

MIGRATION: A FORCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

EDITORIAL

People have always migrated in order to improve their lives. We can trace this phenomenon back even to biblical times. However, in development cooperation, migration is a relatively recent but increasingly prominent topic. For a long time the indirect aim of development cooperation was to prevent migration. Rural development programmes were designed to reduce migration to towns or to encourage mountain populations, in Nepal for instance, to remain in their valleys.

Migration brings challenges and stress for migrants themselves and for the host population. The conviction that development cooperation should channel migration flows and eliminate the concomitant problems is now giving way to an increased emphasis on the positive aspects of migration. Governments and business circles in many countries now perceive migration as an opportunity to increase economic prosperity. Switzerland has

also benefited from migrant workers, not only in economic terms but also in social and cultural terms.

The task for development cooperation is to use the potential of migration for the sustainable development of the country and to combat negative effects such as human trafficking and the exploitation of migrant workers. In this respect the SDC plays a pioneering role. It supports governments and civil society in developing countries in their efforts to produce migration-sensitive development plans. It seeks dialogue with diaspora groups and includes their experience in the international political dialogue. In doing so it supports the interests of Swiss migration policy and partnerships. Here you can read more about the SDC's activity in the areas of migration and development.

Michel Mordasini
Assistant Director General

IN A GLOBALISED WORLD, MIGRATION IS BECOMING A GLOBAL ISSUE

They are called Marco, Alonso or Hernandez, and they have left Spain to escape an unemployment rate that has reached 26% of the economically active population. In search of work, they have gone to ... Morocco, which would have been unthinkable a few years ago. Morocco – until recently a country from which Moroccans emigrated to Europe and through which Sub-Saharan Africans transited on their way to Europe – has thus become a land of immigration. This threefold phenomenon – the combined result of globalisation and the economic crisis – is spreading and demands a response tailored to the complexity of the new migration, which entails risks but is also increasingly seen as a force that needs to be taken into account in development strategies. Doing so will require more international cooperation.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) was one of the first development agencies to take an interest in this issue and to link migration projects to policy dialogue. This prompted the SDC to launch a "Global Programme Migration and Development" (GPMD), which aims to capitalise on population movements to combat poverty. Launched in 2009, the GPMD was several years in the making.

Growing awareness

Already in 2001, the Confederation launched a regional and international consultation known as the Bern Initiative, "in order to improve the management of migration [...] through cooperation among States." It subsequently supported the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), an initiative launched in 2003 in Geneva by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Two years later, this 19-member commission published a report that made an explicit connection be-



Construction sites, such as here in Egypt, often use immigrant labour.

tween migration and development. However, the theme of migration emerged too late to be included in the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

International legitimacy

The UN continued to look into the issue through a first High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which took place in 2006 and led to the Global Forum on Migration and Development, an ongoing informal, non-binding platform. Switzerland was a pioneer in this field. "Switzerland has played a very active role in the Forum's work," stresses Beata Godenzi, head of the SDC's Global Programme Migration and Development. "In particular, it cleared the way for dealing with certain development-related issues that were rarely addressed – and when they were, only from the security angle – and brought discussions that had previously been confined to academic circles into the political arena."

At the same time, fourteen UN agencies, the World Bank and the International Organisation for Migration created a "Global Migration Group" charged with "more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approaches" to the issue of international migration. The World Bank, for its part, has recently launched a new instrument, the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD), which was supported by Switzerland from the outset. KNOMAD aims to provide governments with a knowledge base, training and guidance in the area of migration and development.

The growing prominence of this issue is no accident. According to the United Nations, more than 215 million people, i.e. approximately 3% of the world's population, are migrants. If they were a country, it would be the fifth biggest in the world. Only 8% of these migrants are refugees. The proportion of migrants has remained stable over the last decade. But the total remittances they send to their countries of origin have sky-rocketed: the equivalent of CHF 377 billion have been sent to developing countries, i.e. three to four times more than total official development assistance to these countries. These transfers have not decreased during the economic crisis, which shows how well entrenched they are.

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) remains the most



Nowadays, remittances sent by migrants to their families back in their home countries exceed official development assistance.

important platform for dialogue on migration and development. In 2011 Switzerland held the (rotating) chairmanship of the GFMD which, explains Beata Godenzi, "gave us more visibility and legitimacy. Switzerland proposed a dozen thematic workshops in various regions as well as more direct interaction between the Forum and civil society." These proposals were taken up in 2012 and 2013.

