

International Migration and the Global Agenda: Reflections on the 1998 UN Technical Symposium

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ABSTRACT

As a cross-border phenomenon affecting many countries, migration should be an important area for international cooperation. Yet such cooperation has been slow to emerge. Politically, the topic has been marked by interest conflicts and differing national policy approaches. As a field of social scientific research, it has been characterized by fragmentation according to disciplines, paradigms, methodologies and ideologies.

The 1998 United Nations Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development was therefore highly significant as a step towards a global response, although as a meeting of experts it fell short of the intergovernmental deliberations some states (especially emigration countries) have called for.

The Symposium reviewed knowledge on the links between migration and development and discussed the relative success of various policy approaches. A number of key themes emerged. An inclusive research framework is needed which takes account of all types of population mobility and all stages of the migratory process. The contributions of a range of social scientific disciplines and paradigms should be integrated. An important advance has been the growing understanding of the role of social networks and cultural capital in the migratory process.

The Symposium discussed the need for strategies which reflect the ambivalence of women's experience: international migration can be both a source of exploitation and abuse, and an opportunity for greater autonomy.

Issues of settlement and of return migration were debated: both need to be considered in strategies for maximizing the benefits of migration for the various participants. An urgent need for better public information and education on migration and settlement was noted.

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Overall, the Symposium showed the great complexity of links between migration and development. It also found that a knowledge base does exist for greatly improved policy formation and international cooperation in this area of growing global significance.

INTRODUCTION

The most significant thing about the United Nations Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development, held in The Hague (Netherlands) during June-July 1998, is that it took place at all. Despite decades of growing international population mobility and increasing politicization of issues of migration and settlement in many countries, this was the first global conference under the auspices of the United Nations designed to examine the state of knowledge on migration and development, and to debate pressing policy issues. Admittedly, it was not an intergovernmental conference, but a “technical symposium” of experts, yet it may well pave the way to greater international interchange and cooperation in this area. This article presents the personal view of one participant about some of the key issues and problems discussed.¹

The long road to international cooperation

In political terms, international migration is an area marked by interest conflicts and differing national policy approaches which hinder international cooperation. Similarly, as a field of social scientific research, international migration studies have been characterized by fragmentation on the basis of various disciplines, paradigms, methodologies and ideologies. The political deficit is signalled – among other things – by the lack of a single international body dedicated to improving understanding and management of migration and its consequences. Currently, responsibility is divided between the UN Population Division and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which have been concerned far more with fertility and mortality issues than with population mobility; the International Labour Organization (ILO), which focuses on labour migration; the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which has always sought to emphasize the differences between refugees and other types of migrants; and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which has mainly been an operational body concerned with management of refugee and other flows. The social scientific deficit is shown by the lack of a clearly defined field of studies, the relative weakness of a body of generally accepted cumulative knowledge and theory (Massey et al., 1993) and the predominance of nationally-specific models in the analysis of migration and settlement (Castles, 1999).

These deficits seem surprising. By its very nature, international migration transcends national boundaries and seems to demand cross-national analysis

and cooperation between states. Indeed, many experts in the field, including staff of the relevant international agencies, have been calling for such approaches for years. However, by the same token, international migration is often seen as a potential threat to national sovereignty. The migrant has always been the “other” of the nation-state, who could undermine myths of cultural homogeneity and national identity. In the era of globalization, states welcome flows of capital, trade and know-how, yet frequently reject flows of people – which are inextricably linked with the other types of mobility. New technologies of transport and communication allow the emergence of transnational communities and facilitate the proliferation of people with multiple identities and dual (or multiple) citizenships. All this is deeply unsettling both for those who exercise power in national contexts, and for populations which feel threatened by globalization.

Thus the national-level reaction to growing international mobility since the 1980s has often been reduced entry quotas and stricter border control, leading to erosion of the rights and protection of migrants. Sometimes such measures have pandered to extremist groups which have made immigrants the scapegoats for all sorts of social evils. At the international level, bilateral agreements concerning labour recruitment and social security for migrants have been limited in scope. Some have been designed to facilitate return migration when foreign labour was no longer needed. Similarly, multilateral cooperation has been mainly about regulation and exclusion (especially at the regional level, as in the Schengen Agreement) rather than about multilateral action to maximize the benefits of migration for all concerned.

