Thematic Meeting: the Root Causes of Irregular Migration

"Towards a common understanding and solutions"

Chaired by the French Republic, Co-Chaired by the Republic of Senegal

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Conclusions of the Co-Chairs

Understand and recognise the complexity of migration dynamics

Migration is not the result of one, unique factor. Migrants should be considered as autonomous individuals who are driven by a complex set of factors. The notion of "a project to migrate" - which is constantly re-evaluated and reconfigured whilst the migration is underway - enables us to better understand migrants' journeys:

1. Enrich existing initiatives by creating links with the research sector ;
2. Exchange points of view in order to grasp the complexity of migratory dynamics between: i) regions with a long history of migration or where migration is an important lever for local development ; ii) major urban hubs for international emigration; iii) migratory crossroads and iv) destination regions, where motivations and decisions regarding migration change throughout the course of the migratory journey;
3. Recognise that there is no fundamental difference between the structural causes of irregular migration and the structural causes of regular migration;
4. Take into account a migrant-centred approach which focuses on the individual or collective voice of actors and their reasoning and reflection in the construction of the project to migrate - or not to migrate - and the migratory journey itself, in particular i) their impression of the current migratory context ; ii) their entourage ; iii) their conditions (institutional, availability of information, environmental, socio-economic and cultural, etc.) ; iv) the conditions under which the migratory journey was undertaken (social networks, scattered siblings, migration policies etc.);
5. Re-establish the reality of sub-regional migratory movement by referring to factual data;

Optimise human capital by investing in working tools and training

Emigration may translate a wish to acquire a better social or economic status, or to obtain additional professional experience. In many countries of origin, diplomas no longer guarantee access to employment or appropriate salaries which are in line with the level of studies undertaken.

1. Improve recognition for short-term training as a means of accessing employment ; focus on ongoing training in order to go beyond "informal" training and strengthen initial training (in particular specialist training)
2. Identify the expectations of job-creating companies, in terms of knowledge and know-how
3. Recognise the status of entrepreneurs, including in the informal sector, and promote entrepreneurial initiatives, including new forms of entrepreneurship which allow people to develop "survival" activities by : i) improving the business climate; ii) improving access to information for each sector of activity; iii) consulting with lending institutions; iv) providing specific support for entrepreneurs in the informal sector in disadvantaged urban areas; v) taking into consideration the question of gender.

Fighting against social exclusion

Emigration is often a response, a form of action when faced with a feeling of frustration, exclusion or social injustice. In order to find one's place in the community, particularly through the exercise of a professional activity and the acquisition of financial capital, leaving seems to be the only way out.

1. Highlight and support knowledge and skills, particularly of craftsmen, traders and fishermen;
2. Develop a skills policy that favours an optimal qualification that pays attention to the qualitative aspects of education, promotes the mobility abroad of graduates to diversify professional experience and sets up a social dialogue in order to give the diploma a real status;
3. Promote intergenerational exchanges, between those who have migrated and those who have stayed behind in order to i) provide a more accurate view of what the migratory journey involves ii) collectively question the issues of family relationships ;
4. Improve governance in order to involve young people in the definition of public policies and in the design of development projects.

Reinvigorate the agricultural sector in order to limit the phenomenon of rural exodus

Sub-Saharan Africa is unique in the enduring importance of its rural population. In this region, a stronger agricultural sector and rural development are essential to fight against poverty, food insecurity and absence of employment opportunities – which are often at the origin of migratory movements towards urban areas. Local development planning and the need to take migration issues into account are important for all relevant actors in the territory concerned. Coordinated action - involving civil society, local authorities and devolved state services – should be undertaken.

1. Involve local authorities and leaders of social groups (religious, traditional and customary leaders) more closely in the decision-making process in rural areas, whilst also involving financial and technical partners and research institutes;
2. Promote decentralisation processes with the collaboration of state technical services
3. Invest in job creation, territorial development and sustainable food systems by: i) creating decent work opportunities by strengthening agricultural value chains (including through research) and agribusiness development; ii) increasing the resilience of agricultural livelihoods to threats and crises; iii) establishing a dialogue with the market sector and all relevant stakeholders including cooperatives, youth associations, rural-dwellers, etc.;
4. Stimulate rural development by: i) harnessing the potential of diaspora remittances and investments for agriculture and non-agricultural activities in rural areas of origin; ii) promoting returns (nationally and internationally) as a resource for agriculture and rural development and maximizing the potential of migrants resettled in rural areas; (iii) facilitating seasonal migration; (iv) combating land degradation; (v) promoting access to basic services;
5. Raise awareness and provide information on: i) living conditions and opportunities both in rural and urban areas; ii) success stories from rural areas, by using young farmers as "Ambassadors" as a vehicle for promotion.

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Create sustainable urban policies which promote migrant integration and include local actors in migration issues

The growing urbanisation of migration brings new challenges for cities due to the arrival of migrants in need of employment and other services. However, urban zones represent a source of opportunity for migrants in terms of livelihoods and the possibility to be involved in entrepreneurial projects. Local actors should be more involved in discussions on migration governance in order to develop sustainable policies which promote migrant integration.

1. Take into account migration issues and different categories of migrants in urban planning in large cities but also in intermediate cities and small towns;
2. Promote rural-urban links through city networking (e.g. inter-municipal level) and take into account urban and peri-urban areas to facilitate, in particular, the transition from rural to urban areas;
3. Carry out urban planning within the wider framework of territorial development, in partnership with national and local authorities, but also work with all stakeholders in the wider peri-urban area, including traditional authorities, who can play a role in land management. Go beyond the formal definition of the city;
4. Strengthen the articulation and coherence of decentralization and devolution policies and sectoral policies;
5. Promote the development of regional urban centres in a sustainable, inclusive and non-discriminatory manner (rights-based approach - access to basic services, etc.), involving in particular civil society organisations (migrants' associations, etc.) and promoting the scientific and cultural activities of migrants in cities;
6. Recognize the positive contribution of migrants, including in the formal and informal economic sectors, as accelerators of urbanization and sustainable urban development;
7. Help local authorities to increasingly take migrants needs into account and to pay particular attention to neighbourhoods in which migrants reside;
8. Ensure better management of population registers in order to better understand migrants' socio-economic profiles and their needs (the importance of access to factual data and information, in accordance with current legislation) ;
9. Continue to strengthen civil status registries and to make them more accurate in order to improve mobility management and in particular the daily commuting movements;
10. Provide support (access to advice services, for example) to migrants in their first steps in settling in, and develop relationships of confidence using a participatory approach.

Contribute to a balanced narrative on root causes and migration

It is important to ensure balanced communication by redefining the debate on the root causes of irregular migration and promoting an evidence-based approach. This approach will help to better understand the motivations, dynamics and causes at the origin of migratory movements, in order to take decisions and develop appropriate and relevant migration policies.

1. Develop coherent messages and ensure coordination regarding migratory initiatives and policies so as to make messages more credible
2. Use neutral and professional terminology;
3. Seek to balance the power of images over public opinion with factual data and analysis;
4. Match information with contextualization and evidence-based explanations to better combat misinformation;
5. Establish a constructive dialogue between the authorities and the media on the subject of migration;
6. Identify different target audiences and tailor messages to them accordingly;
7. Establish dialogue with different type of "influencers" (people capable of conveying messages clearly)
8. Consider education (role of teachers, etc.) as a key element of the communication strategy on migration;
9. Strive to understand the role of social media networks and modern communication tools in influencing / shaping opinions (especially amongst young people).