Labour Migration and Development Indicators in the Post-2015 Global Development Framework

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Abstract

The eight Millennium Development Goals (www.un.org/millenniumgoals) to be achieved by 2015 do not mention migration. However, international labour migration can speed the achievement of many of the MDGs, including eliminating extreme poverty and hunger, increasing education and improving child and maternal health, and promoting global partnerships for development.

This monograph reviews the role of international labour migration in promoting economic development. After discussing the current global development agenda, the introduction outlines the major ways in which migration could foster economic development in a post-2015 development framework, and explores how faster development may affect migration patterns. The next section provides an analysis of the 3 Rs that link international labour migration and development, viz., recruitment, remittances, and returns, followed by a review of global migration trends. The next section suggests several indicators to measure how migration is affecting development, while the concluding section makes the case for including migration prominently on the post-2015 development agenda.

There are three major conclusions. First, many of the MDG targets will not be met by 2015, raising questions about the appropriate framework to guide global development efforts after 2015. The eight MDGs acknowledge the role of poverty in contributing to hunger, child mortality, and the lack of education and poor health that retard human development, and the MDG process outlined a global partnership to achieve the MDGs and speed human development. However, the MDGs focus on ends rather than means, and are not sensitive to the very different starting points of various countries on the path to inclusive development. Migration is one of the means that can help countries to achieve MDG ends or goals, as when remittances sent by and spent by women reduce poverty and hunger, increase years of education, and improve health.

Second, the number of international migrants, defined as persons outside their country of birth a year or more, more than doubled between 1980 and 2010, from 103 million to 214 million. Half of the world’s migrants are in the labour force of the country to which they moved. Persisting demographic and economic inequalities between countries, at a time when globalization makes it easier to learn about opportunities abroad and cheaper to travel and take advantage of them, promise more international labour migration. Faster development will enable some of those now too poor to migrate to move to better opportunities, so that international migration and the potential for faster development may increase together.

How will countries that migrants seek to enter respond to an increased desire for entry? Most migrant-receiving countries have welcome-the-skilled, rotate-the-low-skilled, and reduce-irregular migration policies, although few make these policies explicit. The challenge is to develop politically acceptable ways to open doors wider to low-skilled legal migrants, who are over 80 percent of the world’s workers, in order to accelerate development in migrant-sending countries while protecting migrant workers. Guest worker programmes that include incentives
to align employer and migrant behavior with programme goals, such as charging employers more if they renew work permits and refunding the payroll taxes of migrants who depart as scheduled, can help to increase the acceptance of and protections for migrants while enhancing migration’s development impacts.

Third, integrating migration into the post-2015 development agenda will require acknowledgement of the mutual benefits of international labour migration, a rethinking of some migrant worker norms, and complementary policies to ensure that the 3 R’s of recruitment, remittances, and returns contribute to development in migrant-sending areas. Just as economists believe that free trade is mutually beneficial for most residents of trading nations, but public opinion often remains skeptical of freer trade, so economists believe that more migration of workers from poorer to richer countries can generate win-win outcomes despite restrictionist public opinion. The migration of people is more complicated than trade in goods for many reasons, including the fact that migrant workers have rights and ideas about how to organize the societies in which they live and can reproduce.

Developing a framework that protects migrant workers but does not lead to unwanted social costs and settlement would give most migrants the economic opportunities they seek and reduce opposition to labour migration in receiving countries. Linking rising flows of international migrants with cheaper remittance flows, and ensuring that returning workers can take advantage of opportunities to invest the money earned abroad at home can set in motion faster development. Migration opens a door to faster development, and a post-2015 framework that includes increased flows of workers can help more workers in more countries to achieve faster human development.

The most readily available migration indicators are the 3 Rs of recruitment, remittances, and returns. Recruitment indicators include how many and the characteristics of workers who cross national borders, the recruitment and other costs that they pay to work abroad, and mechanisms to facilitate labour migration and protect migrants, including the number and provisions of bilateral, regional, and other labour agreements. Remittances are the easiest indicator to measure, since money flow data is reported by central banks to the IMF, which reports workers remittances and compensation of employees inflows, while the World Bank estimates the cost of remitting funds in many remittance corridors. Returns involves the people and ideas that return to the country of origin and their impacts on development, encompassing issues that range from recognizing the skills acquired abroad to engaging with the diaspora to forge new and expand trade and investment links.
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Introduction: MDGs and Migration

In 2000, world leaders at the UN’s so-called Millennium Summit agreed on eight MDGs that have 21 targets measured by 60 indicators (www.un.org/millenniumgoals). World leaders reaffirmed their desire to achieve the MDGs at in 2005, and made commitments to support development institutions such as the World Bank and to reduce the debt owed by Heavily Indebted Poor Countries so that they could devote more resources to achieving the MDGs. A World Bank (2010) review of progress to achieving the MDGs noted very uneven progress, and laid out a plan of action to achieve them by 2015.

The MDGs had their origins in the UN’s Millennium Declaration, which asserts that all individuals have a right to dignity, freedom, equality, and a basic standard of living in places that encourage tolerance and solidarity. The MDGs were developed throughout the 1990s in meetings of donors, development institutions, and recipients of Official Development Aid as well as NGOs. Their three pillars, viz., raising basic standards of living, increasing social, economic and political rights, and improving infrastructure, were eventually narrowed to goals involving improved nutrition, health care, and education to enable individuals to increase their human capabilities. The MDGs are considered the most broadly supported poverty reduction goals ever set by world leaders.

The MDGs are ends rather than means, which helps to explain why there is no target level or indicator of international migration. However, decades of experience show that migration can reduce poverty and that the very poorest people do not migrate as much as people with some resources (Skeldon, 1997; Taylor and Martin, 2001). As the poorest people gain some resources and hope, more may move. Having some poor residents leave very poor areas for internal and international destinations, helps to provide remittances to those who remain behind and may result in the return and investment of money earned outside the area that sets development in motion. Migrants who are successful in destination areas may have their families join them there or return and invest.

