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The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

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نيويورك

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Assistant Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs

Fourth informal thematic session of the GCM
24-25 May 2017

**Panel 1 Summary: Contribution of migrants and diaspora to all
dimensions of sustainable development:
The Linkages between Migration and Development**

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The first panel of the fourth GCM informal thematic consultation focused on the contributions of migrants to development, the broader and multifaceted links between migration and development, the barriers that prevent migration from producing positive development outcomes, and the practical means of enhancing those positive benefits.

The panellists and most of the interventions from the floor stressed that the links between migration and development are undeniable. These links should be fostered especially with the recognition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that migration is a multi-dimensional reality and a contribution to development. These links also create benefits that accrue to all countries – whether origin or destination, developed or developing – as well as to migrants themselves. Those benefits can include increased incomes, educational and employment opportunities for migrants in host countries; a source of much needed labour (at all skills levels), innovation and entrepreneurship in destination countries; and economic and “social” remittances, transfers of skills and knowledge in origin countries, amongst many other benefits. These contributions constitute what might be considered a ‘triple win’: the idea that governments can work to create gains for migrants, for their countries of origin, and for the societies that receive them. SDGs also recognize needs to protect migrants labor rights

Panellists and many interventions highlighted that migrants can positively contribute to their countries of origin as well as destination when their labour rights are respected. Migrants’ rights must be respected upon arrival, abusive practices must be deterred and decent work must be promoted. Bilateral recruitment via foreign worker programmes helps safe and orderly recruitment. Temporary and circular migration can play a role in promoting skills transfers. Policies that consider labor needs, especially women migrant workers, should be considered.

The panellists also stressed that, since it is now well established and agreed that migration and development are linked in many different ways, evidenced by those links, being acknowledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and New York Declaration. The crucial issue is not that those links exist, but how they can be leveraged to create positive and concrete development outcomes. The discussion canvassed some of the barriers that can prevent migrants and migration from contributing to their full potential. The panel highlighted a lack of political will as being one of the most critical barriers. Others include inadequate



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and inefficient policies that work at cross-purposes and that undermine, rather than enhance, development. Examples provided in the discussions included a lack of effective legal channels for migration; irregular status; poor integration and a lack of effective integration policies; high migration costs, in particular of remittances; lack of portability of social security benefits; and discriminatory and exclusionary law and practices, lack of technical capacity to deal with migrants in particular relating to irregular migrants in vulnerable situations such as women and young people.

Panellists and many who intervened highlighted that mainstreaming migration into national development planning and multi-lateral development cooperation – that is, ensuring that migration is considered as a significant factor in development - and promoting coherent policy are amongst the means to address these barriers and promote migration's benefits. Panellists noted that the main countries of destination must broaden their perspective to include the interests of migrants noting that when migrants succeed, societies do too, and that all countries must promote migration policies that are consistent with other policy objectives and vice versa.

This would mean adopting whole of government and whole of society approaches to migration that pursue shared objectives and that seek to eliminate negative side effects across different policy areas. In short, policies should not work against each other. Speakers highlighted various tools to help governments achieve more consistent, mainstreamed policy and projects implemented by UN agencies to help integrate migration issues into relevant policies in addition to international cooperation. Partnerships were referred to as key to produce more coherent programmes in the migration field. This would necessitate partnerships between governments, as well as between governments and other actors.

Participants from the floor reaffirmed the multiple links between migration and development. The role of migrant remittances was highlighted as one of the most positive and tangible examples of how migration benefits development. Many participants highlighted the need to meet commitments in the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Agenda to promote cheaper, faster and safer remittance transfers. Promoting greater financial literacy for recipients, elimination of costly remittance corridors and reduce transaction costs; and ensure services are available to migrant men and women were also highlighted. There is general recognition that remittances' are contributing positively in development, there is a need for more regulatory environment, for example, an enabling environment for small transfers of money. However, they are not in any way a replacement for ODA.

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It was also stressed by numerous delegations that migrants' contributions cannot be reduced solely to a financial component. Migrants' social remittances – their knowledge and skills transfers, networks, , cultural capital, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit – are also significant and need appropriate recognition. Enhancing the potential of migrants' social remittances requires that their skills are effectively recognized and utilized. A number of participants noted that migrant remittances cannot replace the role of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other forms of international investment in development, both of which remain important to reduce poverty and inequality. This is especially the case since remittances do not necessarily benefit the whole of society, but help to meet the needs of migrants' families.

The role of migrants and diaspora as partners in development was also discussed by numerous participants. Delegations referred to the number of their citizens that live overseas, recognizing the significant potential benefits they offer in terms of their economic and social remittances. A number of examples were put forward to illustrate how governments are building partnerships with their diaspora – for example, via cultural attaches and consular services – to promote greater investment in development activities at home. Activities to prepare people for migration – such as skills training and cultural preparation - were also highlighted as a means not only to promote effective integration in the destination country, but also to maintain links with the origin country to maintain linkages and support.

Integration in the country of destination was highlighted as a particularly important means to promote the links between migration and development. It was recognised for example that promoting migrants' rights and providing access to health, education and social protection, as well as supporting employment opportunities, are all crucial to ensuring that migrants meet their full potential. Providing support to migrants should in fact be considered a longer term investment. Supporting the integration of migrants, including by eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, was especially stressed. This was also emphasized in the context of promoting women's empowerment. Various participants suggested the importance to prioritise gender equality and women's empowerment, noting that women comprise roughly half of all migrants globally, but their contributions are often undermined while they pay higher costs, earn less, and often have family obligations.



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The nexus between migration and integration is a further priority. Policies are needed to facilitate integration including resolute action by governments against discrimination, racism and xenophobia, stereotyping and negative public narrative about migrants.

Last but not least, We reemphasize that the overarching principle which we can draw from this panel is the triple win. Governments can work to create triple wins for migrants, for their countries of origin, and for the societies that receive them.

