CONCLUSION*

Human mobility in its many and varied forms, within and across national borders, is a major characteristic and perhaps even one of the defining features of our contemporary world. People move in ever increasing numbers and for many different purposes related to work, family, social, educational, cultural, business or personal safety concerns; sometimes within their own countries, at other times across the nearest border or perhaps across the world.

Today, a great deal of policy attention tends to fall on highly qualified workers and their needed skills, drive and energy. Developed countries are conscious of the need to offer competitive conditions of entry, residence and employment if they are to attract needed talent from abroad, as exemplified by the European Union's current debate about the proposed introduction of a "Blue Card" for highly qualified individuals (European Commission, 2007). On the other hand, low and semi-skilled workers remain a much more challenging and contested category: while their labour continues to be indispensable in many economically important areas of employment, for instance in the agriculture, construction and hospitality sectors, in many host countries their presence is the subject of persistent controversy. When community debates arise about the size of migration quotas, about the value of permanency of residence as opposed to circularity of movement, about worker rights and social entitlements and, even more generally, about the economic impact of migration, it is generally these workers who are the focus of interest.

For any analysis of contemporary mobility to be comprehensive and meaningful, however, other, often overlooked categories have to be taken into consideration. For instance, student populations in countries of destination are increasingly seen as pools of talented individuals who can be and are encouraged to stay on for work at the completion of their studies.

Tourists and business visitors account for the highest numbers of international border crossings, and their movements have perceptible impacts on broader migratory patterns: tourists may combine the pursuit of cultural and leisure activities with prospecting for employment in anticipation of subsequent migration, and business visits may be a prelude to eventual longer-term residence and employment, or the establishment of business enterprises. In

* This Conclusion was written by Gervais Appave and Ryszard Cholewinski (Editors-in-Chief), and Michele Klein Solomon, Director, Migration Policy, Research and Communications, IOM, Geneva.

addition, there is a growing trend to offer carefully tailored access to domestic labour markets to young, educated tourists through the use of working-holiday visas.

Family migrations are also changing. They have, in the past, often been seen as an adjunct to labour migration and consisting largely of economically inactive female spouses and dependent children. Without prejudice to the importance of the reunion of spouses, and parents and children in migration management, this perception needs to be adjusted to acknowledge more readily the fact that women are now migrating as heads of households, that family migrants do enter and actively participate in the workforce in countries of destination, and that family members are recruited to meet specific labour market needs.

The number of internal migrants[1] probably far exceeds that of international migrants and, in many countries – India and China for example, but they are not, by any means, the only ones – they are an established and essential part of the labour force. Their contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of both their regions of origin and destination appears to be beyond question. Internal migration may eventually lead to international migration.

Last, but no means least, there are the scattered but vast contingents of irregular migrants who remain beyond the reach of official policy and procedure, but who, albeit to different degrees, are nonetheless very much part of migration and employment patterns in countries of transit and destination.

The broad surveys of these diverse manifestations of human movement, as laid out in Part A of *World Migration 2008*, invite a number of observations. The first is that mobility is both a consequence and a constituent part of the complex and interdependent social and economic processes that are now collectively referred to as globalization; a consequence in the sense that developments towards the facilitation of the production of goods and services through global resourcing, the facilitation of the movement of capital and the facilitation of trade create a context that encourages human mobility; a constituent part in the sense that human mobility in itself gives rise to ever expanding networks of relationships and communications that are part and parcel of globalization.

Second, as one of the consequences of the choice made by the international community to facilitate the movement of capital, goods and services, human mobility or, more specifically, the movement of human resources at all skills levels is now factored into the equations intended to yield new economic gains. In other words, labour market dynamics are increasingly operating across international borders.

Third, while the motivations underlying human mobility are many and varied, work-related interests and concerns are rarely if ever entirely absent and provide a strong unifying link.

The fourth observation is that these dynamics are sustained and amplified by the large demographic differentials and wage disparities between developing and developed countries and are also operating to some degree among developing countries.