Both internal and international migration can reduce poverty. There are four times more internal than international migrants (UNDP, 2009), and almost 55 per cent of the world’s people are expected to be living in cities in 2015. Internal migration is largely influenced by national government policies,¹ many of which discourage urbanization, meaning that they attempt to slow rural-urban migration. Rural poverty can become urban poverty, but opportunities for upward mobility are generally better in cities, making it imperative that governments plan for urbanization.

International migration is shaped largely by the policies of receiving countries that attract migrants (Martin et al. 2006). International migrants can shape development in their areas of

¹ A 2005 UN survey found that 75 percent of governments in developing countries wanted policies to discourage urbanization, meaning that they attempt to slow rural-urban migration. Half of developing country governments expressed a desire to reverse rural-urban migration.
origin via the 3 R’s of recruitment, or who migrates, remittances, the funds they send home, and returns, both physical as when migrants abroad go home and inject new ideas and energy into their home countries or when they settle abroad and forge new trade and other links with their countries of origin, so-called diaspora-led development (Martin, 2010). Each of these channels is examined in greater detail below, but remittances are the focus of most attention because they can be measured and the sums are large.

The MDGs do not mention international migration, but the 3 R’s can operate in ways that help countries to achieve them. For example, migration from rural Mexico to the US accelerated rural-urban migration within Mexico, as some of the migrants who returned moved from rural areas to towns and cities, and international migration in conjunction with the freer trade and investment policy symbolized by NAFTA have moved more Mexicans closer to the US, Mexico’s major trading partner (Martin, 1993). Similarly, migration from the Philippines to countries around the world has accelerated rural-urban migration and increased expenditures on children’s health and education, since most Filipino migrants are women who leave their children at home (Abella et al. 2004). Migration in Africa also has accelerating-change effects, including widespread use of mobile phones to transfer remittances from internal and international migrants to often rural areas of origin. The spread of mobile phones both facilitates remittance transfers and offers information sharing and education opportunities that can help farmers to obtain better prices and both children and adults to learn.

International migration affects residents who move and those who do not move. The 3 Rs can operate to help residents who cross national borders, and those who do not, to achieve the poverty-reduction MDGs.

**Labour Migration and Development**

There are millions of workers in developing countries who would like to move to industrial countries to earn in one hour what they earn in a day or a week at home. Should industrial countries open their doors wider to such low-wage workers?

The World Bank and many economists focused on promoting economic development say yes, pointing to remittances to argue that migration can reduce poverty and speed development in migrant countries of origin (Pritchett, 2005; World Bank, 2003). These organizations and authors believe that more migration from lower to higher income countries is inevitable, and they call for speeding up the onset of the third wave of globalization, migration, to join with the freer movement of goods (trade) and money (finance) and act like a rising tide that lifts all boats. Trade and finance are regulated by international organizations, but migration is the purview of national governments that determine who can enter and what foreigners can do inside their borders. Some groups of nations, notably the European Union, have added free-movement of labour to free flows of goods and capital within the now 27-nation group, but EU member states continue to determine how many and which non-EU foreigners can enter and stay.
There are many efforts to increase international migration and to improve the governance of the migration that occurs. Pritchett (2005) argues that more migration would increase global economic output in the same way that freer trade creates more wealth, viz., by allowing countries to specialize. Pritchett begins with five forces that promise more international migration, including persisting economic and demographic inequalities, uneven globalization, and the existence of hard-to-trade services. With globalization reducing barriers to the movement of goods and services, and communications and transportation revolutions lowering the cost of information and travel, Pritchett sees liberalizing labour migration as the last frontier in globalization.

There are calls for a World Migration Organization to set rules to pry open more doors in rich countries for migrants from poorer countries (Ghosh, 2000). Meanwhile, governments have since 2006 met each year at the Global Forum on Migration and Development to discuss ways to improve protections for migrants and to ensure that migration contributes to development in migrant-sending nations (Martin and Abella, 2009).

It is widely agreed that an ideal world would have few barriers to international migration, and very little unwanted migration. Indeed, it is precisely the fact that there will be very little unwanted migration that allows countries to remove barriers to migration. This is why managing international migration in ways that protect migrants and contribute to development in both countries of origin and destination is an increasingly important global challenge. If employers recruit workers in another country who would otherwise be unemployed, if these guest workers send home remittances, and if returning migrants use skills learned abroad to raise productivity at home, migration can speed up development. However, there is no automatic link between migration and development, meaning that policy can make a difference to ensure that the window of opportunity opened by international migration results in faster development.

International migration moves people or human capital from one country to another. The 3 R’s summarize the impacts that migrants can have on the development of their countries of origin and raise many migration and development questions:

- Recruitment deals with who migrates. Are migrants persons who would have been unemployed or underemployed at home, or key employees of business and government whose departure leads to layoffs and reduced services?

- Remittances to developing countries exceeded USD 1 billion a day in 2012. Can the volume of remittances be increased if more migrants cross borders? How can the cost of transferring small sums between countries be reduced further? Once remittances arrive, are they spent to improve the education and health of children in migrant families or do they fuel competition for fixed assets, as when land or dowry prices rise?

- Returns refer to migrants who come back to their countries of origin. Do returning migrants bring back new technologies and ideas and stay, do they circulate between home and abroad, or do they return to rest and retire?
The impact of the 3 Rs on the differences between areas that prompt migration vary across migrant-sending countries, which is one reason why the link between migration and development is often described as uncertain or unsettled (Skeldon, 2008 and 1997; Papademetriou and Martin, 1991). Economically motivated migration can set in motion virtuous circles, as when young workers who would have been unemployed at home find jobs abroad, send home remittances that reduce poverty and are invested to accelerate economic and job growth, and return with new skills and technologies that lead to new industries and jobs. The result is a convergence in economic conditions and opportunities between sending and receiving areas as predicted by the factor-price equalization theorem.²

The alternative vicious circle between more migration and slower development, and thus even more migration, can unfold if employed nurses, teachers or engineers are recruited for overseas jobs, so that the quality and accessibility in health and schooling declines in migrant-sending areas or factories lay off workers for lack of key managers. In the vicious circle, migrants abroad do not send home significant remittances, or send home remittances that fuel inflation rather than create new jobs. Migrants abroad do not return, or return only to rest and retire, so that there is only a limited transfer of new ideas, energies, and entrepreneurial abilities. If the vicious circle unfolds, more migration can slow development and increase the pressure for out-migration.

