relating to family and village support, philanthropy, charity and politics”.³⁴

The development interest in these diasporas has grown following the realization that these transnational communities can be engaged to mobilize not only their financial capital (their remittances and other forms of investment), but also their human capital, for the development of their countries of origin. Depending on their profiles, diaspora communities abroad can represent accumulations of useful human and social capital that can be transferred to their countries of origin as “social remittances”.³⁵ Where migrants working abroad are able to develop their skills, both in their specific field of work and more generally in areas such as management, entrepreneurship or community engagement, these skills could potentially be mobilized directly in training exercises, the creation or improvement of job-creating businesses or for carrying out community projects.³⁶ The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals Project, run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), represents one attempt to operationalize this potential, by providing opportunities for highly-qualified Sudanese diaspora members to return to the Sudan to carry out projects there.³⁷

Equally, where highly-skilled emigrants have linked themselves into knowledge networks, they can contribute to ensuring that their countries of origin also have access to the contacts and benefits associated with membership of such networks, contributing to the integration of countries of origin into processes of change and innovation. Such outcomes can be achieved through physical return, either temporary or permanent, or even through long-distance engagement from countries of destination. For example, the Network of Arab Scientists and Technologists Abroad aims to link institutions in Arab countries with Arab scientists and researchers abroad, to benefit from their expertise without them necessarily having to return permanently to their countries of origin.³⁸

Beyond this, diaspora members’ knowledge of and contacts in multiple contexts (in their countries of origin and destination) can be useful: for example, they can identify gaps in country of destination markets for goods from their home countries³⁹ and can also act as advocates for their countries of origin in their countries of destination.⁴⁰ It is therefore not necessary to encourage permanent return; indeed, migrants can actively benefit their countries of origin by remaining in their countries of destination.

However, the ability of diasporas to contribute constructively will depend on their experience in the countries of destination; for example, whether their qualifications are recognized and they are able to work in a context in which they can develop their skills. The result can be that not all diasporas are in a position to help, or can help in appropriate ways. For example, a study on the Egyptian diaspora found that there were significant differences between diaspora members in Arab countries and those in Western countries: in

³² Schiller, Basch and Blanc, 1995, p. 48.

³³ See, for example, Wahlbeck, 2002, p. 231.

³⁴ Tabar, 2009, p. 18.

³⁵ Levitt, 1998.

³⁶ Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), 2009, p. 3.

³⁷ IOM, 2010a.

³⁸ Mahroum, Eldridge and Daar, 2006, pp. 32-33.

³⁹ Melde and Ionesco, 2010, p. 19; Black and Sward, 2009.

⁴⁰ GFMD, op. cit., p. 3.

relation to skills acquired, while 97.5 per cent of Egyptians surveyed who were living in Western countries reported that they had acquired new skills abroad, only 44.3 per cent of those living in Arab countries reported the same outcome.⁴¹ It should also be taken into account that the usefulness of the skills and attitudes of diasporas depends on how relevant they are to the country of origin; whether the country of origin has the capacity to benefit from such skills; and on the goals and motivations of the diaspora members themselves, who may pursue sectional or even destabilizing agendas, as has been the case with the Lebanese diaspora.⁴²

Immigration and development

Much thinking on migration and development tends to focus on the outcomes of emigration on development for countries of origin. However, the impact of immigration on development can also be important, and should therefore also be considered. This is especially important in the context of the ESCWA region, where, in addition to the GCC countries of destination, even countries traditionally considered as countries of origin (such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Sudan and Yemen) are increasingly also countries of destination for migrants, both from other Arab countries and from further afield.

The example of the GCC countries cited above is instructive in this context. As noted above, large-scale immigration to these countries is generally credited with providing the labour force and expertise to effectively exploit the natural resource base of these countries.⁴³ This provides an example of the ways in which immigration can assist development, meeting labour market needs by filling high- and low-skilled human resources gaps where in-country shortages exist. Moreover, over time, it has been suggested that the familiarity with countries of destination facilitated by the existence of migrant networks may lead to increased investment from countries of origin.⁴⁴ However, it is also true that immigration can, where it does lower the reserve wage, combine with other factors to affect the employment opportunities of nationals, either within particular economic sectors or throughout the economy.⁴⁵ This is particularly the case where migrants are irregular, as their presence outside the formal system of wage protection may exert further downward pressure on wages.⁴⁶