The fifth and final point that emerges is that there are strong regional dynamics in operation. The report identifies six different areas of intense or growing migratory activity: Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Oceania, each with its own specificities worth noting and studying. Migrants from African countries move predominantly to other African countries, with Southern Africa, the Maghreb and West Africa being the sub-regions most affected by labour mobility on the African

[1] As discussed in Chapter 7, internal migrants as a class are often indistinguishable from cross-border transients in border zones.

continent. Asia is the largest source of temporary contractual migrant workers worldwide, while being characterized also by very large intra-regional flows of migrant workers, in particular the vast internal movements in China and India. Europe stands apart because of the EU objective of creating a common migratory space within far-flung but jointly managed external borders. The Americas are characterized by strong South-North migratory flows from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States and Canada and, increasingly, Europe. The United States and Canada continue to be the major receivers of permanent settlers from across the world, but they are also faced with growing demands for temporary workers. The Middle East is by far the most important region of destination for temporary contractual workers, most of who come from Asia. Finally, Oceania includes two large destination countries, Australia and New Zealand, on the one hand and, on the other, many small island nations whose populations are increasingly interested in labour migration. All regions are significantly affected by irregular migration.

The policy implications of these evolving realities require careful exploration, but it is already apparent that neither avoidance of the issues nor a passive laissez-faire approach are likely to lead to the policy responses needed to realize the social and economic potential of mobility. The priority need is for planned and predictable ways of matching labour demand with supply in safe, legal, humane and orderly ways, with due regard to the human rights of migrants and to the social implications of migration. Given the diversity of labour market needs and of available skills, policies and procedures will have to display commensurate flexibility and adaptability to enable modes of labour mobility that may be short-term, circular, long-term or permanent.

Countries of origin and destination are increasingly engaged in the formulation of policies to meet their particular labour mobility objectives: on the one hand, to train and prepare their nationals to work at destinations abroad; on the other, to identify labour market needs and seek recruitment of appropriate personnel. Optimal outcomes will be achieved when the two sets of policies are envisaged as complementary elements of a coherent whole, directed towards the achievement of shared development goals while also ensuring that benefits continue to accrue to migrant workers and their families.

As a general rule, foreign employment policies in countries of origin and destination are established unilaterally, which is unsurprising given that every country has its own economic, political, social and cultural interests at heart. Thus, countries of origin will aim to identify and secure authorized employment opportunities abroad for their citizens, while ensuring that their human rights are protected. Countries of destination, for their part, wish to admit various categories of foreign workers to fill certain domestic labour shortages, while also ensuring the integrity of their sovereign territory and frontiers, and respect for national cultural and social core values. Nevertheless, there are signs pointing to policy convergence in this area built around the notions of human resource development and migration management.

For countries of origin, this means taking on the challenge of formulating policies and setting priorities able to both satisfy local labour market and economic needs, and nurture talent to compete for work placements abroad. This is best achieved within a comprehensive human resource development (HRD) framework. Central to such a framework is a properly resourced education system capable of providing the necessary formal learning opportunities and complemented, where necessary, by practical work experience and training, to be formally assessed and certified by recognized educational and professional authorities. Of necessity, however, HRD planning starts well upstream of educational processes, with the identification of employment opportunities

in relation to both domestic and international labour market needs taking account of, inter alia, demographic projections. Policies required for the specific management of labour mobility then follow. Foremost among these are measures to uphold the integrity of recruitment processes and, more generally, protect migrant workers from exploitation and abuse. Access to authoritative, accurate and up-to-date information is of great importance, but so are welfare and support services for the workers while abroad and, when needed, appropriate arrangements to facilitate their return and reintegration in the home country.

From the perspective of countries of destination, the starting point is also the definition of explicit mobility-related objectives and desired outcomes, followed by the formulation of appropriate policies. These policies are not narrowly limited to the admission of foreign workers to fill existing labour shortages, but relate more broadly to economic and demographic planning, and cover the entire migration cycle from departure in countries of origin, the treatment and adequate protection of migrant workers (and their families) in the host society and the workplace, including appropriate integration strategies, to their return and reintegration, where appropriate, as well as possible continued movement between the country of origin and of destination. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to be able to respond to changing labour market needs. They may need to accommodate both temporary labour migration and (permanent) employment-based immigration and, in certain instances, to provide a bridge between the two types of movement.