Recruitment

Migration is not random: young people are most likely to move over borders because they have the least “invested” in jobs and careers at home and the longest period to recoup their “investment in migration” abroad. However, even among young people, exactly who migrates is heavily shaped by the recruitment efforts of employers and recruiters in destination areas, recruiting agents and governments in sending areas, and networks that link them. For example, if employers want IT professionals and nurses, networks are likely to evolve to train computer specialists and nurses and help them to move abroad. Alternatively, if foreign employers recruit domestic helpers and farm workers, networks will evolve to move low-skilled migrants over borders.

The recruitment of migrants has been concentrated at the top and bottom of the education ladder, that is, those with college educations and low-skilled migrants. The overseas recruitment of well-educated professional workers is generally done openly, as employers advertise and brokers or agents recruit nurses, IT specialists, and teachers to fill foreign jobs.

² The factor-price equalization theorem assumes that there are two countries, C1 and C2, with two goods, G1 and G2, produced by two inputs, capital and labor (Mundell, 1957). If G1 is capital intensive and G2 is labor intensive, and the price of capital relative to labor, R/W, is lower in C1 than in C2, C1 is the capital-intensive country and C-2 is the labor-intensive country. Countries export primarily commodities that require intensive use of the relatively cheaper factor, so that C1 should export mostly G1 to C2, while C2 exports G2 to C1, narrowing the costs of capital and labor in the two trading countries. With wage differences narrowing, there is less economic incentive to migrate from the lower to the higher-wage country, that is, trade is a substitute for migration.
The result can be a virtuous, if out-migration in one period creates more jobs in the next, or vicious, if out-migration now increases migration in the next period.

The Indian IT story is an example of a virtuous circle. India had only 7,000 IT specialists in the mid-1980s, according to the Indian software association NASSCOM, but multinationals recognized their skills and recruited Indian IT specialists for operations outside India. Brokers soon emerged to recruit and deploy Indian IT workers to fill foreign jobs. Some Indians returned with contracts to provide computer services to the firms that had employed them abroad, and the Indian government, at the behest of the then-nascent IT-outsourcing industry, reduced barriers to imports of computers, upgraded the communications infrastructure, and allowed the state-supported Indian Institutes of Technologies to set quality benchmarks for IT education.

Employing Indians in India to do computer work for clients abroad had important spillover effects in India. The growing outsourcing industry supported efforts to improve India’s electricity and telecommunications infrastructure, promoted merit-based selection systems in higher education and employment, and improved the quality of IT services in India as Indians were offered some of the same world-class services offered to clients abroad. The virtuous circle was completed with a sharp jump in enrollment in science and engineering schools, making India a leading provider of IT specialists and services (Heeks, 1996).

By contrast, the recruitment African doctors and nurses by hospitals in former colonial powers is often alleged to have set in motion a vicious circle of poorer health care. Many African countries retained colonial-era education systems, so that doctors and nurses today are trained to colonial-power standards. Financially strained health care systems in Africa often find it hard to lure doctors and nurses to poorer rural areas, so they often require medical graduates who received government support for their education to serve a year or two in underserved rural areas before receiving medical licenses. The result is often a bad experience that prompts many newly licensed health care professionals to emigrate.

Health care is a peculiar sector, with government strongly influencing the demand for health care professionals via the building of hospitals and charges for patients and drugs and influencing the supply of health-care workers by subsiding the training of medical professionals and by setting their salaries. Some African countries, including Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, have half or more of the doctors and nurses who trained in these countries abroad (Clemons and Pettersson, 2008). However, governmental efforts to limit the emigration of health care professionals may not be the proper response to an inadequate wage in underserved rural areas. Barriers to out-migration interfere with personal rights and may be evaded, and may be the wrong target, since the number of trained nurses not employed in nursing exceeds estimates of nursing shortages in many African countries.

The World Health Organization, which estimated a shortage of 4.3 million health care workers in 40 sub-Saharan African countries in 2008, developed a best-practice code to regulate the recruitment of African health care professionals. The WHO Code calls for MOUs between the
governments of countries sending and receiving health care workers and encourages governments in countries that receive African health-care workers to subsidize training in African sending countries (Connell, 2010).

Jamaica is a commonwealth country that has one of the world’s highest rates of outmigration of professionals. Three-fourths of Jamaican university graduates have emigrated, and “migration fever” is reportedly very common among university students who assume that they will have higher wages and better working conditions abroad.³ Jamaican Minister of Foreign Trade Anthony Hylton called for “bilateral and multilateral arrangements with countries like England and the United States, so that they pay at least a part of the training cost to the government for recruiting people that we have trained and will not necessarily benefit from their service.”⁴

In contrast to countries that want compensation from receiving countries for their professionals who emigrate, the Filipino government works to open new markets for its health care workers abroad. There are several key differences between the Philippines and other countries, including the fact that nursing education in the Philippines is often financed privately, so that individuals rather than governments are investing in education for foreign labour markets. Some 6,500 to 7,000 nurses graduate from Filipino nursing schools each year, and many plan to go abroad for better pay, more professional opportunities, and because of ties to relatives abroad.⁵ Pay for Filipino nurses abroad was reported to be USD3,000 to USD4,000 a month in 2003, versus USD170 a month in urban areas and USD75 to USD95 a month in rural areas of the Philippines.⁶ Private recruiters compete with each other to match Filipino nurses with foreign jobs on wages and working conditions abroad as well as prospects for becoming an immigrant who can settle abroad.⁷