This is shown most clearly in the failure of all states except a handful of emigration countries to ratify the 1990 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, as well as in the poor ratification and implementation records with regard to ILO Conventions 97 and 143. The 1994 United Nations Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo thus marked a significant departure in that migration issues were given considerable prominence. Now that the “population explosion” seemed less threatening due to the success of fertility control measures and the effects of industrialization on population growth in some areas, international migration appeared at last to have been given appropriate prominence as a major factor in population dynamics. Yet deep divisions remained, and countries of emigration and of immigration were unable to reach agreement on certain basic principles, such as rules on family reunion. The desire of many emigration countries for an intergovernmental conference on international migration was not met. Thus, the holding of the Technical Symposium in 1998 was both a step forward and a compromise: a meeting of experts had far less political significance than a full-blown intergovernmental meeting. Nonetheless, the Technical Symposium may help maintain the momentum towards greater international cooperation. Its report is to be

submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in 1999. Hopefully, the next step will be on the political rather than the technical level.

All the same, the Symposium was an important event. It offered the opportunity for a review of the “state-of-the-art” in research on migration and development, as well as for evaluation of the relative merits of various policies adopted to regulate and manage international migration. It would be impossible to summarize the topics debated by the Symposium in one short article. Here I will simply highlight some important points that emerged from the discussions.

An inclusive framework for studying international migration

A significant aspect of the Symposium was its inclusiveness on a number of levels. First, with regard to the themes covered, the Symposium shrugged off the usual compartmentalization of the field, especially the dichotomy between migratory movements and processes of settlement in receiving countries. Topics included macro-social factors affecting migration (such as globalization, regional integration, economic change, and political shifts); micro-level migration decision-making processes; labour market issues in receiving countries, especially irregular employment; measures by emigration countries to protect their citizens overseas; social and cultural issues arising from settlement; and return migration. This broad programme represented a recognition that migration and development can only be meaningfully analysed in an integrated framework that takes account of all stages of the migratory process and of all the participants within it. The approach adopted by the Symposium was a recognition of current trends towards more embracing and integrated theories of international migration.

Most significant was the inclusion of issues of asylum and refugee policies in an international conference on migration. Although leading migration scholars have argued for many years that economic migration and asylum-seeker movements arise out of the same situations of societal transformation connected with decolonization and state-formation (Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1989), international agencies have so far been reluctant to accept this insight, since it questioned the rationale of existing institutional boundaries. The fact that UNHCR was willing to sponsor and participate in a conference on migration as a general phenomenon closely linked to development represents an important and positive shift in thinking.

The Symposium was also inclusive in terms of its participants. Its central theme made it vital to include scholars, officials and NGO-representatives from both emigration- and immigration countries and from all the world’s regions. It was apparent that increasing interest in migration issues in recent times has led to the emergence of a group of committed and internationally-oriented experts in the field – a far cry from the situation even 10-15 years ago, when migration was

mainly analysed on the national level and was seen as peripheral to mainstream social science.

Finally, the Symposium was inclusive in terms of the breadth of theoretical and empirical approaches covered. The old hegemony of individualistic economic paradigms and of bureaucratic-regulatory approaches has gone. Serious scholars in the field now recognize the need for use of a variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches, covering a range of disciplines and reflecting the complexity of the migratory process as an all-embracing human experience.

This inclusive approach in a Symposium designed to present a global overview of key theories and findings on international migration is important. It may help to advance the study of migration as a distinct area of the social sciences, while at the same time moving away from some of the simplistic policy recipes of the past. The global perspective on migration could help counter myths of national uniqueness in migration experience that still influence policies in many countries. Clearly, population mobility is one of the major forces of globalization that both arises from and helps to bring about social transformation at the regional, national and local levels. There can be no adequate understanding of the local without the global and vice versa.

