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Human Development Report **2009**

Overcoming barriers:
Human mobility and development



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Foreword

Migration not infrequently gets a bad press. Negative stereotypes portraying migrants as 'stealing our jobs' or 'scrounging off the taxpayer' abound in sections of the media and public opinion, especially in times of recession. For others, the word 'migrant' may evoke images of people at their most vulnerable. This year's Human Development Report, *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*, challenges such stereotypes. It seeks to broaden and rebalance perceptions of migration to reflect a more complex and highly variable reality.

This report breaks new ground in applying a human development approach to the study of migration. It discusses who migrants are, where they come from and go to, and why they move. It looks at the multiple impacts of migration for all who are affected by it—not just those who move, but also those who stay.

In so doing, the report's findings cast new light on some common misconceptions. For example, migration from developing to developed countries accounts for only a minor fraction of human movement. Migration from one developing economy to another is much more common. Most migrants do not go abroad at all, but instead move within their own country.

Next, the majority of migrants, far from being victims, tend to be successful, both before they leave their original home and on arrival in their new one. Outcomes in all aspects of human development, not only income but also education and health, are for the most part positive—some immensely so, with people from the poorest places gaining the most.

Reviewing an extensive literature, the report finds that fears about migrants taking the jobs or lowering the wages of local people, placing an unwelcome burden on local services, or costing the taxpayer money, are generally exaggerated. When migrants' skills complement those of local people, both groups benefit. Societies as a whole may also benefit in many ways—ranging from rising levels of technical innovation to increasingly diverse cuisine to which migrants contribute.

The report suggests that the policy response to migration can be wanting. Many governments institute increasingly repressive entry regimes, turn a blind eye to health and safety violations by employers, or fail to take a lead in educating the public on the benefits of immigration.

By examining policies with a view to expanding people's freedoms rather than controlling or restricting human movement, this report proposes a bold set of reforms. It argues that, when tailored to country-specific contexts, these changes can amplify human mobility's already substantial contributions to human development.

The principal reforms proposed centre around six areas, each of which has important and complementary contributions to make to human development: opening up existing entry channels so that more workers can emigrate; ensuring basic rights for migrants; lowering the transaction costs of migration; finding solutions that benefit both destination communities and the migrants they receive; making it easier for people to move within their own countries; and mainstreaming migration into national development strategies.

The report argues that while many of these reforms are more feasible than at first thought, they nonetheless require political courage. There may also be limits to governments' ability to make swift policy changes while the recession persists.

This is the first Human Development Report for which as Administrator I am writing the foreword. Like all such reports, this is an independent study intended to stimulate debate and discussion on an important issue. It is not a statement of either United Nations or UNDP policy.

At the same time, by highlighting human mobility as a core component of the human development agenda, it is UNDP's hope that the following insights will add value to ongoing discourse on migration and inform the work of development practitioners and policy makers around the world.



Helen Clark
Administrator
United Nations Development Programme

The analysis and policy recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme, its Executive Board or its Member States.

The report is an independent publication commissioned by UNDP. It is the fruit of a collaborative effort by a team of eminent advisers and the Human Development Report team.

Jeni Klugman, Director of the Human Development Report Office, led the effort.

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This report is the fruit of the efforts, contributions and support of many people and organizations. I would like to thank Kemal Derviş for the opportunity to take on the daunting task of Director of the Human Development Report, and the new UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark, for advice and support. Coming back to the office after its 20 years of growth and success has been a tremendously rewarding experience, and I would like to especially thank my family, Ema, Josh and Billy, for their patience and support throughout. The dedication and hard work of the whole HDR team, listed earlier, was critical. Among those who provided important strategic advice and suggestions, which were especially critical in pulling the report together, were Oliver Bakewell, Martin Bell, Stephen Castles, Joseph Chamie, Samuel Choritz, Michael Clemens, Simon Commander, Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Hein de Haas, Frank Laczko, Loren Landau, Manjula Luthria, Gregory Maniatis, Philip Martin, Douglas Massey, Saraswathi Menon, Frances Stewart, Michael Walton and Kevin Watkins.

Background studies were commissioned on a range of thematic issues and published online in our Human Development Research Papers series, launched in April 2009, and are listed in the bibliography. A series of 27 seminars that were held between August 2008 and April 2009 likewise provided important stimulus to our thinking and the development of ideas, and we would again thank those presenters for sharing their research and insights. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the national experts who participated in our migration policy assessment.

The data and statistics used in this report draw significantly upon the databases of other organizations to which we were allowed generous access: Andean Development Corporation; Development Research Centre on Migration, University of Sussex; ECLAC; International Migration Institute, Oxford; Inter-Parliamentary Union; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; the Department of Statistics and the International Migration Programme of the ILO; IOM; Luxembourg Income Study; OECD; UNICEF; UNDESA, Statistics Division and Population Division; UNESCO Institute for Statistics; UNHCR; Treaty Section, United Nations Office of Legal Affairs; UNRWA; the World Bank; and WHO.

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From the outset, the process involved a range of participatory consultations designed to draw on the expertise of researchers, civil society advocates, development practitioners and policy makers from around the globe. This included 11 informal stakeholder consultations held between August 2008 and April 2009 in Nairobi, New Delhi, Amman, Bratislava, Manila, Sydney, Dakar, Rio de Janeiro, Geneva, Turin and Johannesburg, involving almost 300 experts and practitioners in total. The support of UNDP country and regional offices and local partners was critical in enabling these consultations. Several events were hosted by key partners, including the IOM, the ILO and the Migration Policy Institute. Additional academic consultations took place in Washington D.C. and Princeton, and HDRO staff participated in various other regional and global fora, including the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Manila, preparatory meetings for the Athens GFMD, and many conferences and seminars organized by other UN agencies (e.g. ILO, UNDESA and UNITAR), universities, think-tanks and non-governmental organizations. Participants in a series of Human Development Network discussions provided wide-ranging insights and observations on the linkages between migration and human development. More details on the process are available at http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr.

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Jeni Klugman
Director
Human Development Report 2009

Acronyms

CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMW	United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECD	Early childhood development
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EU	European Union
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GDP	Gross domestic product
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HDRO	Human Development Report Office
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market)
MIPEX	Migrant Integration Policy Index
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
TMBs	Treaty Monitoring Bodies
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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