The government professes little concern about Filipino nurse emigration. Then-Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas in 2002 said that nurses are "the new growth area for overseas employment," and that Filipinas have a comparative advantage because of their care giving skills and English. She said: "we won't lose nurses. The older ones, those in their mid-40s, are not likely to leave. Besides, the student population reacts to markets quickly. Enrollment is high. We won't lack nurses."⁸

³ Jamaica has replaced some of its emigrant health-care workers with Cubans.
⁵ The Philippines Nurses Association Inc. (PNA) estimated in 2002 that 150,885 Filipino nurses were abroad, and noted that experienced nurses with specialty training were most in demand overseas.
⁶ Since it is easiest to go abroad as a nurse, some Filipino doctors, who earn USD 300 to USD 800 a month, are reportedly retraining as nurses so they can emigrate.
⁷ For example, one agency promises Filipino nurses that their US hospital employers will sponsor them for immigrant visas (www.nursestousa.com/).
Instead of health care professionals emigrating, some developing countries are attracting foreign patients to private hospitals that provide high-quality care at lower-than-home-country prices. Health tourism, a form of Mode 2 provision of services in the GATS, brings patients to health-care workers rather than moving health-care workers over borders to patients (Connell, 2006). India in January 2004 created a task force to “assess the opportunities for promoting India as a health destination and recommend specific types of health facilities which can be made available for this purpose,”9 while the Malaysian government calls “health tourism” a growth industry and supports its expansion.10

Remittances

Remittances to developing countries, the portion of migrant incomes that are sent home, were USD391 billion in 2011, over USD1 billion a day, and USD406 billion in 2012. Remittances are projected to continue increasing by USD40 billion a year to reach USD534 billion by 2014.

Remittances to developing countries have risen with number of migrants, and surpassed official development in the mid-1990s. Unlike foreign direct investment and private capital flows, remittances were stable during the 2008-09 recession, while FDI and private capital flows to developing countries fell sharply (Sirkeci, Cohen, and Ratha, 2012).

Remittances have two major components: workers remittances, the wages and salaries that are sent home by migrants abroad 12 months or more, and compensation of employees (called labour income until 1995), the wages and benefits of migrants abroad less than 12 months.11 Many countries do not know how long the migrants who remit funds have been abroad, so most analyses combine workers remittances and compensation of employees when studying remittances and their effects. For example, Mexico reports most money inflows under worker remittances, while the Philippines reports most under compensation of employees. The volume of remittances depends on the number of migrants, their earnings abroad, and their willingness to remit.

A handful of developing countries receive most remittances (World Bank, 2012). India received USD70 billion, China USD66 billion, the Philippines and Mexico, USD24 billion each, and Nigeria, USD21 billion. Egypt ranked sixth, receiving USD16 billion, followed by Bangladesh and Pakistan, USD14 each. Remittances are the largest share of the economy in a diverse group of countries, including ex-USSR countries whose Soviet industries collapsed, such as

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10 About 60 per cent of foreigners who seek treatment in Malaysia are from Indonesia. In October 2003, the Health Ministry set fees for three packages priced between RM450 and RM1,150, and recommended floor and ceiling prices for 18 procedures. “Robust growth in revenue for health tourism sector,” Business Times (Malaysia), February 4, 2004.
11 A third item not generally included in discussions of remittances are migrants' transfers, which is the net worth of migrants who move from one country to another. For example, if a person with stock migrates from one country to another, the value of the stock owned moves from one country to another in international accounts.
Tajikistan and Moldova; island countries such as Tonga and Samoa; and Central American countries with large diasporas in the United States, including Honduras and El Salvador.

Studies demonstrate convincingly that the best way to maximize the volume of remittances is to have an appropriate exchange rate and economic policies that promise growth (Ratha, 2004). Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, many governments have tried to shift remittances from informal to formal channels, that is, via regulated financial institutions such as banks. Migrants have demonstrated a willingness to transfer money via formal channels, especially if it is easy and cheap to do, but this usually requires banking outlets in migrant communities at home and abroad and competition to lower transfer costs.

The cost of sending small sums over borders can be 10 per cent of the amount transferred, or USD20 to send USD200. The G8 and G20 countries have pledged to cooperate to reduce remittance costs, and their 5x5 programme aims to reduce remittance costs by five percentage points within five years. However, remittance costs are still considered too high, averaging 7.5 per cent in 2012 in the 20 largest bilateral remittance corridors (World Bank, 2012).

The US-Mexico remittance market is unregulated, in the sense that Mexicans in the United States decide on their own how and how much to remit. Several Asian countries, by contrast, have tried to specify both the amount of remittances migrants must send and the form in which they are remitted. For example, many Korean migrants in the Middle East in the late 1970s were considered employees of their Korean construction company for which they worked in Korea and abroad. Most of their wages were paid in Korean currency to their families in Korea, while they received only a small stipend in local currency. Korea no longer sends workers abroad, but some of the Chinese and Vietnamese who work abroad remain employees of Chinese and Vietnamese firms. Their wages are paid in the same way that Koreans were paid, viz., most go to the migrant’s family or bank account in the home currency. The Philippines attempted to specify how much should be remitted in the 1980s, but abandoned this forced-remittance policy after protests from migrants.

Forced-remittance programmes are unpopular with migrants. Migrants from Jamaica, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Dominica have been sent to US farm employers since 1943 under the auspices of the British West Indies Central Labor Organization, which charged migrants five per cent of what they earned for liaison and other services. BWI CLO required US employers of Jamaican migrants to deposit 20 per cent of each worker’s earnings in a Jamaican savings bank. Returned migrants complained that they had difficulty accessing these savings in Jamaica, and received them with no interest, prompting the bank to begin paying interest.