In addition to the impact of immigration on the economic prospects of nationals, the rights of migrants and their relationship to development should also be considered. As noted in the 2000 *Human Development Report*,⁴⁷ human rights are essential for full human development. The goals of human rights and human development are mutually-supportive: core human rights include those such as the right to food, health and education, with clear developmental links.⁴⁸ Similarly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) overlap with certain economic and social rights, while bringing a human rights-based analysis and approach to service delivery to development enables the identification and overcoming of social and political barriers to inclusion of certain groups in development processes.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, specifically in relation to migration and development, the protection of the rights of migrants increases their ability to contribute to development processes, making migrants more productive and promoting social cohesion.⁵⁰ While it may not be appropriate to give migrants the same rights as citizens in areas such as the right to vote, nonetheless, the ability of migrants to access core human rights (such as the right to health and education), is important in processes of development in their countries of destination as well as their countries of origin, both as ends

⁴¹ Zohry and Debnath, 2010, p. 45.

⁴² Tabar, 2009, p. 18.

⁴³ Winckler, 2010, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁴ UNCTAD, 2009, pp. 12-13 (UNCTAD/DITC/TNCD/2009/2).

⁴⁵ Colton, 2010, pp. 35-6.

⁴⁶ Global Forum on Migration and Development, 2008b, p. 3; Shah, 2009, p. 19.

⁴⁷ UNDP, 2000a, p. 2.

⁴⁸ UNDP, 2000b, p. 21.

⁴⁹ OHCHR, 2008, p. 4; UNDP (2000b), pp. 21-23.

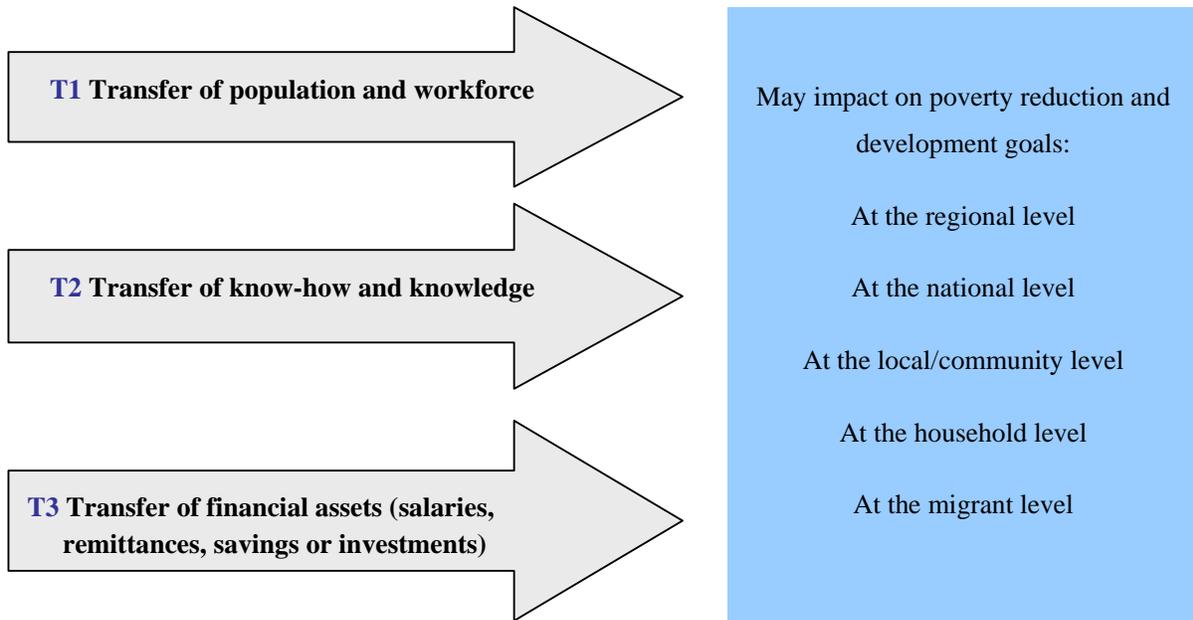
⁵⁰ GFMD, 2008a, p. 5.

and means of development. The inability of such migrants to access rights holds these countries back from meeting their development commitments.⁵¹

Conclusion

This section has sought to provide a brief outline of the current understanding of the main impacts on development that migration, both outward and inward, can have, and to outline how they can be positive or negative, depending on the context. To illustrate these different effects, Nonnenmacher has developed a framework based on the “three transfers”, inwards or outwards, of migration:

Figure III. The 3Ts of Migration in Development⁵²



It is as a result of this understanding of the impact of migration on development that the current consensus that migration is important for development, but is neither inherently harmful nor helpful but rather has varied effects depending on the context, has grown. In line with the current thinking on migration and development issues, there is an increased focus on how policies can be implemented to improve the context in which migration affects development. Some of the thinking around the role of policy will therefore be developed in the following section.