The importance of social networks

The multidimensionality of the analysis needed to understand international migration is well illustrated by the emphasis on social networks. Older studies on international migration often used experiential or historical sources which emphasized the importance of family and community ties, as well as associations and agencies. This led to the notion of “chain migration”. But the individualistic economic approaches which dominated research on migration decision-making in the post-1945 period largely cut out these social dimensions. From the 1980s, the emergence of community research and social capital theories revived interest in the social networks developed by migrants and their communities to deal with migration and settlement (Boyd, 1989). Migration systems theories have sought to integrate macro- and micro-social dimensions of migration, showing how the policy objectives of states, employers and international bodies are often affected or even frustrated through the micro-level activities of various types of social networks (Kritz, Lim and Zlotnik, 1992).

Social networks were not a specific theme of the Symposium – rather they cropped up in just about every session. For instance, Ronald Skeldon argued that economic disparities alone could not explain migratory flows. Rather, with a given level of poverty, migration was more likely to take place if social networks linking the area of origin with a destination already existed. This

made it important to complement macro-analyses of the relationships between migration and development with empirical studies at the national and local levels. Similarly, as Edward Taylor implied in his paper, the analysis of family and community dimensions plays an important part in the “new economics of labour migration”, which has enhanced our understanding of the economic behaviour that underlies migration decision-making and the use of remittances. Social networks are particularly important in understanding forms of migration which take place outside official channels. Both irregular migration for employment and asylum-seeker flows are strongly influenced by the social networks developed by migrants and their communities in order to increase their security and well-being in adverse circumstances. The Symposium also heard evidence that the success of return migrants in re-integrating into the community of origin, and in establishing a new economic basis for themselves, often depends on migrants’ ability to maintain social and cultural links while abroad.

Social networks have an ambivalent character. On the one hand they represent adaptations and initiatives at the grassroots level which may compensate for deficiencies or contradictions in official measures, and hence smooth the migration process and improve conditions for those concerned. On the other hand, social networks may undermine official policies and lead to loss of control of migratory flows. This is particularly the case when social networks metamorphose into an alternative and competing form of institutional regulation: the “migration industry” with its plethora of informal and commercial recruiters, agents and other facilitators of international migration. Much of the migration industry is legal and willing to cooperate with governments, employers and migrants in organizing migration, but there are elements which profit from the exploitation of migrants and the violation of national regulations. Trafficking of migrants is one unsavoury side of the migration industry. Such elements may have their roots in social networks, but they form part of the burgeoning global criminal economy, which is an integral part of globalization (Castells, 1998: 166-205).

Governments have tended to ignore the role of social networks in the migratory process, since they do not fit in with myths about the power of the nation-state and the controllability of ethno-cultural difference. The debates at the Symposium made it clear that this approach is misguided and merely opens the door to disorderly movements and abuse of the weakest. Rather, migration and settlement policies need to take account of the power of social and community activity. Authorities should work closely with migrant associations and similar bodies. This would require policies that take account of social realities and safeguard the human rights of everybody involved in the migratory process. The best way to control the migration industry is not to prohibit it, but to introduce licensing systems, training and support measures, which will give incentives towards good practice. This might make it possible to separate off the exploitative and criminal element and combat them better.

Women and migration

The special place of women in global population mobility was the focus of a paper by Lin Lean Lim, but it was also an important underlying theme throughout the Symposium. Two main questions emerged: first, does the widespread notion of the “feminization of migration” (Hugo, 1994; Castles and Miller, 1998: 9) have empirical validity? Second, should female migration be seen mainly in terms of its potential for exploitation and abuse, or rather as a factor helping in the emancipation of women from restrictive and repressive situations?

In her introductory statistical overview, Hania Zlotnik showed that women have always played a major role in international migration. Although the absolute number of women migrants has grown considerably, their share in the global migrant stock increased only from 47 per cent of a total of 75 million persons in 1965, to 48 per cent of 120 million persons in 1990. Thus the notion of feminization of migration could not be justified in purely quantitative terms. However, as Zlotnik, Lim and other speakers pointed out, the new trend was towards increasing participation of women as autonomous economic migrants, rather than as dependants of male migrants. Many recent labour migration flows, particularly in Asia, have been female-dominated. This is partly because of the increasing education of women and the loosening of restrictive norms, and partly because of the desire of employers for workers who could be paid lower wages and easily controlled on the basis of patriarchal stereotypes. Family strategies for maximizing the benefits of migration also played a part: women were sometimes seen as more easily dispensable in agricultural activities at home and more reliable in sending home remittances. Women and children also make up a growing share of refugees and asylum-seekers, especially in less developed areas devastated by warfare. Thus the feminization of migration is a valid and important concept with regard to qualitative changes in the migratory role of women.

