



# Report and outcomes of the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development: Remittances and other diaspora resources.

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Annual Meeting of the CDE's European Institutional Network - Lanzarote, 27 September 2007

# Background

- UN High Level Dialogue – Sept. 06
- Addressing the migration-development nexus : exchange of best practices, partnerships... without producing negotiated outcomes or normative decisions.
- Informal, voluntary and government-led
- Open to all UN member states (+ observers)
- Initiated by the Government of Belgium (in consultation with UN SRSG and FOF).
- Manila 2008

# First Meeting of the GFMD

- Brussels, 9-11 July 2007
- Civil Society Day (King Baudouin Foundation) : 200 representatives of civil society worldwide
- Governmental meeting : 800 delegates, over 150 countries and 20 observers
- Three themes (3 Roundtables- 12 sessions):
  - Human capital development and labor mobility
  - Remittances and other diaspora resources
  - Policy and institutional coherence
- Horizontal issues : human rights, gender, root causes of migration

# Structuring Framework

The first meeting of the GFMD and the process leading to it (9 months):

- Global survey
- Focal points
- Friends of the Forum
- Creation of teams
- Operating modalities

# Basic Principles

- Development aid should not be instrumentalized for the regulation of migration flows
- Migration is not an alternative to national development strategies
- Remittances are private money, not a substitute for ODA or development responsibilities
- ...

# Key conclusions

- **Platform for discussing experiences, innovative and good practices,** and for identifying concrete ways of assuring the positive contribution of legal migration to development
- **New approach to migration** - moving development to the centre of the migration debate; and promoting legal migration as an opportunity for development (North as well as South, receiving as well as sending countries)
  - Reach migration and development objectives more effectively
- Paves the way for a **longer term common global vision** on migration
  - **Sharing responsibilities between developed and developing countries** can make migration work better for development and vice versa; and that development can lead to migration by choice and not by necessity.
- **Focal points** are a vehicle for greater coherence and a more comprehensive approach towards migration, development and other policies at national level.

# After the first meeting

- Operating modalities
- Exchange of information; Funding support ; Ongoing government engagement ; Internal government coordination ; Favorable public opinion
- Marketplace

## Roundtable 2 – Remittances and other diaspora resources: Increasing their net volume and development impact

Four sessions :

- reduction of **cost**, **formalization** of transfers and the role of new technologies;
- options to leverage the development impact of remittances at the **micro** level and prevent their negative impact;
- options to leverage the development impact of remittances at the **macro** level and respond their negative impact;
- partnerships to be established between governments and **diasporas** to enhance their positive impact on the development of the country of origin.

# Roundtable 2 : Concept

- Reducing remittance costs can create incentives to use formal remittance channels (role of new technologies for new ways of remitting and improving existing ones).
- In turn, improving the formalization of transfers
  - Offers opportunities for individual savings, investments or support to local development projects (micro-impact).
  - Enables better policy planning for development and for responding to the possible negative impact (macro-impact)
- Beyond remittances, diasporas also carry out various activities with important development potential
- Sending/ receiving countries; home/ host countries

# Roundtable 2 – Key messages

- Financial transfers to developing countries (North-South but also South-South) - \$206 bn in 2006 (The World Bank)
- Private flows – incentives not appropriation
- Links between remittances and development are numerous and complex, and conditional upon the broader economic and political context.
- Do not diminish the need for ODA and are not an alternative to national development efforts. Not an encouragement to migrate.
- Continue exchanging best practices - still at a learning-by-doing stage

## Improving the micro impact of remittances on development – Key messages

- Beyond formalization (bilateral agreements that facilitate remittances, corridors, etc...)
- Innovative and inclusive options, tools and incentives to leverage remittances for development purposes (linked to the transfers themselves or through savings)
- Level playing field, raise awareness, build confidence, tax regime, capacity challenges, on-the-ground tool to use (collective) remittances and investment -> not necessarily by government but possibly
  - ! Before creating new tools, take full advantage of what exists
- Include remittances in the planning of receiving country governments' development objectives (NDPs, PRSPs, etc.)
- Better understand : the impact of remittances on children; (post) conflict situations or recovery after natural disasters; evolution of remitting patterns over generations

# Recommendations and proposed actions

- **Enable a diversified supply of financial services** (from micro-insurance, micro-pension, etc. to investment opportunities, etc.) by the private sector for remittance senders and recipients, e.g. through the creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships, while retaining the possibility for governments to intervene as necessary; and ensure full use of the services already existing.
- **Set up intermediary structures** for on-the-ground management of migrant investments in the country of origin, taking into account the necessary gradual approach from individual to collective, local and national investment.
- **Provide financial literacy** programs and better information on financial services to remittance senders and recipients.
- **Support research** on tools and incentives needed for governments to make remittances become investments, as well as on the impact of remittances on the situation of women and on children.

# Working with the diaspora for development –

## Key messages (1/2)

- Diasporas have long been active in the development of their country of origin but initiatives can be facilitated and enhanced through partnership and coordination with governments.
  - Challenges : identification, new tools, capacity building, gender, etc.
  - Question of attitude + Basic principles
  - Relationship between diaspora integration and capacity to play a role in development.
- Diaspora : «individuals originating from one country, living outside this country, irrespective of their citizenship or nationality, who, individually or collectively, are or could be willing to contribute to the development of this country. Descendants of these individuals are also included in this definition» - Voluntary approach

# Working with the diaspora for development –

## Key messages (2/2)

- Home country: Communicate and maintain links through formal or informal communication channels; forum, council or web-based network; representation in domestic politics; maintain contacts over generations.
- Integrate diaspora initiatives into national development strategies (consult, on-the-ground interlocutor, appointment of a ministerial level official in charge of diaspora).
- Host country : scale and organization (on country-of-origin basis or across diasporas); partnerships among host countries harboring diasporas of the same origin; look at local level; establish triangular partnerships
- Entrepreneurship - not linked to return; access to meso-credit; “nostalgic trade”
- No transformation of diaspora networks into mainstream development NGOs, but facilitation of existing transnational practices (creating an enabling environment: portability of social rights, multiple re-entry visas, dual citizenship, etc.)

# Recommendations and proposed actions

- **Identify partners** within the diaspora (numbers, location, skills, etc.) and support diaspora organizations' organizational and representation capacities.
- **Establish triangular partnerships** between diasporas, home and host countries and **increase coordination** among different ministerial departments in home and host countries, between home and host countries, as well as between host countries harboring diaspora of the same origin.
- **Enhance links between diasporas and countries of origin**, including over generations, through regular dialogue and information channels (formal or informal, political involvement) and provide accurate information to diasporas about development and investment opportunities in countries of origin.
- **Create an enabling environment for diaspora activities** for instance by providing multiple re-entry visas, dual citizenship, recognition of skills and portability of social welfare.
- **Enable the consultation of diaspora as well as the coordination** of their interventions with national and local development plans to enhance their sustainability.
- Further **research** the reciprocal influence between diasporas' **integration** in the host country and their involvement in the development of their country of origin.

# More information



GFMD : [www.gfmd-fmmd.org](http://www.gfmd-fmmd.org)  
Civil Society Day : [www.gfmd-civil-society.org](http://www.gfmd-civil-society.org)



Belgian FPS Foreign Affairs,  
Foreign Trade and Development  
Cooperation: [www.diplomatie.be](http://www.diplomatie.be)



Belgian Directorate General for  
Development Cooperation :  
[www.dgdc.be](http://www.dgdc.be)

Thank you for your attention !

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