



International Symposium on International Migration

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**Key Issues Characterizing International Migration
and Development in the Arab Region**

**Batool SHAKOORI
UNESCWA**

The following sessions were organized in order to provide a framework for discussions

International migration trends and policies in the Arab region.

International migration and socio-economic development.

Temporary labour migration in the Arab region.

Highly-skilled migration: Challenges and Opportunities.

Trans-national communities and return migration.

Remittances: development impact and policy responses.

International migration in the Arab region: prospects for governance and management.


International migration trends and policies in the Arab region

The number of migrants to Arab countries was 13.1 million in 1990 , and was increased to reach 20 million in 2005.

The GCC States are the major receivers of migrants ; especially South to South Migration.

According to the place of birth ,there are about 8.3 million Arab all over the world .

For those who lost contacts with their countries of origin there are 14 million Lebanese migrants and about 20 million Syrian.



The distinction between sending and receiving countries is becoming difficult since a number of Arab countries have dual policies.

Migration policies range from encouraging migration to restricting it according to circumstances and time .

The Maghreb countries have a well defined policy that encourages emigration in order to manage unemployment levels and acquire hard currency .

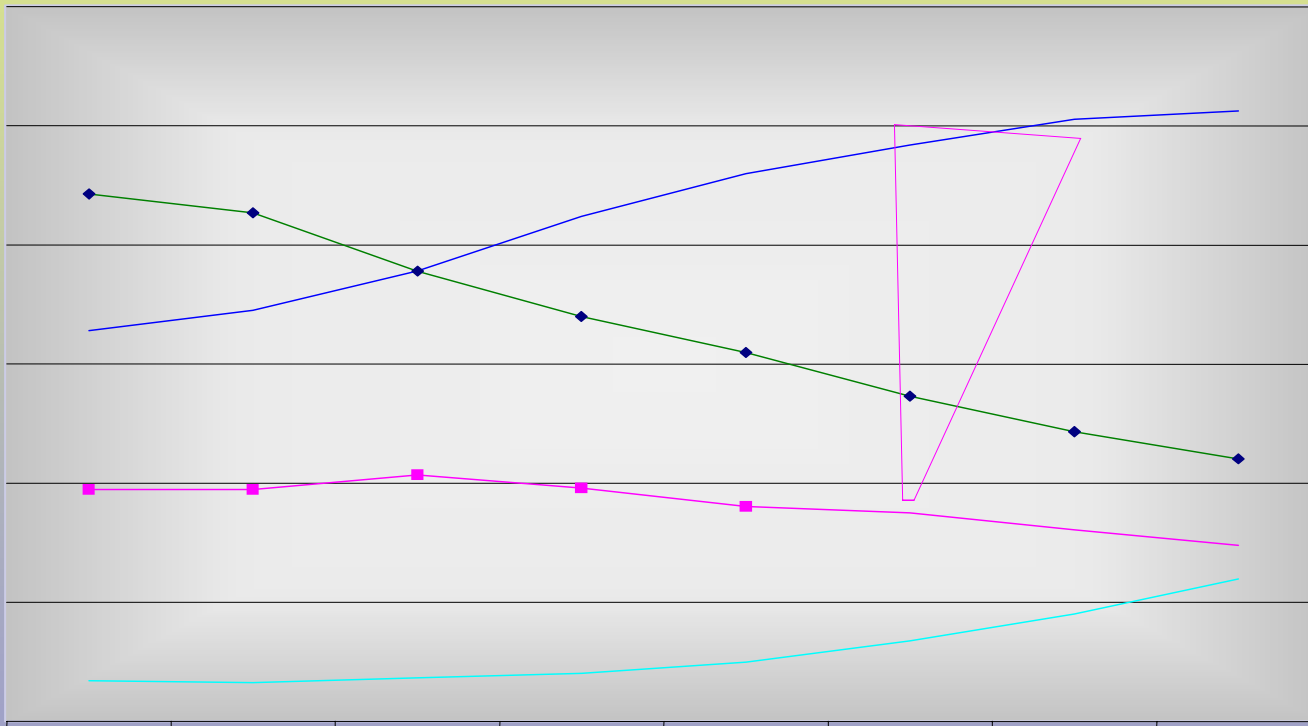
There are identifiable gaps in reliable and comparable statistics and databases.

International migration and socio-economic development

Arab countries have the highest unemployment rate in the world . Unemployment rate ranges between 13.2 and 20 percent . Youth unemployment constitutes 53% of total unemployment , of which 59% are first time job seekers .

A large number of working age people are leaving their country of origin for other countries that offer more attractive employment opportunities and higher income .

As the process of demographic transition proceeds, the working-age population increases , and meeting the employment needs of these young people will be a great challenge .



Temporary labour migration in the Arab region

Total migrants in GCC States are estimated to be 12.8 million. In 1975 intra Arab migration represented 74% of the total in the region; in 2005 it declined to about 28%.

The share of women among migrants is still very low, and they are largely concentrated in low level occupations such as domestic workers.

The available data on migrants workers are neither reliable nor adequate for the analysis of gender .

The coexistence of open unemployment of nationals and large expatriate labour in the GCC States is a unique feature of the region.

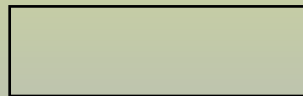


Equally unique, is the high percentage of non-nationals in the populations of the GCC countries.