As for the question of abuse versus emancipation, various contributions to the Symposium indicated that both could be the case. Undoubtedly, the trafficking of women (and children) for the sex industry is a growing global problem. Women from poor backgrounds in less developed areas are particularly vulnerable to such practices. Exploitation of workers through extremely low pay, and unpleasant and unsafe working conditions also affects women to a particularly high degree. Many of the movements of female workers in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere take place through irregular channels, making it difficult to safeguard the rights of women. The growing numbers of domestic workers employed in households in both developed and less developed countries are especially at risk, with evidence of frequent exploitation and abuse. There is no doubt that strategies to protect migrant workers need to take special account of the situation of women. On the other hand, the stereotype of

the vulnerable and passive migrant women can be misleading and discriminatory. Many women become active shapers of their own destinies by deciding to migrate in search of a better economic and social future. A growing proportion of migrant women have high standards of education and skills. Migration can lead to greater autonomy and escape from repressive roles. It is therefore important to adopt differentiated policies in this area: measures for the protection of migrant women that take account of their special situation are vital, but such policies must treat women as active and autonomous subjects in the migratory process.

Settlement and return: a false dichotomy?

If international migration is really to support development, it is vital to find ways of successfully re-integrating returnees, and using their skills and capital in constructive ways. This was a major theme of the Symposium, but will not be discussed here in detail as it is the subject of several of the papers in this issue of *International Migration*. Perhaps more surprising was the inclusion of a session on “improving the situation of immigrants and foreign residents in receiving countries” in a Symposium on migration and development.

Settlement and return are often seen as antitheses, and there is a common sense notion that return of the migrant is crucial if migration is to serve development. However, if we get away from individualistic models of migration and settlement and see them as elements of a global social process, then the absolute distinction between settlement and return becomes questionable.

Papers on the traditional settlement countries (by Mark Miller), Western Europe (Jeroen Doomernik), Japan (Hiroshi Komai) and Malaysia (Azizah Kassim) showed how labour migration can turn into labour migration and community formation – even where this goes against official policies and widely held beliefs on the character of migration. An important question, which could not be resolved at the Symposium, concerned the extent to which permanent settlement is likely in newer immigration countries which only want temporary migrant labour. However, both the Japanese and the Malaysian papers revealed unexpected trends towards settlement of at least some segments of the migrant population. It is therefore important to study the experience of long-standing immigration countries to see what types of policies have been most successful in avoiding socio-economic marginalization of settlers and fostering integration. To some extent it is possible to talk of “best practice” models for settlement and social policy, which have achieved good results in certain countries. At the same time, pluralist or multicultural models are currently under attack in countries like the US, Australia and Canada, and the problems of adapting such models to quite different cultural and historical contexts are complex.

In fact, there are few migratory movements in which all migrants become settlers, just as there are few in which all return to their country of origin. One

of the major recent shifts discussed in the session on return, and in other sessions, was the way in which new technologies of transport and communication made it possible for migrants to stay in close touch with their community of origin. This helps to overcome the supposed dichotomy between settlement and return. Increasingly, some migrants see themselves as members of both the host community and the community of origin, or alternatively as members of transnational communities. There is growing two-way mobility between countries which have become part of a common migration system. This means that remittances flows, cyclical movements between the two areas (for economic, cultural or social purposes), and permanent return migration should all be seen as part of the same broad relationship. Recognition of this changing nature of migration and settlement needs to be embodied in both social integration and return policies. As long as linkages are maintained, the settler community can be as important as the returnee for the development of the area of origin, in terms of both economic contributions and cultural impulses.