PART III

THE POSITIVE ROLE OF POLICY IN SHAPING THE OUTCOME OF MIGRATION ON DEVELOPMENT

Policy, both in countries of origin and destination, has an essential role in shaping the outcomes of migration for development. However, it is only one factor among many. As Chappell, Angelescu-Naqvi, Mavrotas and Sriskandarajah have noted, migration is not a policy variable. It is not something that policymakers can switch on or off or that they can design; rather, migration patterns are the result of two incredibly powerful forces, namely globalization and the social phenomenon of migration, which exist and

⁵¹ The foreign-born form a majority in Qatar (over 80 per cent), the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait (both just under 70 per cent). Jordan, Palestine and Bahrain have foreign-born populations that constitute some 40 per cent of the total population, while the migrant populations in Oman and Saudi Arabia make up slightly under 30 per cent of the total population. DESA, 2009.

⁵² Nonnenmacher (forthcoming), p. 45.

move forward independently of policymakers.⁵³ Moreover, the complexity of the impact and wide range of sectors in which migration simultaneously affects development, and the reasons behind this complexity, mean that it is extremely difficult to “design” the outcomes of migration through policy levers. Rather, policy should be used to support the migration goals of individuals and to provide the means and incentives to link their migration to national development goals. This section will therefore outline current thinking on how and where policy, both in the field of migration and elsewhere, could support development outcomes from migration.

The role of emigration and immigration policy

Migration policy plays a key role in ensuring migration supports development. A key determinant of the ability of migrants to contribute to development in countries of origin and destination is their ability to migrate regularly. For countries of destination, irregular migration, where it involves smuggling and trafficking of migrants, undermines the rule of law and is often linked to the exploitation of migrants, holding back human development and frequently having deleterious effects on wages for all. For countries of origin, meanwhile, irregular migration often means a violation of the rights of their citizens; a reduction in earning power, resulting in fewer remittances; less potential for skills development for their nationals; and, in the case of deportation, research suggests that unplanned return leads to lower earnings for migrants on return.⁵⁴

Countries concerned by such trends have tried to enforce tougher laws to deal with human trafficking and smuggling. Countries aiming to prevent the perceived brain drain of skilled professionals have also placed restrictions on emigration. However, traffickers and smugglers are – to some extent – responding to demand among populations for services enabling them to emigrate or immigrate, and the effect of such restrictions may simply be, as the GFMD has noted, to drive smugglers and traffickers further underground and raise the cost and risk to migrants and society.⁵⁵ Similarly, restrictions on the mobility of the highly-skilled are ineffective, contrary to human rights, and risk driving such migrants into irregularity.

It is therefore increasingly recognized that immigration and emigration policy is most effective in supporting development when it promotes channels for regular migration, thus supporting the migration projects of individuals in a safe and regular fashion, maximizing the benefits for all involved in the process. This can be achieved through, *inter alia*, creating new channels for regular migration (including through bilateral labour migration agreements, such as those in place between Egypt and Italy and Egypt and Jordan), simplifying regulations, providing migrants with information on possibilities for migration, and providing incentives for temporary migrants to remain in a regular situation. Thus migration policy can have a role in promoting positive outcomes for migration on development.

The role of other policy areas

However, the impact of migration on development can also be affected by policies outside the sphere of migration policy. This will be illustrated by showing how development outcomes of migration are influenced by macroeconomic and health policy.⁵⁶

The productive use of remittances is an area in which macroeconomic policies are important. To incentivize the investment of remittances in savings, insurance or business creation does not necessarily require migration-specific measures; rather, the returns of migration for development can best be facilitated through the creation of an overall macroeconomic environment which is stable, business-friendly, and which rewards and supports savings, job creation, investment and entrepreneurship. This reflects the fact that despite their particular attributes, there is a pragmatic dimension to the investment decisions made by

⁵³ Chappell, Angelescu-Naqvi, Mavrotas and Sriskandarajah, op. cit., p. 94.