Similarly, between 1942 and 1946, Mexican Braceros had 10 per cent of their earnings sent from US employers directly to the Bank of Mexico. Many of the war-time Braceros say they never had these forced savings returned to them in Mexico, and the Mexican government says it has no records of what happened to the money. Suits filed in the US against Wells Fargo Bank, the US bank that transmitted the funds to Mexico, and the Mexican government in 2005
created a fund to pay former Braceros and relatives of late Braceros living in Mexico up to USD 3,500 each.\footnote{The Mexican government, without admitting it lost the 10 percent of Bracero wages withheld by employers and sent via banks to Mexico, agreed in 2005 to pay $3,500 in compensation to Braceros living in Mexico. However, only 49,000 of the 212,000 Mexican applicants could provide the required documentation to receive payments. Rural Migration News. 2009. H-2A Re-Engineering, Braceros. January. Volume 15 Number 1. \url{http://migration.ucdavis.edu/rmn/more.php?id=1408_0_4_0}}

Remittances can reduce poverty and improve the lives of recipients. Most remittances are used for consumption, helping to explain their stability\footnote{Automatic stabilizers in developed countries, such as unemployment insurance, help to stabilize the flow of remittances to developing countries that have the same economic cycles as the countries in which their migrants work.} even as exchange rates and investment outlooks change. Presidents of many countries, including Mexico and the Philippines, acknowledge the important contributions that remittances make to financial stability and development. Mexico has a much touted 3x1 programme, matching each dollar donated by migrants abroad for government-approved infrastructure projects in migrant areas of origin with another dollar from the federal, state, and local governments (Orozco and Rouse, 2007).

The spending of remittances can generate jobs. Most studies suggest that each USD1 in remittances generates a USD2 to USD3 increase in GDP, as recipients buy goods or invest in housing, education, or health care, improving the lives of non-migrants via the multiplier effects of remittance spending (Taylor and Martin, 2001). The exit of men and women in the prime of their working lives initially reduces output in migrant-sending agricultural areas, but the arrival of remittances can lead to adjustments that maintain or even increase farm output. For example, families who lose workers to migration can shift from growing crops to raising less labour-intensive livestock and rent their crop land to other farmers.

In addition to remittances, migrants abroad can steer FDI to their countries of origin and persuade their foreign employers to buy products from their countries of origin. Having migrants abroad increases travel and tourism between countries, as well as trade in ethnic foods and other home-country items. Migrants abroad may undertake many other activities, including organizing themselves to provide funds for political parties and candidates. Many of these activities are informally organized, making it difficult to ascertain their volume and impacts.

Returns

The third R in the migration and development equation is returns. There is no automatic relationship that ensures more migration will generate faster development. In the virtuous circle linking migration and development, returning migrants provide the energy, ideas, and entrepreneurial vigor to start or expand businesses at home or go to work and, with the skills and discipline acquired abroad, raise productivity at home. Migrants are generally drawn from
the ranks of the risk takers at home, and if their new capital is combined with risk-taking behavior upon their return, the result can be a new push for economic development.

On the other hand, if migrants settle abroad and cut ties to their countries or origin, remittances may decline and migrant human capital may be “lost” to the country of origin. If migrants return only to rest and retire, they may have limited development impacts. Finally, migrants could circulate between sending and receiving areas, and their back-and-forth circulation can contribute to economic growth in both countries.

Most cases of migration contributing to development involve countries that experienced rapid development, making it hard to isolate the contribution of returned migrants. Taiwan provides an example. The government invested most of its educational resources in primary and secondary education in the 1970s, so Taiwanese seeking higher education often went abroad for advanced study, and over 90 per cent of those who earned PhDs remained overseas despite rapid economic growth in Taiwan. During the 1980s, before the end of martial law, some Taiwanese abroad began to return, while others maintained “homes” in North America and spent so much time commuting that they were called “astronauts.”

The Hinschu Science-based Industrial Park was created in 1980 to Silicon Valley. Financial incentives were available to high-tech businesses that located in Hinschu, including subsidized Western-style housing (Luo and Wang, 2002), and Hinschu was soon a major success, employing over 100,000 workers in 300 companies with sales of USD28 billion by 2000. About 40 per cent of Hinschu’s companies were headed by returned overseas migrants in 2000, and 10 per cent of the 4,100 returned migrants employed in the park had PhD degrees.

This experience suggests that investing heavily in the type of education appropriate to the stage of economic development, and tapping the “brain reserve overseas” when the country’s economy demands more brainpower, can be a successful development strategy. Then-Chinese leader Premier Zhao Ziyang called Chinese abroad "stored brainpower overseas," and encouraged Chinese cities to offer financial subsidies to attract them home, prompting the creation of "Returning Student Entrepreneur Buildings." More Chinese professionals are returning to take advantage of opportunities in China.

The poorest countries pose the largest challenge to encouraging returns. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) operates a return-of-talent programme for professional Africans abroad who sign two-year contracts to work in the public sector of their country of origin, and the United Nations Development Program has a similar Transfer of Knowledge

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14 These students were highly motivated to pursue advanced studies. Before they could do abroad, they had to complete two years of military service and obtain private or overseas financing.

15 Shanghai reportedly has 30,000 returned professionals, 90 percent with MS or PhD degrees earned abroad, who are employed or starting businesses (Jonathan Kaufman, “China Reforms Bring Back Executives Schooled in US,” Wall Street Journal, March 6, 2003; Rone Tempest, “China Tries to Woo Its Tech Talent Back Home,” Los Angeles Times, November 25, 2002).
Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme that subsidizes the return of teachers and researchers. Many of the professionals involved in such return-of-talent programmes have an immigrant or long-term secure status abroad and remain in their country of origin only a year or two. Sussex University’s Richard Black called subsidized return-of-talent programmes “expensive failures,” since they do not result in the “investment that [return] should bring,” although this conclusion has been softened to “there is much uncertainty about the impacts of migration and return on development (Ammassari and Black, 2001, p40).

