

**INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES OBSERVATORY FOR THE
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (IMRO)**

THE FUTURE OF THE IMRO: REVIEW AND PROSPECTS

PRESENTATION FOR THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS OF THE LEAST
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

July 27, 2014, Cotonou, Bénin.

INTRODUCTION

Ten months ago, on September 27, 2013, on the occasion of the LDCs Ministerial Meeting in margin of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, I presented the report of the pilot project of the International Migration and Remittances Observatory for the LDCs (IMRO), which is the culmination of seven years of collaborative and inclusive efforts for the implementation of a major initiative of the LDCs as far as migration and development are concerned.

As a matter of facts, migration and financial flows gained increasing importance in the economy of the LDCs. In this respect, the World Bank estimates at U.S. \$ 30.5 billion the amount of transfers received by LDCs in 2012. According to prospects, these financial flows will continue to grow, and will constitute a significant part of the GDP of our countries and thus helping reduce poverty and promote development, when appropriate structures and policies are put in place to facilitate formal transfers through financial institutions and genuine savings as well as investments from the Diaspora.

In response to the growing importance of remittances and their development potential, was held from 9 to 10 February 2006 in Cotonou, a Ministerial Conference of LDCs on strengthening the impact of remittances on economic development. It was organized jointly by the Government of Benin, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the High Representative of the United Nations Least Developed Countries (UN-OHRLLS) with the financial support of the Special Unit for South-South cooperation of the UNDP, Norway, Ireland and the World Bank. The Ministerial Declaration of Cotonou recommended, inter alia, the creation of an International Observatory on remittances, which Benin, as chair of the Coordinating Bureau of LDCs, was chosen to host the headquarters. As a follow-up to the Declaration of Cotonou, Benin has signed in May 2011 in Istanbul, a Memorandum on the implementation of a pilot project which aims was to collect, analyze and disseminate data on remittances in four LDCs, Bangladesh, Nepal, Lesotho and Haiti, with the financial support of Turkey. The pilot project officially started in January 2012 with the appointment of the acting Director General, the adoption of the Action Plan and Budget, and recruitment of national consultants.

1. WHAT ARE THE MAIN RESULTS?

1.1. National studies on remittances have been conducted in the four pilot countries; reports, statistical data and information on remittances in these countries are available, with a series of key recommendations suggesting the adoption of policies that facilitate the flow of remittances, including the reduction of transfer costs the, promotion of savings and investment from the diaspora, with particular attention to migrant women who represent a real investment potential for their country of origin.

1.2. National capacity in the pilot countries have been strengthened in research and policy development in the field of remittances. The establishment of national working groups on remittances and the organization of dissemination workshops in view of facilitating short and long term strategies, bearing in mind that remittances are private funds and should not be seen as a substitute for official development assistance (ODA).

1.3. Third, we conducted a series of activities to share and exchange information with experts, delegates and members of the diaspora of LDCs, including through our website www.oitfm.org, which allowed them to better understand the importance of mobilizing the diaspora for the development of their respective countries.

2. WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR THE IMRO?

Since December 2013, I submitted to the LDCs Global Coordination Bureau, for review and validation by experts and Plenipotentiary, a three-year action program with a budget in order to benefit all LDCs. Thus, we have provided three main perspectives:

2.1. At the operational level

In accordance with the Cotonou Ministerial Declaration (2006), we plan to continue our mission to provide advice, support and capacity building of the Governments of LDCs, through studies on the impact of remittances from migrants and animation of working Groups on Migration and Development in at least four other LDCs each year.

2.2. At the strategic level

In accordance with the recommendations of the pilot project, the IMRO will contribute to the economic and social mobilization of LDCs Diasporas to participate in the achievement of the Istanbul Program of Action. This is why we have been preparing a project called LDCs Diaspora initiative for the Istanbul Plan of Action (DIPoA), which was presented in October 2013, at the High Level Dialogue on migration and Development and will be presented again in a few days, on thursday, July 31 at the side event organized by the IMRO.

2.3. At the institutional level

The IMRO currently works with provisional statutes. Therefore, we have prepared and submitted in July 2013 to the LDCs Global Coordination Bureau the draft statutes of the IMRO, as an international organization. I would like to invite national focal points and

experts here present or represented to consider this document in view of its validation and signature by their plenipotentiaries, in a collaborative and inclusive approach, in accordance with international law and duly approved procedures in this regards.

CONCLUSION

The Observatory is and remains an initiative of the LDCs. The principle of its existence and its financial support was reaffirmed at the highest level, including in the document of the Istanbul Program of Action. We call for the implementation of this commitment at a triple level, institutional (adopting the statutes of the IMRO), operational and financial (adopting the IMRO triennial Program of Action and budget). In this regard, we call upon the support of all LDCs and relevant institutions, including the Global Coordination Bureau and the Office of the High Representative of the United Nations for LDCs, as well as the various partners of the United Nations systems and donors countries.

This is an opportunity to renew our thanks to the Government of Turkey, which financial support has enabled the realization of the pilot project. Under the auspices of the Coordinating Bureau and with the support of the Office of the High Representative, we would like to advocate for the renewal of the Turkish endowment for the continuation of the IMRO experience. We also thank the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for its continued support.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Host country of the IMRO, Benin and its President Boni Yayi, who supported me since the beginning of this project. This support is expressed through the special care I received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations in New York and especially its Permanent Representative, Ambassador Zinsou, who brought this project as far as possible. I am also grateful for the support of the Permanent Mission of Nepal, including former Permanent Representative to the UN and current High Representative for LDCs, Ambassador Gyan Chandra Acharya for continuous guidance and support.

I remain at the disposal of national focal points, experts and ambassadors of LDCs, including the country that will succeed in Benin in September 2014 as Chairman of the Group of LDCs to transmit any information and experience accumulated throughout this challenging experience of eight years of coordinating the establishment of an intergovernmental organization of the least developed countries, since the Ministerial Conference of Cotonou in February 2006.

Thank you.

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