

United Nations Nations Unies

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE SPECIAL EVENT **Panel discussion on “Migration and Development: Causes and Impacts”** (prepared by the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

ECOSOC Chamber
Thursday, 15 November 2012
15:00 p.m. – 18:00 p.m.

Concept Note

Background

More people live outside their country of origin today than at any time in history. Deepening inequalities in opportunity, income, demography and governance continue are powerful drivers of migration. Affordable transportation, easy communication and transnational networks facilitate mobility in which people are moving to and from regions and countries both near and distant. The traditional dichotomy between countries of immigration and emigration is fading. Today, the typical country is simultaneously one of destination, origin and transit and the typical migrant is one who engages in temporary, rather than permanent, migration.

Millions of migrant workers perform jobs that natives are unable to fill. Yet, despite its positive effects, including the transfer of financial resources and skills, migration continues to present multiple challenges. Discrimination of migrants is widespread, especially in times of economic crisis. Migrant children and youth in countries of origin feel the psycho-social impact of one or both parents being absent.

Ensuring that migration is voluntary, safe and orderly and that the rights of migrants are respected continues to be a major challenge for governments, the international community and civil society. Cooperation and dialogue at the national, regional and global level is essential to leverage the benefits of migration, to reduce its costs, and to prevent migrant discrimination and abuse.

Objective

The objective of this special event is to bring together experts from government, civil society and academia to debate the linkages between migration and development, to identify best practices and lessons learned on how to harness the benefits of international migration, while minimizing its negative consequences. Panel members will discuss public policies that address the causes of unwanted migration, that maximize migration benefits, and that reduce migration challenges.

Topics to be addressed will include the contribution of transnational communities to development in countries of origin, programmes for safe, orderly and voluntary migration, migrant integration, and practical steps to improve the governance of migration. Panelists will give their perspectives on public policies that facilitate labour mobility, address irregular migration, and promote migrant integration.

Panel I. Country of origin and transit perspectives

How different are migration patterns today compared to 20 years ago? How will they change in the foreseeable future?

How different are the drivers (push and pull factors) of migration today compared to 20 years ago? How will they change in the foreseeable future?

What policies should countries pursue to ensure that migration is a choice, not a necessity?

How can countries of origin effectively protect their citizens living abroad?

What good practices exist to enhance the development contribution of expatriate communities?

Format

The session will consist of a two panel discussions, with no formal statements or presentations. It will be led by a moderator, who will address questions to the panelists and guide the discussion. The first panel will address questions from the perspective of countries of origin and transit while the second panel will address questions from the perspective of countries of destination. The two sets of questions will be addressed by the same panelists. A lead panelist will be identified for each question. The moderator will present the first question and request the lead panelist for this question to respond. Some of the remaining panelists will then be given 2-3 minutes to present their points of view. The moderator will give a brief (one-minute) summary, and then proceed to the next question. After each panel discussion, the audience will be invited to pose questions to the panelists.