Both countries of origin and destination stand to benefit from securing the involvement and cooperation of the widest range of stakeholders, including employers, private recruitment agencies, trade unions, migrant and diaspora associations, and international organizations.

Bilateral cooperation offers many possibilities. Bilateral agreements are flexible instruments that can be used to match labour supply and demand in a planned, predictable and rights-based manner, while also contributing to the mitigation of irregular migration. They enable employers in countries of destination to recruit trained and competent individuals with the needed skills, while countries of origin obtain assurances that employment contracts will be adhered to and workers enjoy decent and safe working conditions. Cooperation does not stop there. Human mobility is increasingly the subject of international cooperation at the sub-regional, regional, inter-regional and global level, although it is true that progress in the management of labour migration is yet to match what has been achieved at the international level in other domains of economic and social affairs.

The discretion to determine who may or may not enter its territory remains a prerogative of the nation state, and this may limit the state's willingness to engage in cooperative endeavours. A second issue is the difficulty in achieving nationally coordinated policy positions addressing labour mobility among interested domestic agencies, such as those concerned with employment, foreign affairs, development, trade or welfare, prior to multilateral engagement. Yet another obstacle is differences in priorities among countries: while they are all affected by migratory flows, they are not all affected at the same time or in the same way, nor do they share the same circumstances or objectives. Despite these hurdles, however, numerous consultative mechanisms on migration policy have emerged over the last decade or so. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue, held in early 2008, is a good example of how consultations among countries of origin and destination can lead to the development of concrete projects to facilitate the movement of workers and improve their welfare (see Textbox 10.5). Such consultative processes, characterized by their informality and open-endedness, deserve to be further developed as forums for confidence building

and information exchange and as "workplaces" where governments can meet to discuss the challenges of managing mobility, improve their grasp of issues and identify viable policy options.

Considerable amounts of time, resources and effort have been invested in non-binding consultative exercises in recent years. The Berne Initiative, IOM's International Dialogue on Migration, the UN General Assembly's High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, and the Global Forum on Migration and Development have been or are, in many ways, large-scale community learning exercises. The Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) was another parallel and intensive effort at developing a "framework for the formulation of a coherent, comprehensive and global response to the issue of international migration" (GCIM, 2005: vii). The outcomes of all these exercises are strikingly convergent. All of them take as their starting point the increasing political visibility and importance of international migration; all of them acknowledge that mobility is an unavoidable economic and social reality; all of them point to benefits that flow from properly managed flows; all of them draw attention to the risks of not managing those flows; all of them assert that it is possible to arrive at common understandings and principles, and propose remarkably consistent lines of action. They also confirm the need for clearer linkages to be established between the domain of human mobility proper and closely adjoining policy fields, especially those of development and trade.

Accordingly, the migration and development equation has become a foremost subject of research and policy debate. It has now been established beyond any doubt that migration can and does contribute to poverty reduction at both the individual and community level. Migrants can benefit directly by obtaining access to higher wages and improved living conditions, and there are follow-on benefits for the family members and communities, who are the recipients of flows of remittances that had an estimated global value of USD 337 billion in 2007 (Ratha et al., 2008). Other longer-term gains accrue from the establishment of expatriate communities. Under the right circumstances, these diasporas have demonstrated that they can develop and sustain extensive social and cultural networks, promote and conduct trade, become providers of investment funding and business know-how, offer humanitarian assistance in times of crisis and even make a meaningful contribution to democratic processes in countries of origin. There are, however, downsides to the picture. Countries of origin – especially the smaller ones – are concerned about the impact on their economies of the departure of large proportions of their highly skilled workers. Developing countries are therefore keenly interested in the development of legislative and policy frameworks that will provide a balanced set of solutions affording opportunities and rights for migrants while meeting their concerns regarding brain drain.

For all countries, progress in this continuously evolving and complex area is first and foremost subject to a better understanding of the impact of international labour mobility on domestic labour supply; the impact of migration on productivity in the domestic economy; and the impact of remittance flows on development. It will also depend on the establishment of genuine partnerships between countries of origin and destination to attain mutually satisfactory outcomes.