Even if migrants do not return, they could contribute to development in their countries of origin in other ways. Many analysts point to the potential of “circular migration” to speed development, or diaspora-led development that involves especially skilled migrants promoting trade links with and investments in their countries of origin. Migrant-sending governments can maintain links to their citizens abroad by permitting or allowing dual nationality or dual citizenship. Bhagwati (2003) imagines “a Diaspora model [of development], which integrates past and present citizens into a web of rights and obligations in the extended community defined with the home country as the center.” Bhagwati is well-known for urging migrant-receiving countries to share some of the taxes levied on the incomes of migrants with migrant countries of origin.

Migrants abroad can also send home “political” remittances, such as ideas that help to speed up development by breaking down gender and other stereotypes that limit the education of girls or restrict women in the workplace (Levitt, 1998). Migration exposes people to new opportunities as well as new ideas. Levitt and other researchers focus on how migrants moving from poorer to richer countries transmit ideas that increase the emphasis in their countries on the importance of hard work, education, and savings and investment.

There are also limitations of diaspora-led development. There are many proposals but few concrete examples of migrants and diasporas formally advising or intervening in the governments of their countries of origin to speed development. For example, some of the Mexicans who migrated to the US were later elected to office in Mexico, but their plans to speed up development were not always well received. Similarly, diasporas may support and fund one side in civil wars and conflicts, as in Sri Lanka, prolonging them (Orjuela, 2008). Government fears that the diaspora could favor one side in an internal dispute or conflict is one reason why some governments are reluctant to engage their diasporas.

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17 Andres Bermudez, California’s so-called Tomato King, was elected mayor of his 60,000 resident hometown, Jerez, in the state of Zacatecas. He first won election in 2001, but that victory was set aside because he had not lived in the town for 12 months. The residency requirement was reduced to six months and he was hailed as a bi-national symbol when he was elected mayor in 2004. He served as mayor for two years before making a failed bid for Mexico’s federal congress. Sam Quinones, “Andres Bermudez dies at 58; 'Tomato King' and Mexican officeholder,” Los Angeles Times, February 8, 2009.
Global Migration Patterns

The number of international migrants, persons outside their country of birth a year or more, doubled between 1980 and 2010, from 103 million to 214 million. However, the share of the world’s people who were international migrants has remained at about three per cent over the past half century despite factors that might have been expected to increase migration, including persisting demographic and economic inequalities between countries at a time when globalization is making it easier to learn about opportunities abroad and cheaper to travel and take advantage of them.

Migration systems in Europe, North America, and Asia are being shaped and reshaped by globalization and competition. If a house is a metaphor for a country, migrants can enter via the front door as settlers, via side doors as temporary visitors and workers, and via the back door as unauthorized or irregular residents. Most countries have welcome-the-skilled, rotate-the-low-skilled, and reduce-irregular-migration policies, although few except Singapore make these policies explicit.

Managing migration is difficult, and there are gaps between migration policy goals and outcomes in all countries that attract migrants. These goal-outcome gaps have prompted some to speculate that borders are “beyond control,” meaning that governments must accept limits on their capacities to regulate who crosses their borders and what non-citizens do inside borders. Others argue that sovereign nations must increase their investments in migration control systems to deter irregular migrants and enforce the rules governing temporary worker programmes. Finally, some urge governments to develop selective immigration systems that open doors wider to foreign talent to fuel knowledge-based economies.

Governments can manage migration to achieve openness, selection, and control goals, but it is often very hard to achieve consensus on what these goals should be. Unlike war and crime, where the goal is to minimize these activities, managing migration is more akin to macro-economic policy making that aims to minimize sometimes competing goods, such as low inflation and low unemployment. Choosing between such competing goods is often difficult, and most countries have political parties that express give higher priorities to one of these competing goals, explaining why there are likely to be continuing debates over the goals of managing migration and goal-outcome gaps in achieving goals.

The United Nations defines an international migrant as a person outside his or her country of birth or citizenship for a year or more. The UN definition is inclusive, embracing persons born outside the country who are considered to be citizens of a country when they arrive, as with ethnic Germans arriving in Germany, settler immigrants, temporary foreign workers and students, and irregular or unauthorized foreigners. In a world of about 200 sovereign nation states, there were 214 million migrants in 2010, about 3.1 per cent of the world’s seven billion people.
Most people never cross a national border. Those who do, usually move to nearby countries, as from Turkey to Germany or Mexico to the United States. The largest flow of migrants, 74 million or 34 per cent, moved from one developing country to another, as from the Philippines to Saudi Arabia or Nicaragua to Costa Rica. The second-largest flow, 73 million or 34 per cent, moved from developing to industrial or developed countries, which include most of Europe, North America, Japan, and Australia and New Zealand. Some 55 million people or 26 per cent of international migrants moved from one industrial country to another, as from Canada to the United States. Finally 13 million people or six per cent of migrants moved from industrial to developing countries, as with Japanese who work or retire in Thailand.

Table 1. International Migrants in 2010 (millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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About 60 per cent of the world’s migrants are in industrial countries, making migrants about 10 per cent of the 1.2 billion industrial country residents. The countries with the most international migrants include the US, with 43 million migrants in 2010; Russia, 12 million; Germany, 11 million; and Saudi Arabia, Canada, and France, about seven million each. These six countries included 87 million migrants, or 40 per cent of the global total.

Countries with the highest share of migrants in their populations were Gulf oil exporters such as Qatar, where over 85 per cent of residents were migrants, and the UAE and Kuwait, with 70 per cent migrants. The countries with the lowest shares of migrants in their population include China, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Peru and Cuba, where less than one tenth of one per cent of residents were born outside the country.

International migration is the exception, not the rule. The number one form of migration control is inertia—most people do not want to move away from family and friends. Second, governments have significant capacity to regulate migration, and they do, with passports, visas, and border and interior controls. One item considered by many established governments when deciding whether to recognize a new entity that declares itself a nation state is whether it is able to regulate who crosses and remains within its borders.

International migration is likely to increase for reasons that range from persisting demographic and economic inequalities to revolutions in communications and transportation that increase
mobility. There are also more borders to cross. There were 193 generally recognized nation-states in 2000, four times more than the 43 in 1900 (Lemert, 2005, p176). Each nation-state distinguishes citizens and foreigners, has border controls to inspect those seeking entry, and determines what foreigners can do while inside the country, whether they are tourists, students, guest workers, or immigrants.