The need for public education and information

A pervasive theme of the Symposium was the crisis in public confidence in official migration policies. This applies in both emigration and immigration countries. In the former, potential migrants and their families perceive the institutional deficiencies, ineffectiveness and (sometimes) corruption of agencies set up to manage migration and protect migrants. The weakness of the sending country authorities in a global buyers' market for labour is all too evident. In receiving countries, many people mistrust models for managing migration and ethnic diversity which have proved faulty in the past. Where political leaders failed to understand and explain the long-term consequences of immigration (whether due to ignorance or fear of an electoral backlash), there is now a credibility gap. Exaggerated predictions on immigration (like the waves of impoverished Eastern Europeans expected by some to overwhelm Western Europe in the early 1990s) feed into popular fears based on feelings of impotence in the face of economic and cultural change and the decline of welfare states. Such panic situations can be exploited by right-wing racist movements just because many people have lost trust in official pronouncements in this area. To make matters worse, some mainstream politicians also talk of the danger of being swamped by third world poverty, or of threats to national culture and identity, thus giving credence to extremist views.

The increasingly frosty reception for asylum-seekers and refugees in many countries, noted in several papers at the Symposium, is linked to such trends. A vicious circle has developed: the political and economic dislocation experienced in many less developed countries in recent years leads to crises, conflicts, and human rights abuses. The resulting pressure for flight feeds into fears of uncontrolled influxes to developed countries. As entry policies become more and more restrictive, increasing numbers of asylum-seekers are rejected – often

after lengthy and costly procedures. Such desperate claimants may then make fraudulent claims or resort to irregular channels for migration and employment, thus apparently confirming existing stereotypes. The willingness of traditional refugee receiving countries in Europe, North America and Africa to welcome asylum-seekers has declined sharply.

Symposium participants pointed out repeatedly that the solution to such problems is twofold: first there is a need for consistent, humane and realistic policies, which can secure public confidence. Second, it is vital to improve strategies of public information and education to raise public awareness of the background to migration and flight, and to secure widespread support for such policies. These strategies need to be multi-faceted, including inputs to school curricula, comprehensive information for journalists, work with politicians and other opinion leaders, and information campaigns directed at the general public. Information alone will not overcome xenophobia, which has deep social and cultural roots, but it can make a contribution.

The state of migration research

The symposium provided important insights into the state of migration research, reflecting many of the empirical and theoretical advances made in recent years, as political and academic interest in the field has grown. In virtually every session, participants drew attention to the deficiencies of data sources and the lack of uniformity in statistical categories. National monitoring of migration is frequently inadequate, and cross-national comparability in data is often lacking – even with regard to countries with highly developed statistical systems. National data systems have developed out of administrative needs, and vary considerably in purpose and scope. Similarly, speakers repeatedly called for more research and pointed to gaps in knowledge and to inconsistencies in theoretical analysis.

Yet it would be misleading and damaging to imply that the state of knowledge is too poor to permit analytical conclusions in important areas. Postponing policy decisions until the state of knowledge is more developed would be misguided. Indeed, the papers and debates showed clearly that we do possess the knowledge base needed to answer many important questions. It is possible today to examine many of the issues and problems connected with international migration on the basis of a considerable fund of historical and comparative material. Policy planning can be based on the evaluation of past successes and failures in many areas. Migration research clearly has a long way to go, and the demands for better data and more research are entirely justified, yet the Symposium found that there is no need to wait for future wisdom before using the fruits of existing work. The bureaucratic ploy of postponing action to

remedy obvious deficiencies “until more research is done” no longer has any validity in this field – if indeed it ever did.

Migration, development and international cooperation

So did the symposium manage to answer the central question implied in its title? What is the relationship between migration and development? Essentially all the themes covered by the Symposium were linked to this important issue. The discussions made it clear that the linkages are multidimensional and complex. For instance, research summarized by Dane Rowlands indicated that absolute poverty is a barrier to migration (except when war or natural catastrophes lead to destitution and hence to “survival migration” under the worst conditions). Rising incomes as a result of incipient development stimulated migration, by providing families with the financial and social resources needed to migrate to areas where incomes may be higher. At higher income levels, the propensity to migrate tended to decline.