The migration and trade nexus is at least as complex as the migration and development equation. At the global level, tariffs and other barriers to cross-border investment and trade in goods have been very substantially reduced in recent decades with the consequent growth in the global exchanges of capital, goods and services. Facilitation of the movement of people has been identified as a potential avenue to further economic gains through trade liberalization, but the policy intersections between migration and

trade need to be more clearly mapped out and more fully explored. One specific issue to be addressed is the fundamental tension between trade-oriented policy objectives driven by market dynamics and premised on planning and predictability, and approaches to migration management that favour discretion and the adaptation of policy strategies to changing circumstances. At the doctrinal level, trade theories have yet to agree whether trade and migration are substitutes (viz. supporting local economic growth and boosting exports would have the effect of easing migration pressure) or complements (viz. both trade and migration can increase, and can be mutually supportive). Trade theories need to be reviewed from the trade-migration vantage point and relevant supporting evidence gathered to better inform policies aimed at managing international labour mobility, all the more so as current globalization trends are predominantly characterized by the growth in trade in services and knowledge-based trading patterns, both of which rely heavily on the mobility of human resources. In the context of international trade negotiations, GATS Mode 4 is seen as a promising means to facilitate the temporary movement of service personnel; however, so far its scope of application has been largely limited to the international movement of highly skilled personnel, and considerable creativity and persistence are still needed to allow these negotiations to move forward. Regional and bilateral initiatives will similarly have to be nurtured and encouraged to yield the intended results. In fact, regional and bilateral trade agreements that already incorporate labour mobility may turn out to be learning stations where states acquire the confidence to work on broader approaches (see Textbox 13.7). Finally, policy coherence requires improvement in two ways: first, through the integration of worker mobility in national, regional and international employment and migration policies and strategies and, second, the definition of the particular roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders, including the private sector.

The elucidation of the connections between migration, development and trade needs to take full account of the rights of migrant workers, in particular those who, for various reasons, such as age, gender, low-skill profile or work in unregulated sectors, are not covered by national labour laws and find themselves in vulnerable situations. Similarly, issues such as the management of change while maintaining social cohesion and adherence to core values, environmental impacts on mobility and vice versa (see Textbox Conc. 1) and migrant health should be taken into account in the development of effective migration management strategies.

Textbox Conc. 1

Climate Change and Labour Mobility

The importance of the reciprocal impact of climate change and migration is expected to grow incrementally over the coming decades. Altered rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and increasingly frequent natural disasters are all likely to exceed the absorption capacity of large areas of the world, and to critically affect problems of food and water security in marginal areas.

A number of analysts, of whom Norman Myers of Oxford University is perhaps the best known, have undertaken to estimate the number of people who will be forced to move over the long term as a direct result of climate change. Myers predicts that, by 2050, "there could be as many as 200 million people overtaken by disruptions of monsoon systems and other rainfall regimes, by droughts of unprecedented severity and duration, and by sea-level rise and coastal flooding" (Myers, 2005: 1).

This is a staggering number and, should it come to pass, some two per cent or one in forty-five people alive in 2050 would have been displaced by climate change at some point in their lives, and their total number would exceed the estimated current global migrant population of 200 million.

Such predictions are, of course, inherently speculative. There are so many and diverse factors at play – population growth, urbanization and local politics, to name just three – that establishing a causal relation between climate change and migration is difficult and fraught with uncertainties. However, it is clear that climate change will lead to large areas becoming increasingly less able to sustain peoples' livelihoods and lead to large-scale moves to areas still able to offer better opportunities.

Migration is, and always has been, an important response mechanism to climate stress. While pastoralists have since time immemorial migrated to and from water sources and grazing lands as part of their normal way of life as well as in response to climate changes, it is becoming apparent that migration as a response to environmental change is no longer limited to nomadic societies.

In Western Sudan, for example, studies have shown that one adaptive response to drought is to send an older male family member to the capital, Khartoum, to find paid work so as to tide the family over until the end of the drought (McLeman and Smit, 2004). Temporary labour migration in times of climate stress can supplement a family's income through remittances from paid work elsewhere, and reduce the demand on local resources as there will be fewer mouths to feed.

But the picture is nuanced. Recent studies in the West African Sahel have revealed the recourse to temporary labour migration as an adaptive mechanism to climate change. The region has suffered a prolonged drought for much of the past three decades. One way that households have adapted has been to send their young men and women in search of wage labour after each harvest. But **how far** they go depends on the success of the harvest.

