



*Migration and Development: Building Migration into Development Strategies*  
Migration DRC Conference, Royal Society, London, 28–29 April 2008

## Session One: Migration in Development Strategies

### Overview

*The last five years has seen a huge growth of interest in the links between migration and development, with institutional interest from the United Nations, the World Bank and donor governments, a number of major new research projects, and a growing number of practical measures on the part of development actors to engage with migrants and capitalise on the resources they have been able to accumulate in host countries and regions. These initiatives have increasingly recognised that migration carries huge potential benefits, as well as significant risks and costs. However, whilst such attention is to be welcomed, our research shows that migration often remains absent from wider policy debates about poverty reduction. This briefing highlights this issue by focusing on the discussion of migration in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.*

### Migration as a problem to be addressed

A major element of national development strategies is the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)* – prepared by governments in low-income countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders and external development partners. Since 2000, 46 countries worldwide have prepared a PRSP or an Interim-PRSP; the Migration DRC has reviewed 24 full PRSPs completed since 2005. In spite of the fact that migration flows of all kinds are increasing around the world, most PRSPs continue to pay little attention to migration in their poverty profiles; where they do, migration is often viewed negatively – especially internal migration, which different countries see contributing to pressure on urban infrastructure and services, unemployment, increased crime, lower school attendance, the growth of slums and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

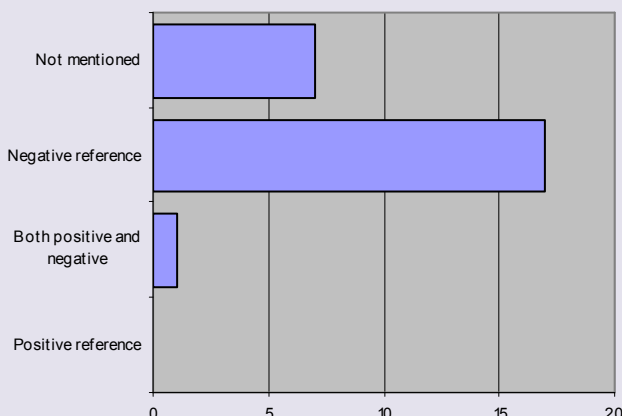
Where migration policies are mentioned or promoted in PRSPs, these often focus on measures to improve border

control, promote public information on the risks of migration, or address the ‘push’ factors that are seen as forcing people to move out of rural areas. Yet such measures can make matters worse – for example, tightening migration regimes in the developed world is likely to increase risky and undocumented migration.

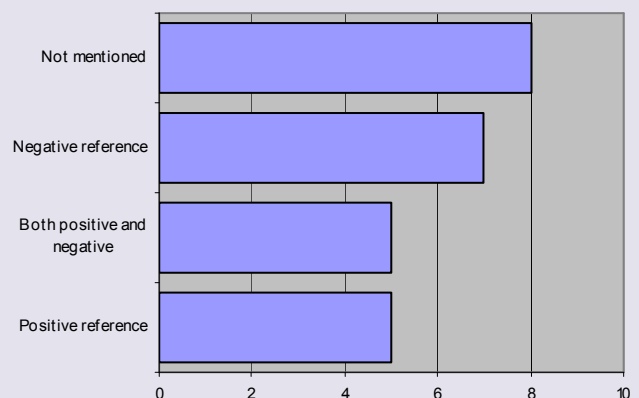
### Internal migration and poverty

The negative approach to internal migration in recent PRSPs is particularly worrying, given that poor people are much more likely to migrate internally than internationally. Internal migration is likely to be less financially rewarding than international migration for individual migrants and their families, as wages are typically lower, and it can pose challenges in terms of government planning and service provision. However, individual benefits from such migration can be substantial, contributing to diversification of livelihoods and growth of the wider economy. More attention could be paid to ways in which public policy sometimes

References to internal migration in PRSPs since 2005



References to international migration in PRSPs since 2005



makes internal migrants unnecessarily vulnerable, by denying them access to rights and failing to protect them from unscrupulous employers.

### Migration as an opportunity

Some countries' PRSPs are starting to see migration as presenting opportunities, with five West African countries (Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde) as well as five countries in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan), South Asia (Bangladesh), and Central America (Nicaragua, Dominican Republic) highlighting the importance of international remittances in providing foreign exchange, improved balance of payments and/or increased household incomes for poor people. This is reflected in a growing number of policy initiatives or proposals that seek to respond innovatively to the opportunities promoted by migration. Some individual countries' PRSPs highlight further innovative solutions; Kenya, for example, proposes changes in the laws of land succession to allow women left behind by husbands who migrate to inherit land in rural areas. However, initiatives such as this, which target some of the consequences of internal migration, remain rare.

| Policy measure                           | Countries proposing/implementing   |
|--|--|
| Diaspora engagement                      | Mauritania, Burundi, DR Congo, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Dominican Republic, Cape Verde         |
| Promote remittances and investment       | Tanzania, Mauritania, Bangladesh, Ghana  |
| Steer emigration to higher value markets | Bangladesh, Kyrgyz Republic, Burkina Faso  |
| Facilitate worker mobility               | Mauritania, Uzbekistan, Nicaragua  |
| Provide information on jobs abroad       | Zambia, Bangladesh   |
| Other measures                           | Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Kenya, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Zambia, Uzbekistan, Tanzania |

### Innovative measures: Bangladesh and Uzbekistan

Two countries stand out in proposing a range of innovative measures in recent PRSPs to tap into the opportunities provided by migration. In addition to the measures listed in the above table, Bangladesh is proposing welfare schemes for women migrant workers, support via NGOs to allow

poorer workers to access safe, legal migration streams, and support to returnee associations. It is piloting these measures in association with the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which will meet in November 2008 in the Philippines. It is also the only PRSP written since 2005 which cites evidence that internal migration contributes to poverty alleviation. Meanwhile Uzbekistan is supporting micro-credit institutions and credit unions to develop remittance markets, whilst promoting bilateral agreements with destination countries to support migrant workers' rights. These, and initiatives in other countries such as the Philippines and Sri Lanka, provide a basis for the development of 'good practice'.

### UK policy

UK government policy on migration and development stresses that migration can support progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reduce poverty, and influence social and political development, with internal labour mobility being seen as essential to economic growth. But it acknowledges that international migration must be managed, internal mobility must be planned for, and the rights of all migrants need to be addressed. With support from the Migration DRC, it is preparing to publish a 'How To' note titled, *Helping governments recognise the contribution migration can make to policy-making*.

### Key findings

- Migration flows of all kinds are increasing worldwide.
- There are aspects of migration that are adversely affected by policy and implementation decisions.
- Governments' attention focuses disproportionately on the negative aspects of migration.
- Migration already makes significant contributions to poverty reduction in developing countries.
- Careful management by states can maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of migration for poverty reduction.

### For more information

To find out more about Migration DRC's research please email us at [migration@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:migration@sussex.ac.uk). Access to Migration DRC's working papers is available at [www.migrationdrc.org](http://www.migrationdrc.org).

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