Activities, debate and influence

The goal of the SDC's Global Programme is to take part in international dialogue on migration and development based on its experience with partnerships and in the field. It aims to help migrants to gain access to their rights, to integrate migration into development strategies and, lastly, to maximise the potential of migration by assisting countries of origin, transit and destination in taking better account of migration. "We introduced the issue of migration in the field of development and vice versa, in order to develop strategies that are more responsive to the needs of migrants and that benefit the countries of origin and destination at the same time," notes Beata Godenzi.

Migration has become vital for some countries. In Nepal, for example, remittances from emigrants account for almost 22% of GDP, compared with 5% for official development assistance. Nepalis migrate to find work in response to demand for unskilled labour, particularly in Malaysia and the Arabian Peninsula. A study published in early 2013 by the Asia Foundation shows that more and more migrants are entrusting their fate to opaque networks instead of recognised recruitment agencies, thereby opening the door to all sorts of abuse. Gaps in the official system also drive people to migrate illegally. In order to maximise the developmental potential of migration, the SDC has begun to cooperate with several countries in South

Asia on training and informing government workers and officials.

But migration benefits go beyond remittances figures. According to Beata Godenzi, many migrants who have been living abroad for a long time would like to help their country of origin, but do not know how to go about it. "A new approach is to promote cooperation between diaspora communities in different host countries on the one hand, and with the governments of their countries of origin on the other."

Also in Switzerland

GPMD programmes focus on concrete action and cooperation with governments, international organisations and NGOs. But Switzerland itself is also a country of emigration, transit and immigration. It is looking to integrate a comprehensive approach to migration into its own foreign policy, for example by establishing migration partnerships with certain states. The GPMD is a centre of competence that works to ensure coherence between Switzerland's international migration policy and its development policy. In this capacity, it supports "enhanced cooperation" mechanisms that have been in place since 2011 among all departments involved in this issue.

The connection between migration and development is gaining visibility, although it remains politically sensitive. The United Nations are expected to include it, under the broader umbrella of "population dynamics", in the Post-2015 Development Agenda that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (see p. 3), and most likely also in the follow-up to the Rio Conference. Beata Godenzi hopes that the UN's second High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, which will take place in October 2013, will be an opportunity to take stock of this issue and endorse a plan of action for the future.

THREE QUESTIONS TO...

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, London-based consultant Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie works at the intersection between Africa's diasporas, Africa's economic transformation, private sector development, and job-creation in Africa. He co-founded the African Foundation for Development (AF-FORD) in London in 1994 with a mission to mobilise and harness the African diaspora's resources for Africa's development.

There is a strong will from a number of countries to introduce the link between migration and development in the Post-2015 Agenda of the UN. Do you think it is important, and if so why?

Human mobility will be one of the defining characteristics of the 21st century so linking migration and development in the Post-2015 Development Agenda is important. Migration has the potential to contribute to a progressive development agenda that emphasises economic

transformation (especially in Africa) and job-creation.

One of your focuses is to encourage the diasporas to invest in home countries, as a way to boost development. But developing countries often lack effective public services and governance. Could the diasporas help in these fields too?

My focus has been mainly to facilitate African diasporas' contributions to Africa's development. Inclusive rather than extractive institutions are important if governance systems, public service delivery, etc. are to work in the broad public interest. I would argue that the question of institutions is a first-order problem. Diasporas will be subject to the same institutional constraints as everyone else. In these circumstances, diasporas have to channel their resources in ways that are mindful of institutional constraints and are able to exploit opportunities for pivotal change where and when they manifest. A big weakness of mainstream "di-

aspora for development" approaches has been to either ignore institutional constraints or to naively assume that diasporas can somehow fix these shortcomings.

What is the response of the diaspora to your "call for action"?

Well, I did not issue a call for action, it was when I noticed all the interesting things that diasporas were already doing some 20 years ago (plus all that had happened historically) that I was inspired and motivated to get involved myself. In general, diasporas have been very proactive and innovative in leveraging their resources for change in Africa, but there is so much more for us all to do.



POPULATION DYNAMICS ON THE AGENDA

As the UN's Millennium Development Goals will have reached their target date in two years, the UN is actively preparing its next agenda, known as the "Post-2015 Development Agenda". Population dynamics – how populations grow, age, urbanise, work and migrate – will be part of the Post-2015 Agenda. In fact, nowadays it is impossible to think about poverty, the environment and the economy without taking these strong trends into account. Internal, regional and international migration, and its connection to development, are naturally part and parcel of this thinking.

Switzerland, whose expertise in this area is internationally recognised, has expressed its interest in working with three UN agencies (UNDESA, UNFPA, UN-Habitat) and the International Organisation for Migration on the theme of "Population Dynamics". It shares this responsibility with Bangladesh, a priority country for Swiss development cooperation which, incidentally, is highly dependent on emigration.