The first step to make migration a manageable challenge is to understand how globalization in a world of persisting differences encourages more migration. Most people do not want to cross national borders and, even though the number of migrants is at an all-time high, international migrants are three per cent of the world’s residents, not 30 per cent. Furthermore, economic growth can turn emigration nations into destinations for migrants, as in Ireland, Italy, and Korea. The challenge is to manage migration in ways that reduce the differences that encourage people to cross borders over time.

**Post-2015 Migration and Development Indicators**

Melde (2012) divides the impacts of migration on human development into eight broad areas, from economic to governance. Her major recommendation is to conduct household surveys to assess the impacts of migration on family well-being and a variety of other development indicators.

The economic indicators focus on individuals and households, and household surveys are suggested as the major source of data to measure the economic impacts of migration, including changes in income and the stability of income. Broader economic impacts of migration can be measured via central bank data on remittances, regional economic indicators, and macroeconomic indicators of GDP and income growth and inequality. Labour market impacts on migration can be measured in wages, employment, and unemployment via labour force and household surveys, although current labour force surveys would likely have to be modified to obtain data on the migration background of respondents.

Many of the other items that migration may affect, from fertility to years of education to health status, require repeated household surveys to measure accurately. Birth records generate fertility data, but may not indicate whether the mother is in a household with migrants or influenced by migration. Similarly, if overall education and health care indicators are improving, household survey data must be combined with other data to determine how much of any observed differences between migrant and non-migrant households are due to migration.

Household surveys are also necessary to understand how migration directly affects the role of women, gender roles, and family structures. As with education and health care, it may be hard to separate changes in women’s roles due to migration from broader changes affecting the roles of women in both migrant and non-migrant households.

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18 Lemert (2005, 176) says there were fewer than 50 generally recognized nation states in 1900.
Governance indicators, from perceptions of human rights to confidence in the home society, can be obtained from household surveys, opinion polls, and interviews. Environmental indicators that measure awareness of environmental issues after migration to richer countries, as well as changes in behavior after returning from abroad, can be measured via household survey data and measures of environmental quality. The impacts of returned migrants or diaspora visits can be measured with household surveys, but it may be hard to assess accurately how information from abroad affects behavior in the households of families, relatives, and others.

**Recruitment Indicators**

Recruitment, the process of matching workers with jobs, often involves high fees. The result can be that especially low-skilled migrants are vulnerable abroad and may have less ability to learn skills and send home remittances. There is no easy way to measure recruitment costs, in part because international norms and national laws establish standards, such as workers should not pay any recruitment fees, or maximum fees, such as one month’s foreign earnings that are routinely violated (Martin, 2012).

Job matching involves costs that often increase with geographic and cultural distance. Recruitment or job-matching costs can be expressed as a share of earnings, such as the rule-of-thumb that the recruitment costs of an executive are equivalent to six to 12 months of his or her salary, and they rise as skill levels fall.

Low-skill workers generally pay a higher share of their foreign earnings in recruitment costs than high-skill workers, and many have to borrow money to obtain contracts to work abroad, so that they leave foreign jobs in debt and more vulnerable.

One indicator of recruitment costs is who is in the recruitment business. Many migrant-sending countries require recruiters to be citizens who obtain licenses from government agencies after a variety of checks, including recommendations from current recruiters. Few multinationals such as Adecco or Manpower move low-skilled workers over borders, with the limited exception of some activities in free-movement zones such as the European Union. If multinational temporary work firms moved low-skilled workers over borders, their presence would suggest fewer side payments and make it much easier to track recruitment costs. Furthermore, the formalization involved with multinational recruiters would likely standardize costs and open the door to lower-cost loans based on valid contracts, with repayment possible via deductions from foreign-earned wages.

The recruitment industry after 2015 will likely be similar to the industry today. Recruitment cost indicators after 2015 include the number of bilateral or regional agreements that establish maximum fees and any fee schedules announced unilaterally by migrant-sending or receiving countries. In formally announced fee schedules, another indicator is how recruitment costs are apportioned between employers, workers, and other parties, including governments. Enforcement experience that depends on complaints provides limited evidence on how well
recruitment regulations are enforced, since many workers drop complaints if the recruiter sends them abroad.

In addition to who is in the recruitment business, maximum fees, and enforcement, the number and stability of recruiters can be a post-2015 migration and development indicator. The normal government reaction to recruitment abuses is to impose new regulations and to raise penalties for violations. This raises a question: would competition that favors better recruiters with faster processing or lower fees, such as an ABC rating system that rewards recruiters for longevity and no complaints from workers or employers, favor the expansion of better recruiters? One indicator would be the number of A-rated recruiters, and the share of recruiters who are A-rated.

Simple recruitment-fee rules, such as limiting worker fees to a maximum one-month’s foreign earnings for a two-year contract, or 4.2 per cent of what they expect to earn abroad, are easier for workers to understand and governments to enforce. If there were a way to quickly calculate total recruitment fees, as there is with remittance fees, governments could adopt a goal such as reducing recruitment fees by specified amounts over time.

**Remittance Indicators**

There are three macro- or national-level remittance indicators and three micro- or household-level indicators. Improving measurements of them in the post-2015 development framework would provide a more complete picture of the links between migration and development.

The amount of remittances received by developing countries is the headline indicator most often cited as the link between migration and development. Remittances to developing countries first exceeded ODA in the mid-1990s, and today exceed ODA by a factor of more than three to one. There are three common macro remittance measures: (1) the total amount of remittances, (2) remittances compared to other financial flows in amount and stability, and (3) the remittance share of GDP.

