



22 MAY 2017

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Addressing drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crises, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution

PANEL 1: Sustainable development and poverty eradication

We welcome the second informal thematic session and thank the co-facilitators for their insightful remarks. We also thank Louise Arbour, the Secretary General of the intergovernmental conference, for presenting the inter-agency issue brief, which serves a good basis for framing our discussions.

The report of the Secretary General on Addressing Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees reconfirms the direct link between migration and development. Similarly, the issue brief reminds us that Government policy choices in both origin and destination countries are influential in driving migration, as they shape individual perceptions of and the actual costs, benefits and risks of migration. In this regard we would like to reflect on our national policy choices and suggest some recommendations.

This March Armenia adopted its Migration Policy Strategy for 2017-2021. This is Armenia's fourth strategic policy document in the field of migration since 2000. The new strategy is supported with a Plan of Action for its implementation. For the first time it contains a new pillar on "migration and development" and comprises 24 concrete actions designed to reinforce the positive link between migration and development. Some key areas for action are aimed at promoting and facilitating the positive contribution of migrants to growth and sustainable development. The document recognises emigrants, their families that stay behind, returning migrants and immigrants as agents of development with considerable potential for advancing new skills, expertise and financial capacities to contribute to national economies. The document defines three overarching

objectives of a) utilisation of the positive potential of migration, b) support to circular migration and c) mobilisation of the investment potential of all migrants. The UN and its specialised agencies, the IOM and regional organisations have an important role in facilitating institutional arrangements for assisting member states and promoting effective co-operation between them. A good example of Armenia's international co-operation is the Mobility Partnership between Armenia and the EU, providing effective framework for implementation of projects aimed at enhancing cooperation on migration issue.

Goal 10(c) of Agenda 2030 aims at reducing the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminating remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent. Armenia's Strategy document aims at promoting an environment conducive to encouraging faster and cheaper use of banking institutions for the transfer of remittances, as well as advancing financial literacy of migrants and members of their families. Amongst various actions, presently the Government is developing an online information portal, www.sendmoneyarmenia.am, to enable clients to make best and informed choices of banking institutions for transfers by way of comparing transaction costs, speed and other parameters on offer from banks.

Empirical evidence points at weaker potential for promoting economic development in the use of informal transfers of remittances. At the same time, the use of informal channels is strongly driven by cost considerations, which amplifies the importance and the need for a reduction of fees in formal services. According to our estimates, the implementation of the pledge to reduce transaction costs by 5% over five years may result in savings of up to USD20M per annum for migrants of Armenian origin and their families. Financial literacy and raising awareness about the potential risks of informal channels are equally important objectives.

We attach importance to mainstreaming these issues in the Global Compact in order to provide achievable set of policy suggestions and new innovative solutions for remittances.

In conclusion we should ensure that human rights, non-discrimination, safety and dignity of migrants is at the core of Global Compact.

Thank you.