Such findings negate neo-classical approaches which perceive migration essentially as a function of income differences between sending and receiving areas (Borjas, 1989). If that were the case, migration would tend in the long run to even out income differences between sending and receiving countries, bringing about development in the former until a state of equilibrium was reached. Thus migration could be an instrument of development. By the same token, governments which wanted to inhibit migration could do so through development aid strategies designed to raise incomes in sending areas. Current theory suggests that the first effect of raising incomes in less developed areas could be just the opposite – namely to stimulate migration. The theory of the “migration transition” (Lim, 1996) argues that economic development initially raises agricultural productivity, releasing more workers than can find employment in nascent industries. This leads to emigration, but as economic development continues, fertility tends to fall and demand for labour increases, so that emigration declines until a transition point is reached and immigration commences. In other words, policies designed to reduce migration through development aid are likely to have the contrary effect, at least for a substantial period, until the transition point is reached.

Of course, issues of income and employment are not the whole story. Cultural capital is also a vital factor: potential migrants need knowledge of opportunities in receiving countries as well as information on how to get there and how to obtain necessary documentation, accommodation and employment. Such cultural capital may be the result of improved schooling and access to the mass media – also consequences of incipient development – or may be provided through social networks or the migration industry. As already noted, such networks arise through historically-specific experiences of interaction between

societies, which may be the result of colonialism, military interventions, trade, investment, political linkages and so on. That is why there can be no single, universally applicable explanation of migration. Each case has its own specific characteristics which require analysis, although each case is also affected by general factors at the regional and global levels.

If the effects of development in generating migration are so multi-faceted, what of the opposite side of the coin: does migration help or hinder development? Again there is no simple answer (and indeed no singular notion of what constitutes development). In an ideal world, well organized labour migration might lead to flows of worker remittances which would improve the national accounts of the sending country, and at the same time lead to investments which would improve productivity and infrastructure. Returnees would bring with them valuable skills and experience, which would support the development process. The real world is not like this. Much migration is irregular and leads to insecure and exploitative employment, which gives few benefits in terms of training and investment. Many migrants go abroad to gain the resources to maintain their existing mode of production and lifestyle, rather than to precipitate change. Remittances and savings often go into consumption or low productivity service enterprises. The loss of skilled and active personnel can inhibit development, and many of the most skilled migrants never return.

The picture is uneven, yet the experience of various initiatives to improve the benefits of migration for development does show significant potentials. Perhaps the key statement emerging from the Symposium is that international cooperation does matter. On the surface, there appears to be an inherent interest conflict between sending countries and receiving countries. The former want access to the labour markets of richer countries, adequate pay, conditions and protection for their citizens, and long-term benefits through remittances, training and orderly return. All too often, the latter just want cheap, flexible labour and care little about the human rights and social well being of the migrants. But if they combine to take a longer term view, both types of country could have an interest in orderly migration and regulated conditions for migrants, combined with strategies that would support the sustainable development of the sending country. If migration helps contribute to more productive economies and more prosperous societies, that is likely to benefit everybody through greater international trade and security, as well through social and cultural interaction.

At present, the short-term and the ad hoc are still the rule in migration policy making. Many policy makers still see international migration more as a threat to national security and identity than as an opportunity for cooperation and development. There is no "international community" with common goals and interests in this area as yet. Perhaps the 1998 Symposium, and the work of the international agencies which organized it, may have made a small contribution to the long process needed to bring this about.

NOTE

1. The author of this article was General Rapporteur of the Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development held at The Hague, The Netherlands, 29 June-3 July 1998 (UNFPA, 1998). However, this article is not a summary of the Report, and does not claim to represent the views of the United Nations, the organizers of the Symposium or any other participants.

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LA MIGRATION INTERNATIONALE ET L'ORDRE DU JOUR MONDIAL : QUELQUES RÉFLEXIONS INSPIRÉES PAR LE COLLOQUE TECHNIQUE DES NATIONS UNIES DE 1998

En tant que phénomène transfrontière concernant de nombreux pays, la migration devrait être un domaine important de coopération internationale. Pourtant, cette coopération tarde à se mettre en place. Politiquement, c'est un domaine où se font sentir les conflits d'intérêt et les divergences d'approche en termes de politiques nationales. En tant que domaine de recherche pour les sciences sociales, il est caractérisé par une fragmentation qui est due à la séparation entre disciplines, paradigmes, méthodes et idéologies diverses.