International consultation on this issue, which was co-financed by Switzerland and was conducted between November 2012 and February 2013 with civil soci-

ety, academia, the private sector and the states concerned, resulted in the publication of a report in March of this year. The report takes a unanimous principled stand: "controlling" population is out of the question; what is needed instead is to create the conditions to make the best of the current situation and limit the risks associated with it. One of the priority issues identified by the report is the formulation of a tailor-made solution for "migration and human mobility". It also underscores the importance of international cooperation, a rights-based approach, and the importance of including migration in development strategies.

This report, the result of an international consultation process, lays the foundation for an international consensus on the issue of population dynamics. This consensus was endorsed by fifty states that met in Dhaka in March 2013 at a conference co-chaired by Switzerland. On migration, the Dhaka Declaration officially emphasised the need to "strengthen policy coherence at all levels through local, national, regional and global cooperation, including deepening cooperation among origin, transit and destination countries, and establish global partnerships in the post-2015 framework to ensure that migration contributes to equitable and sustainable development."

These ideas have been taken up and explored in depth at a series of events organised by the stakeholders with Switzerland's very active participation. On 22 May of this year, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, a voluntary platform for exchange and discussion between states, organised a one-day thematic meeting on the inclusion of migration in development strategies and the UN agenda. On 7 June, a round table on the theme of "Labour Migration" was held in New York with the support of Switzerland and other participants as part of the preparation of the high-level dialogue next October.

Thus, the principles articulated in the early 2000s by various stakeholders are gradually gaining legitimacy in the lead-up to the UN's Post-2015 Development Agenda. "It's an evolving process in which the SDC is acting as a catalyst," explains Beata Godenzi, head of the SDC's Global Programme Migration and Development. "We are not aiming to formulate an official goal at any cost, but we do consider it crucial to integrate the variable of migration in the goals that will be selected. In that case, however, we want not just a mention, but a set of specific indicators on migration."

KEY POINTS

1

The phenomenon of migration has grown in tandem with globalisation in recent years. The economic crisis has made the situation more complex. Many states have now become countries of departure, transit and destination. This trend can no longer be ignored.

2

The United Nations estimates that 3% of the world's population are migrants. Developing countries are receiving remittances totalling CHF 377 billion from these expatriates, i.e. four times the official development assistance they receive. These remittances have not decreased despite the economic crisis.

3

There is a growing awareness of the positive impact of migration on development as a result of the work performed by migrants in the destination countries, the remittances they send to their families back home, and the exchange of skills between the countries of origin and destination.

4

Migrants' journeys are fraught with difficulties. They are often at the mercy of opaque networks. Cooperation between countries is necessary to ensure their protection and to guarantee the rights of migrant workers, who account for almost 92% of all migratory flows. It is imperative that the opportunities and challenges of migration be integrated into development strategies. This means that significant training and information efforts will have to be made.

5

The SDC was one of the first development agencies to broaden the debate and to combine practical experience with a commitment to policy dialogue, in particular by establishing the Global Programme Migration and Development (GPMD). GPMD is a competence centre for migration and development issues.



The bases for an international consensus were endorsed in Dhaka in March 2013 under the presidency of the SDC Director-General, Martin Dahinden, and the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Shahidul Haque.

INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

(under www.deza.admin.ch, Projects/All projects)

Support for migrants and their families in their country of origin

Ten per cent of Sri Lanka's population are working abroad. Migrants, mostly women employed as domestic workers, and families deprived of their mothers, become vulnerable because of lack of support, information and protection by the judicial and law enforcement authorities. The GPMD wants to tackle this problem and thus maximise the potential benefits of migration for development.

Decent working conditions in the host countries

The GPMD is advocating, for example, the reform of the so-called kafala system, which requires unskilled labourers to be dependent on a sponsor, usually their employer, without any provisions to limit abuses. Fair and equitable treatment improves the status of migrants and empowers them to become development actors.

Opening new horizons thanks to the diaspora

In Tunisia, 15% of the population live outside the country. Switzerland supports the Tunisian authorities' efforts to integrate the migration factor into their planning, as well as cooperation with the diaspora in areas such as investment.

Support for the World Bank's knowledge platform

The World Bank's Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) produces studies showing the influence of migration on development and vice versa together with scholars from around the world. The aim is to propose policy options that take account of the reality on the ground with respect to sensitive and politically charged issues.

IMPRINT

Editor

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
Directorate Global Cooperation
Freiburgstrasse 130, CH-3003 Berne
info@deza.admin.ch, www.deza.admin.ch

Photos Photos ILO/M. Crozet, World Bank/Shehzad Noorani, IOM/MAP/Sujan

This publication is also available in German and French