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Report of the Global Commission on International Migration

Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action

Summary of Proposed Principles for Action and Recommendations

Chapter One

A world of work: Migrants in a globalizing labour market

Principle

Migration out of choice: Migration and the global economy

Women, men and children should be able to fulfil their potential, meet their needs, exercise their human rights and fulfil their aspirations in their country of origin, and hence migrate out of choice, rather than necessity. Those women and men who migrate and enter the global labour market should be able to do so in a safe and authorized manner, and because they and their skills are valued and needed by the states and societies that receive them.

Recommendations

1.1 The number of people seeking to migrate from one country and continent to another will increase in the years to come, due to developmental and demographic disparities, as well as differences in the quality of governance. States and other stakeholders must take due account of this trend in the formulation of migration policies.

1.2 States and other stakeholders should pursue more realistic and flexible approaches to international migration, based on a recognition of the potential for migrant workers to fill specific gaps in the global labour market.

1.3 States and the private sector should consider the option of introducing carefully designed temporary migration programmes as a means of addressing the economic needs of both countries of origin and destination.

1.4 The GATS Mode 4 negotiations on the movement of service providers should be brought to a successful conclusion. Given the linkage between international trade and international migration, greater efforts should be made to foster a dialogue between officials and experts dealing with the two issues.

1.5 Governments and employers should jointly review current barriers to the mobility of highly educated professionals, with a view to removing those which are unnecessarily hindering economic competitiveness.

1.6 Greater efforts should be made to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods in developing countries, so that the citizens of such states do not feel compelled to migrate. Developing countries and the industrialized states should pursue economic policies and implement existing commitments that enable this objective to be achieved.

Chapter Two

Migration and development: Realizing the potential of human mobility

Principle

Reinforcing economic and developmental impact

The role that migrants play in promoting development and poverty reduction in countries of origin, as well as the contribution they make towards the prosperity of destination countries, should be recognized and reinforced. International migration should become an integral part of national, regional and global strategies for economic growth, in both the developing and developed world.

Recommendations

2.1 Cooperative relationships between labour-rich and labour-poor countries are required to promote human capital formation and the development of a global pool of professionals. Providing appropriate pay, working conditions and career prospects in order to retain key personnel must be an integral component of such strategies.

2.2 Remittances are private money and should not be appropriated by states. Governments and financial institutions should make it easier and cheaper to transfer remittances and thus encourage migrants to remit through formal transfer systems.

2.3 Measures to encourage the transfer and investment of remittances must be combined with macro-economic policies in countries of origin that are conducive to economic growth and competitiveness.

2.4 Diasporas should be encouraged to promote development by saving and investing in their countries of origin and participating in transnational knowledge networks.

2.5 States and international organizations should formulate policies and programmes that maximize the developmental impact of return and circular migration.

Chapter Three

The challenge of irregular migration: State sovereignty and human security

Principle

Addressing irregular migration

States, exercising their sovereign right to determine who enters and remains on their territory, should fulfill their responsibility and obligation to protect the rights of migrants and to re-admit those citizens who wish or who are obliged to return to their country of origin. In stemming irregular migration, states should actively cooperate with one other, ensuring that their efforts do not jeopardize human rights, including the right of refugees to seek asylum. Governments should consult with employers, trade unions and civil society on this issue.

Recommendations

3.1 States and other stakeholders should engage in an objective debate about the negative consequences of irregular migration and its prevention.

3.2 Border control policies should form part of a long-term approach to the issue of irregular migration that addresses the socio-economic, governance and human rights deficits that prompt people to leave their own country. This approach must be based on interstate dialogue and cooperation.

3.3 States should address the conditions that promote irregular migration by providing additional opportunities for regular migration and by taking action against employers who engage migrants with irregular status.

3.4 States should resolve the situation of migrants with irregular status by means of return or regularization.

3.5 States must strengthen their efforts to combat the distinct criminal phenomena of migrant smuggling and human trafficking. In both cases, perpetrators must be prosecuted, the demand for exploitative services eradicated and appropriate protection and assistance provided to victims.

