

INPUT TO THE EIGHTH COORDINATION MEETING ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

*United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*

A. INTRODUCTION

The 2005 World Summit Outcome acknowledged the important nexus between international migration and development and the need to address the challenges and opportunities presented by migration. A collaborative, coherent and comprehensive approach on this topic is essential to ensure that migration is prominent on the global development agenda and that regular migration is seen as an opportunity for development in both origin and destination countries, rather than as a threat. This is especially important given the current global economic and financial crisis which threatens to impact migration and remittance flows and might undermine the development benefits of migration.

B. THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS  
ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

The recent economic downturn has important implications for future migration flows, although little concrete evidence is available on the magnitude of the impact. As more countries are affected by an economic recession and as unemployment rises, migration policies may become more restrictive and public perception of migrants may become more negative. Migration flows have already shown signs of reversing in the hardest hit sectors of the economy and in turn have also affected the flow of remittances.

Women might be especially affected by the economic and financial crisis, including discrimination due to their immigration status and gender, which might make them more vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination and abuse. The extent of the impact on female migrants varies by region and type of migration as women are well represented in the employment sectors hit by the crisis such as manufacturing, real estate, and the hotel industry, but also in the sectors that have not been negatively affected by the crisis or that have even expanded during this time including health, social work, social and personal services, and education.

Many women are employed in the informal sector of the economy and are at an increased risk of discrimination and exploitation. The plight of domestic workers not benefiting from the protection of labour laws in most countries deserves particular attention in times of crisis. Also, as competition for jobs increases, female migrants may be forced to accept inadequate terms and conditions of employment, something that affects formally employed migrants and migrant workers in an irregular situation in the informal economy.

As the economic crisis continues, female migr

women typically send a larger percentage of their earnings home to their families, it remains to be seen how resilient these remittances will remain during the economic crisis.

Women who are unable to find employment through regular channels may resort to traffickers and smugglers, exposing themselves to exploitation and human rights abuses in sweatshops, the sex industry and domestic servitude where they may find themselves at increased risk of physical and mental health problems, including HIV/AIDS, yet lack adequate access to appropriate health-care information and services.

Timely and reliable age and sex disaggregated migration data in conjunction with culture, gender and age-sensitive research are essential for evidence-based policymaking, development planning and programme formulation. This includes research that enhances the understanding of the implications of Government responses to the economic crisis, the effect of the crisis on migration and development, and the impact on female migrants. The 2010 round of censuses may shed some light on the impact of the crisis. However, there is a risk that the economic downturn may affect countries' ability to conduct censuses.

#### C. CURRENT AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continues its collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) offering seminars on key migration issues for Government

In order to strengthen the evidence base on

migration and protect the rights of migrants. Effective migration and development policy requires capacity-building, compilation and exchange of information, and linking research and policy.

UNFPA looks forward to continue working with GMG partners, United Nations Member States, United Nations agencies, other international organizations and civil society to address the increasing challenges of migration and to ensure that migrants do not become the innocent victims of the economic and financial crisis.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the meeting, see [http://www.unaids.org/en/AboutUNAIDS/Governance/PCBArchive/24th\\_PCB\\_Meeting\\_June\\_2009.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/AboutUNAIDS/Governance/PCBArchive/24th_PCB_Meeting_June_2009.asp) (accessed 25 February 2010).

<sup>2</sup> For further information on the Joint Initiative, see <http://www.migration4development.org/content/about-jmdi> (accessed 4 January 2010).

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#### REFERENCES

United Nations (2005). World Summit Outcome in General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/1 of 16 September 2005.

United Nations Population Fund (2009). *The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Female Migration*. September 2009. New York: United Nations Population Fund.