Le Colloque technique de 1998 sur la migration internationale et le développement organisé par les Nations Unies a ainsi constitué un important pas en avant dans le sens d'une action d'envergure mondiale, même si, en tant que réunion d'experts, il n'a pas permis les délibérations intergouvernementales que certains Etats (surtout les pays d'émigration) appelaient de leurs vœux.

Ce colloque a passé en revue les connaissances disponibles sur les liens entre migration et développement et examiné le succès relatif des différentes approches politiques. Il en est ressorti un certain nombre de thèmes clés. Sur cette base, il apparaît nécessaire de se doter d'un cadre de recherche intégré tenant compte de tous les types de mobilité de populations et de tous les stades du processus migratoire. Il faut y intégrer les contributions d'un large éventail de disciplines et de paradigmes relevant des sciences sociales. La perception croissante du rôle des réseaux sociaux et du capital culturel dans le processus migratoire a constitué une avancée importante.

Le colloque a été l'occasion de débattre des besoins de stratégies reflétant l'ambivalence de l'expérience vécue par les femmes. En effet, la migration internationale peut être à la fois une source d'exploitation et d'abus, et une opportunité dans le sens d'un gain d'autonomie.

Les aspects relatifs au peuplement et à la migration de retour ont été débattus. L'un et l'autre doivent être considérés dans le cadre de stratégies ayant pour but de faire bénéficier les différents participants de tous les avantages possibles de la migration. On note à ce sujet un urgent besoin dans le sens d'une meilleure information du public et d'un enseignement concernant les migrations et le peuplement.

Dans l'ensemble, le colloque a révélé la grande complexité des liens unissant la migration et le développement. La conclusion s'est également imposée qu'il existe une base de connaissances pour une formation politique nettement améliorée et une coopération internationale dans ce domaine dont l'importance mondiale ne cesse de croître.

MIGRACIÓN INTERNACIONAL Y AGENDA MUNDIAL: REFLEXIONES SOBRE EL SIMPOSIO TÉCNICO DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS CELEBRADO EN 1998

La migración, al ser un fenómeno transfronterizo que afecta a muchos países, debe ser una importante esfera de cooperación internacional. No obstante, esta cooperación ha tardado en surgir. Políticamente, el tema se ha visto marcado por conflictos de intereses y diferendos en las perspectivas políticas nacionales. Como campo de investigación sociocientífica se caracteriza por su fragmentación en disciplinas, paradigmas, metodologías e ideologías.

El simposio técnico de las Naciones Unidas celebrado en 1998 sobre migración internacional y desarrollo tuvo por consiguiente considerable importancia al constituir un paso hacia adelante para una respuesta global, aunque como reunión de expertos no colmó las expectativas en cuanto a las deliberaciones intergubernamentales, como esperaban algunos países (especialmente los países de emigración).

El simposio examinó los conocimientos sobre los vínculos existentes entre la migración y el desarrollo y debatió el éxito relativo de diversas perspectivas políticas. Durante el mismo surgió una serie de temas clave. Es preciso contar con un marco de investigación inclusivo que tenga en cuenta todos los tipos de movilidad de población y todas las etapas del proceso migratorio. Las contribuciones de una serie de disciplinas sociocientíficas y paradigmas deben integrarse. Se ha progresado considerablemente entre el creciente entendimiento de la función de las redes sociales y el capital cultural en el proceso migratorio.

El simposio examinó la necesidad de estrategias, que reflejan la ambivalencia de la experiencia de las mujeres: la migración internacional puede ser tanto una fuente de explotación y abuso como una oportunidad para adquirir mayor autonomía. También se debatieron cuestiones de asentamiento y migración de retorno, y ambas deben considerarse en las estrategias para alentar al máximo los beneficios migratorios para los diversos participantes. También se observó la urgente necesidad de informar mejor al público y de educarlo sobre cuestiones de migración y asentamiento.

Globalmente, el simposio demostró la gran complejidad de los vínculos entre la migración y el desarrollo. También determinó la existencia de una base de conocimientos para mejorar considerablemente la formación de políticas y la cooperación internacional en esta esfera de creciente importancia mundial.