A good harvest might give the family sufficient resources to send a member to Europe in search of work. While the potential rewards in terms of remittances are high, the journey is dangerous and the migrant is unlikely to be back in time for the next planting season. But, in a drought year, when harvests are poor, the young men and women tend to stay much closer to home and travel instead to nearby cities for paid work with which to supplement the household income. In such years the risk of losing the "migration gamble" is simply too great (McLeman, 2006).

In the past, the rich developed countries focused mainly on mitigating climate change by setting emissions targets for the OECD countries and deliberating on how to gain new adherents to an emissions control agreement after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. More recently, greater attention has been paid to helping developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change, for instance by altering irrigation techniques, building better storm shelters and developing drought-resistant crops.

This approach to adaptation is fundamentally based on the idea of adapting "in situ". Migration is somehow viewed as a failure to adapt. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for example, has supported the development of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) to help the Least Developed Countries to identify and rank their priorities for adaptation to climate change. However, none of the fourteen NAPAs submitted so far mention migration or population relocation as a possible policy response. Likewise, the developed countries are very resistant to the idea of relaxing their immigration or asylum policies and to consider environmental strain as a legitimate reason for migration.

It may be said that the international community is, in fact, ignoring labour mobility as a coping strategy for climate stress. Instead, there is a collective, and rather successful, attempt to ignore the scale of future climate-induced migration. However, how the international community reacts to climate-driven labour migration will have a real effect on the larger development impacts of climate change.

Some analysts are beginning to argue that migration is both a necessary element of global redistributive justice and an important response to climate change; and that greenhouse gas emitters should accept an allocation of "climate migrants"[2] in proportion to their historical greenhouse gas emissions. Andrew Simms of the New Economics Foundation argues: "Is it right

[2] IOM applies the term "environmental migrants" to describe persons moving primarily as a result of climate change and environmental degradation. In its 2007 Discussion Note on "Migration and the Environment", IOM defined environmental migrants as "persons or groups of persons who, for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad" (IOM, 2007: 1-2, para. 6). This term is broader than "climate migrants" and encompasses population movements that are resulting both from climate and non-climate related environmental processes and events.

that while some states are more responsible for creating problems like global climate change, all states should bear equal responsibility to deal with their displaced people?"

There is a dilemma here. Relaxing immigration rules as part of a concerted policy to "release the population pressure" in areas affected by climate change could accelerate the brain drain of talented individuals from the developing world to the developed – and thereby worsen the "hollowing out" of affected economies, which is itself a driver of migration. On the other hand, closing borders in both source and destination countries undermines remittance economies and denies developing countries the benefits of access to the international labour market.

Clearly, there has to be a balance of policies that promotes the incentives for workers to stay in their home countries, whilst not closing the door to international labour mobility. The first steps are to acknowledge, assess and plan for the role of climate change and environmental degradation in future population movements.

***Source**: Oli Brown, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Geneva.*

Accurate and reliable data on migrant stocks, flows and trends are indispensable to develop, monitor and evaluate migration policies and programmes. However, the collection, sharing and management of migration data is a highly time-consuming and resource-intensive process. Data are frequently gleaned from a multitude of sources not actually designed for migration-related analysis. In addition, since migration data are frequently considered to be sensitive, the sharing of data among institutions at the national level, let alone with other governments or non-government specialists, is often avoided. Special efforts are needed to improve the reliability and comparability of existing data sources; to identify and gather new data on emerging issues; and to ensure the dissemination and utilization of data and research on labour migration.

For many countries, migration is a new administrative area, and comprehensive systems to track, process and facilitate inward and outward movements of people are weak or non-existent. What is needed is a renewed focus on building the capacity of all governments, in particular those of developing countries or of countries newly affected by migratory flows; to formulate policy and legislation; to improve labour migration and related human resource development programmes through experimentation and innovation; to properly administer them; and to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

A new spirit of partnership in outlook and action is both possible and essential to realizing beneficial outcomes for the international community as a whole, including countries of origin, countries of destination and the migrants and their families. Such a partnership will be the key to the success or failure of the efforts to manage the international labour mobility challenges of the twenty-first century.

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