⁵⁴ Ibid. and GFMD, 2008a.

⁵⁵ GFMD, 2008a, p. 3.

⁵⁶ See Nonnenmacher (forthcoming) for a fuller description of the potential areas of impact.

migrants and their families; they will not invest remittances simply out of altruism, but are looking for returns on their investment. Beyond this, business policies (at the national or even the local level) which provide legal frameworks, incentives and structures enabling non-residents to make profitable investments in business creation would further support this process, enabling migrants as well as foreigners to assist private sector development. The migration and development nexus is therefore relevant in both microeconomic and macroeconomic policy.

Another policy area in which migration for development outcomes can be affected is health. As three of the eight MDGs relate to health, this is highly pertinent. Migrants can contribute towards the fulfilment of these goals, most obviously where countries of destination are able to employ skilled migrant health workers to fill human resources gaps in their own health systems.⁵⁷ However, as noted above, where the migration of health workers reaches excessive levels, it has an impact on the ability of countries of origin to deliver necessary health services. In order to address this problem, an improvement in the management of human resources in the health sector, generally at the root of this phenomenon, is likely to be highly effective in the retention of health workers.⁵⁸

In countries of destination, meanwhile, legal, social, cultural, linguistic or even geographical barriers to access to preventive health services, information campaigns and curative health services, when added to vulnerabilities brought about by issues such as poor housing and gender inequality, increase the susceptibility of migrants to disease, hampering progress towards the achievement of health-related MDGs.⁵⁹ Returnees, meanwhile, may not have access to or familiarity with relevant services due to their time abroad. Development-related outcomes of migration are thus also affected by health policy, and migration should therefore be considered as part of any health strategy.

It is therefore clear that Government policies have an important role in determining the development outcomes of migration. While this is most clear in relation to policies regulating immigration and emigration, policies in other areas also play an important role in shaping these results, as they still either implicitly or explicitly relate to migrants in countries of origin and destination.

PART IV

CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

The impacts of immigration and emigration on development are complex: migration outcomes can be positive, promoting and supporting human and economic development efforts in sectors as different as health and enterprise creation; at the same time, in other sectors, they can be problematic. Even within a single sector, they might bring both benefits and challenges at the same time. Many, although not all, of these impacts can be shaped by policy interventions from Governments, both in migration policy and other policy areas.

Given the wide-ranging effects of migration on development, a single migration and development policy, while helpful, would be limited in its effect, focusing on a single variable, when migration is just one development issue among many.⁶⁰ Nor is it considered sensible to construct a development policy based entirely on migration.⁶¹ Rather, it is now widely recognized that in order to properly ensure that all the effects of migration are fully considered, and that policies and activities are formulated and implemented in a

⁵⁷ Nonnenmacher (forthcoming).

⁵⁸ IOM, 2006, pp. 49-50.

⁵⁹ Nonnenmacher (forthcoming). Returnees who have lost their rights to access health services in their country of origin may also face barriers to accessing health services.

⁶⁰ Chappell, Angelescu-Naqvi, Mavrotas and Sriskandarajah, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104.

⁶¹ United Nations, 2006, (A/61/515).

coherent, comprehensive and appropriate way to maximize the contribution of migration to development and minimize the negative effects, it is essential to mainstream the consideration of migration into all Government development and poverty reduction strategies.⁶² These evidence-based strategies provide a conceptual and policy framework around which Government actions to fight poverty and promote such goals as decent employment, public health and investment for development can be organized and implemented over a period of time, identifying key areas of need and the appropriate measures to be taken. Box 2 outlines the ways in which migration is currently considered in the development strategies of ESCWA member countries.