Closely related is the cost of remitting small sums over national borders. The World Bank and multinationals such as Western Union and Moneygram can provide data on the cost of transferring a standard amount, say USD200 or USD300, between two countries. Remittance costs have been falling, in part because of coordinated government efforts to encourage remittances to be transferred via regulated financial institutions to make it more difficult for terrorists to use informal transfer networks. However, the G8 and G20 pledges to cooperate to reduce remittance costs under the 5x5 programme, by five percentage points within five years, is unlikely to be met by 2015.

The third macro-level remittance indicators involve the effects of remittances on the exchange rate and trade and investment flows. Remittances usually increase alongside trade and investment flows from the countries where migrants are employed, but the exchange rate effect of remittances can be negative for export-led development in the country of origin. This occurs when an inflow of remittances raises the exchange rate, making it harder to export
goods produced in the migrant-sending country. The Dutch exchange rate rose when exports of natural gas during the 1960s and 1970s increased the inflow of foreign currency, making it more difficult for Dutch manufacturers to sell their now more-expensive goods abroad, so that a rising exchange rate that chokes off exports, and the jobs associated with them, is sometimes called Dutch disease.

The three major micro effects of remittances include their effects on the incomes and spending of the families that receive them; their effects on investment and attitudes toward risk; and their effects on non-migrants, as with the multiplier effect of migrant spending. The effects of remittances on family incomes and spending are documented in household surveys that generally find remittances raise incomes, reduce poverty, and increase spending on the education and health of children, especially if women receive and spend remittances or remittances are sent by mothers abroad.

The effects of remittances on investment-related activities in the country of origin can also be measured by household surveys and sometimes in business formation data, especially if migrant investments create registered firms. Remittances that are used to expand landholdings, improve irrigation, or make productivity-increasing changes in farm and business practices may show up in agricultural and business surveys, but are more likely to be found in household surveys, which may be the only way to learn about remittance-related investments such as purchases of cars that provide personal transportation and serve as taxis or trucks that serve both personal and business goals.

Finally, the spending of remittances generates multiplier effects in local economies, as when materials are bought and workers hired to build or improve housing. The multiplier from remittance spending is usually found to be between USD1.80 and USD2, meaning that every USD1 in remittance spending increases local economic activity by up to another USD1 as the money is circulates from buyers to sellers or employers to workers (Taylor and Martin, 2001).

There are other effects of migration and remittances that may also speed development. Having migrants abroad may forge banking links that can provide funds to often capital-short economies, as between Spain and Latin America over the past decade, and perhaps from Latin America to Spain today. Remittance flows may be accompanied by more trade if transactions costs are lowered by denser economic linkages between two countries.

**Return Indicators**

Most migrant workers eventually return to their countries of origin, either because they want to return or because their work permits end. There are three major return questions: why do migrants return, what do they do upon return, and what are the effects of those who do not return, the diaspora, on development in the country of origin?

The first question is how many migrants return, and how returns vary by country of destination. The number of migrants returning can be determined at ports of entry, and information from a sample or from all returning migrants can distinguish those who were
employed in seasonal or year-round jobs abroad and other characteristics. For development purposes, it is important to know who returns and why. What share of those returning achieved savings targets abroad, and how many are returning because they must but hope to go abroad again? Some of this information can be gained from surveys of returning migrants at ports of entry, but some may be more easily obtained via household surveys.

The second major return question involves what migrants do after returning. Some go to work for wages, but many others are self-employed. Surveys of returning migrants conducted at ports of entry can obtain information on the intentions of returning migrants, but household surveys of returned migrants may be required to get detailed data. In some cases, labour force surveys or business registration forms can be modified to collect information on workers and entrepreneurs who were employed abroad.

The final question involves migrants who do not return. Information on circulating migrants can be obtained at ports of entry, and economic and other data can report the density of trade, travel, and other links between migrant-origin and -destination countries. However, it is often difficult to distinguish the effects of the diaspora from other influences on trade and travel between countries.

**Conclusions and Next Steps**

About three per cent of the world’s seven billion people are international migrants, persons outside their country of birth for a year or more. Most people become international migrants for economic reasons, seeking opportunities to achieve higher earnings. Persisting demographic and economic inequalities at a time when globalization is making it easier to learn about opportunities abroad and cheaper to travel and take advantage of them promise more international migration, prompting fears that migration may get out of control of governments.

Migration can promote development in migrant countries of origin, speeding the achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Migration is not mentioned in the MDGs because it is a means to achieve development goals rather than a goal itself, but the 3 Rs that link international labour migration and development, viz., recruitment, remittances, and returns, can be an important means to individual opportunity and national development.

By focusing on migration’s potential to speed development, migration can contribute to human development by reducing hunger and child mortality and achieving gender equality and environmental sustainability. About three per cent of the world’s people, almost 215 million, were international migrants in 2010, and the number of international migrants is poised to expand faster than the world’s population through 2050.

Indicators that demonstrate how international labour migration contributes to human and social development can be grouped into three broad categories. Recruitment indicators include how many migrant workers go abroad and the characteristics and recruitment fees
and other costs, as well as how they are shared between employers, migrants, and others. One simple indicator is who moves migrant workers over borders. The presence of multinational temporary help agencies among recruiters could lower recruitment costs and make them far more transparent.

Remittances are the most widely cited indicator of migration’s contribution to development. Remittances to developing countries have risen rapidly, topping USD400 billion in 2012 or more than three times official development assistance. Coordinated efforts to reduce the cost of transferring small sums over borders, and to ensure that remittances flow through regulated financial institutions, demonstrate that migrant-sending and -receiving countries can cooperate to increase the benefits of migration.

Returns are the third link between migration and development. Who returns, and what they do after return, helps to determine whether migration provides an extra spark that speeds development or a temporary respite from poverty. Those who leave a country do not have to return in order to have a development impact, especially if their governments forge links with diasporas abroad.

The migration ideal is a world with few barriers to migration. This ideal will be reached sooner if the migration that is occurring now speeds development in migrant-sending areas, so that the push factors that can contribute to unwanted migration are diminished. Migration is a process to be managed, not a problem to solve, and migration that speeds development makes managing migration a far easier challenge.
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