The use of the concept migrant workers for contractual expatriate workers in GCC countries is contentious and problematic.

Most if not all GCC countries want to lower immigration, because of the rising unemployment of nationals.

There are marked deficiencies in policies, programs and institutions to help settle and integrate migrants in the host countries in the region.



Too high Lower

Oman Satisfactory ~~Satisfactory~~ Too high Lower

Qatar Satisfactory Maintain Satisfactory Maintain

Saudi Arabia Too low Raise Too high Lower

UAE Satisfactory Maintain Too high Lower

Yemen Satisfactory Maintain Too high Lower





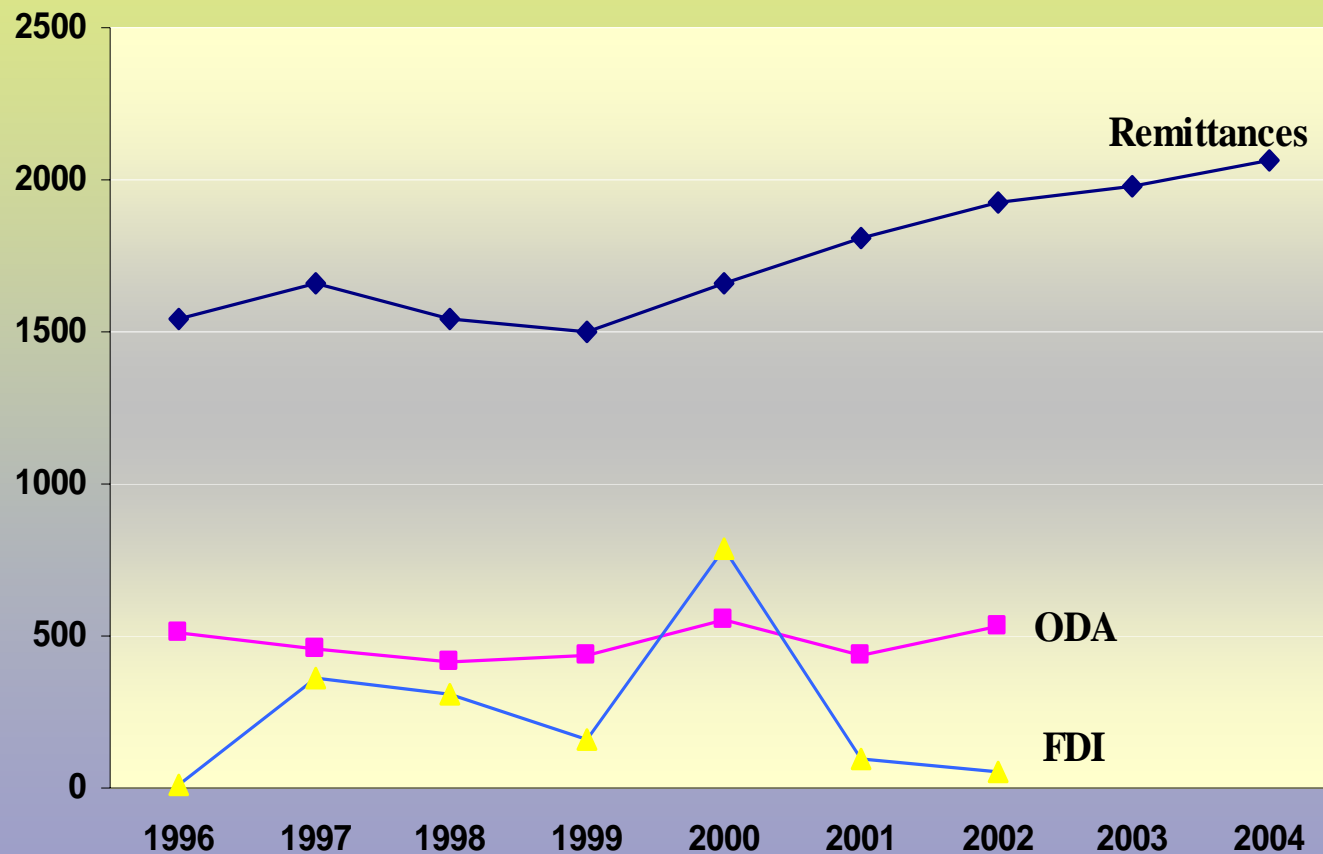
Remittances: development impact and policy responses

Migrant remittances have become the first largest capital flow in the region. and constitute the fastest growing and most stable capital flow to the region.

Remittances were higher than Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and ahead of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) ,

Migrant remittances have made major contributions to poverty reduction, health improvement and educational attainment of many households.

Jordan- workers' remittances and other inflows (Million)







Among the countries receiving large remittances from their migrant workers are Morocco (US\$ 4.3 billion), Egypt (US\$ 2.9 billion), Lebanon (US\$ 2.3 billion), and Jordan (US\$ 2.2.

Conclusions

An Arab regional dialogue on international migration was deemed imperative.

International migration databases should be available for policy making.

Improve the evidence-base in the region was an important conclusion of the meeting .

Protecting the rights of migrants, including women workers, was also emphasized .

Policies to facilitate the flow and use of remittances for development benefits was emphasized.

Improving the overall investment environment and increasing access to formal sector transfer services will enhance the productive aspects of remittances.