Box 2. Migration in current ESCWA development strategies

The countries of the ESCWA region have each produced strategies and vision statements outlining social and economic goals for the future. Following the example of Black and Sward,⁶³ a keyword analysis of the English versions of 13 of the strategies outlined in the ESCWA *Integrated Social Policy Report III: Visions and Strategies in the ESCWA Region*,⁶⁴ using the search terms “migra”, “expat” and “diaspo” was carried out, which highlighted the following trends:

- As might be expected, there is an important focus on substitution of national for migrant labour in the strategies of the GCC countries. However, it is notable that in the strategies of Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, there is a recognition that expatriate labour still plays a complementary role in specific areas in the short term; substitution should therefore be balanced against labour market realities.
- Moreover, the Omani and Saudi Arabian strategies both mention the potential role that investment by expatriates could play in the development of their countries.
- Similarly, among countries of origin, there is a clear pattern of concern around the brain drain, with this being mentioned as a concern by Egypt, Iraq and the Sudan. However, these concerns are balanced by the recognition of the ways in which emigration could be of benefit to them: for example, the Egyptian five year plan mentions the importance of training, not only to fill national, but also international labour market needs, while the Sudan also mentions the positive role which the highly-skilled in the diaspora could play to “bridge the gaps in technology and knowledge and inject capacity”.⁶⁵
- The Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen also mention the potential role of their diasporas as investors, with the Yemeni strategy focusing on streamlining investment rules so that they may invest, while the Syrian strategy suggests exploring ways of integrating remittances into community development plans and trying to raise local salaries to incentivize the return of Syrians abroad.
- Iraq also notes that burdensome visa and immigration rules could affect its ability to exploit tourism as a tool for development, while the Palestinian strategy suggests that “Israeli policies to discourage visiting diaspora also drain an important potential source of intellectual and financial capital”.⁶⁶

While these examples suggest that migration is already considered to some extent, it is not clear whether migration is considered systematically across policy areas. By systematically considering the specific dynamics of migration across development strategies and integrating them where relevant, as is already the case for other issues such as gender, their effectiveness in promoting development can be increased: migration policies can be designed and implemented with the impact on development in mind, while development-related policies across different policy areas can take into account the role of migration and migrants in achieving their objectives.

⁶² Nonnenmacher (forthcoming).

⁶³ Black and Sward, 2009.

⁶⁴ ESCWA, 2009 (E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/4). The English versions of the strategies of the following countries were reviewed: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, The Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. No English version of the finalized Kuwaiti strategy was available.

⁶⁵ Government of Sudan, 2007, p. 26.

⁶⁶ Palestinian National Authority, 2008, p. 68.

Box 3. The role of data in mainstreaming processes

Essential in the process of maximizing the benefits and minimizing the negative aspects of migration on development is a full understanding of these impacts in order to ensure that policies aiming to mainstream migration into development strategies are based on evidence. For this, it is necessary to have widely-available, accurate, timely data, not only on the numbers of migrants and where they reside, but also on their characteristics, such as gender, education levels and occupation.

However, globally, the current state of these data is poor; indeed a report by the Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy called this situation “the biggest blind spot in our view of the world economy, [which] leaves us unable to answer crucial questions”. As a result, the Center for Global Development offers five recommendations to improve migrant data:

1. Ask three basic questions on every population census – country of citizenship, country of birth and country of previous residence – then publish cross-tabulations of this information by age and sex.
2. Exploit existing administrative data sources that often contain rich and poorly utilized information on international movement.
3. Compile existing data from the labour force surveys of countries around the world into a single, harmonized, frequently updated database.
4. Provide public access to anonymous individual records of international migrants from surveys and administrative data to allow major improvements in the quality of research while maintaining strict confidentiality.
5. Increase the systematic use of standardized modules of migration-related questions in ongoing household survey programmes, particularly those in developing countries.

Although not providing all the data required, these five steps represent a possibility of “significantly improv[ing] international migration data in the short run — with existing institutions and at low cost”.⁶⁷

Another key aspect in promoting greater coherence for migration and development is dialogue and cooperation. Given that migration inherently involves more than one country, and that policies in one country will influence the development outcomes of migration in others, such processes in countries of destination and origin are important to ensure that strategies are as complementary and mutually-supportive as possible. In the absence of a global migration management regime, informal, non-binding processes of dialogue, both regionally-focused (such as the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue, which involves countries of origin and destination around the Mediterranean) or thematic (for example, the GFMD, organized to follow up on the 2006 High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development) have played a key role in promoting such collaboration and charting cooperative ways forward by providing a space for free and open discussions on otherwise controversial issues. Regional consultative processes on migration throughout the world have enabled States, *inter alia*, to better understand migratory phenomena; build consensus, networks and capacity to manage them; and learn from one another’s experience to inform their own policymaking.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy, 2009.

⁶⁸ Hansen, 2010.

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