3.6 In their efforts to stem irregular migration, states must respect their existing obligations under international law towards the human rights of migrants, the institution of asylum and the principles of refugee protection

Chapter Four

Diversity and cohesion: Migrants in society

Principle

Strengthening social cohesion through integration

Migrants and citizens of destination countries should respect their legal obligations and benefit from a mutual process of adaptation and integration that accommodates cultural diversity and fosters social cohesion. The integration process should be actively supported by local and national authorities, employers and members of civil society, and should be based on a commitment to non-discrimination and gender equity. It should also be informed by an objective public, political and media discourse on international migration.

Recommendations

4.1 While recognizing the right of states to determine their own policies in relation to the situation of migrants in society, all migrants must be able to exercise their fundamental human rights and benefit from minimum labour standards.

4.2 Authorized and long-term migrants should be fully integrated in society. The integration process should value social diversity, foster social cohesion and avert the marginalization of migrant communities.

4.3 Local and national authorities, employers and members of civil society should work in active partnership with migrants and their associations to promote the integration process. Migrants should be properly informed of their rights and obligations and encouraged to become active citizens in the country to which they have moved.

4.4 Particular attention should be given to the empowerment and protection of migrant women, as well as ensuring that they are actively involved in the formulation and implementation of integration policies and programmes. The rights, welfare and educational needs of migrant children should also be fully respected.

4.5 While temporary migrants and migrants with irregular status are not usually granted the right to integrate in the society where they are living, their rights should be fully respected and they should be protected against exploitation and abuse.

4.6 Those individuals and organizations that have an influence on public opinion must address the issue of international migration in an objective and responsible manner.

Chapter Five

A principled approach: Laws, norms and human rights

Principle

Protecting the rights of migrants

The legal and normative framework affecting international migrants should be strengthened, implemented more effectively and applied in a non-discriminatory manner, so as to protect the human rights and labour standards that should be enjoyed by all migrant women and men. Respecting the provisions of this legal and normative framework, states and other stakeholders must address migration issues in a more consistent and coherent manner.

Recommendations

5.1 States must protect the rights of migrants by strengthening the normative human rights framework affecting international migrants and by ensuring that its provisions are applied in a non-discriminatory manner.

5.2 All states must ensure that the principle of state responsibility to protect those on their territory is put into practice, so as to reduce the pressures that induce people to migrate, protect migrants who are in transit and safeguard the human rights of those in destination countries.

5.3 Governments and employers must ensure that all migrants are able to benefit from decent work as defined by the ILO and are protected from exploitation and abuse. Special efforts must be made to safeguard the situation of migrant women domestic workers and migrant children.

5.4 The human rights component of the UN system should be used more effectively as a means of strengthening the legal and normative framework of international migration and ensuring the protection of migrant rights.

Chapter Six

Creating coherence: The governance of international migration

Principle

Enhancing governance: Coherence, capacity and cooperation

The governance of international migration should be enhanced by improved coherence and strengthened capacity at the national level; greater consultation and cooperation between states at the regional level, and more effective dialogue and coordination among governments and between international organizations at the global level. Such efforts must be based on a better appreciation of the close linkages that exist between international migration and development and other key policy issues, including trade, aid, state security, human security and human rights.

Recommendations

6.1 All states should establish coherent national migration policies that are based on agreed objectives, take account of related policy issues and are consistent with international treaty law, including human rights law. Governance at the national level should be effectively coordinated among all concerned ministries and should also involve consultation with non-state actors.

6.2 The international community should support the efforts of states to formulate and implement national migration policies through the contribution of resources, appropriate expertise and training.

6.3 Bilateral agreements are a valuable means of addressing migration issues that affect two states. They must always respect the normative framework affecting international migrants and thereby safeguard migrant rights.

6.4 Additional efforts are required to ensure that regional consultative processes on migration have worldwide coverage, engage civil society and the private sector, and are not focused solely on migration control. Greater interaction between the different processes is essential given the global nature of migration.

6.5 The new willingness of a range of states, institutions and non-governmental stakeholders to take global initiatives on international migration is welcome. The UN General Assembly High-Level Dialogue provides an opportunity for greater interaction and coherence between these initiatives, and to ensure that their momentum is maintained. The ongoing UN reform process provides a window of opportunity to realize this momentum through a revision of current institutional arrangements.

6.6 The Commission proposes to the UN Secretary-General the immediate establishment of a high-level inter-institutional group to define the functions and modalities of, and pave the way for, an Inter-agency Global Migration Facility. This Facility should ensure a more coherent and effective institutional response to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration.