



# 4 Migration and Urbanization

During the past ten years, migration has increased, both within and between countries, and the phenomenon has grown in political importance.

Recognizing that orderly migration can have positive consequences on both sending and receiving countries, the ICPD Programme of Action (Chapters IX and X) called for a comprehensive approach to managing migration. It emphasized both the rights and well-being of migrants and the need for international support to assist affected countries and promote more interstate cooperation around the issue.

## Urbanization and Relocation

By 2007, for the first time in human history, more than half the people in the world will be living in cities, the result of a continuing movement of people that has led to a tremendous growth of urban areas in developing countries in the past decade. Helping countries respond to this population shift was a key priority for the ICPD.

The Programme of Action devoted an entire chapter to the spatial distribution of the population and

internal population movements. It recognized that people move within countries in response to the inequitable distribution of resources, services and opportunities. Push factors—particularly rural poverty—and pull factors—the attraction of more economically dynamic urban areas and new land tenure prospects in rural frontiers—contribute to these population movements.

As can be the case for international migration, a significant proportion of internal migration is temporary, for example, with labour migrants returning to their farms during busy seasons.

Like earlier population conferences, the ICPD sought to promote integrated and sustainable development policies to address imbalances within countries and between population growth and economic growth. Action recommendations aimed to improve infrastructure and services for poor, indigenous groups and other underserved rural populations.

Another focus was managing population growth and developing infrastructure in large urban areas. These are urgent challenges for development and for

## MANAGING MIGRATION

*In order to achieve a balanced spatial distribution of production employment and population, countries should adopt sustainable regional development strategies and strategies for the encouragement of urban consolidation, the growth of small or medium-sized urban centres and the sustainable development of rural areas, including the adoption of labour-intensive projects, training for non-farming jobs for youth and effective transport and communication systems. To create an enabling context for local development, including the provision of services, governments should consider decentralizing their administrative systems.*

—from ICPD Programme of Action, para. 9.4

improving the lives of the poor, many of whom live in slums and peri-urban settlements with limited access to health care and other services.<sup>1</sup>

The ICPD recognized the economic dynamism of large urban settlements, but also acknowledged the growing importance of medium-sized cities and of migration between cities.<sup>2</sup>

Today, more policy attention is being given to the economic diversity within cities and neighbourhoods, where rich and poor often live in close proximity.<sup>3</sup>

Millennium Development Goal 7, Ensure environmental sustainability, has as a target, “By 2020, achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.”

The latest estimates and projections indicate a majority of the global population will be urban by 2007.<sup>4</sup> The number of urban dwellers will rise from 3 billion in 2003 (48 per cent of the total population) to 5 billion in 2030 (60 per cent). Most of this urban growth will be due to natural fertility rather than migration. The rural population will decline slightly in the same period, from 3.3 to 3.2 billion.

The urban population is projected to grow by 1.8 per cent per year between 2000 and 2030, almost twice as fast as global population growth. Less-developed regions will grow by 2.3 per cent and are expected to be majority urban by 2017. By 2030 all regions of the world will have urban majorities (Africa will reach 54 per cent urban; Asia, 55 per cent). Almost all of the world’s total population growth in this period will be in urban areas of developing countries.

HIV/AIDS has added a new element of uncertainty to these projections.<sup>5</sup> Overall, infection rates have tended to be higher in urban areas. In heavily affected areas, higher urban death rates and lower fertility rates might slow the pace of urbanization or even result in a decline in urban population.

Today there are 20 cities of more than 10 million people (15 in developing countries), containing 4 per cent of the global population; by 2015 there will be 22 such mega-cities (16 in developing countries), with 5 per cent of the global population.

Cities with fewer than 1 million persons will add 400 million people by 2015, and more than 90 per cent of this growth will be in cities of fewer than 500,000.

This will require vast improvements in local infrastructure and in the capacity to manage public services, particularly as decision-making is increasingly being decentralized to local municipalities and districts.

Greater attention will have to be given as well to the needs of the urban poor, whose access to health and other services is far worse than that of richer city dwellers and often not much better than rural conditions. Unmet need for family planning among the urban poor in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, for example, is nearly as great as for rural populations (in South-east Asia it is greater). The urban poor are similarly disadvantaged with regard to skilled birth attendance and knowledge about avoiding HIV/AIDS.

### Policy Developments since the ICPD

Nearly two thirds of developing countries responding to the 2003 UNFPA global survey (97 of 151) reported having taken some action on internal migration, compared to 41 per cent of respondents in 1994; 52 per cent have adopted plans on migration; 51 per cent have plans to influence spatial distribution of the population (including resettlement schemes, plans to redistribute population by creating new economic growth centres, and decentralization of social and economic planning and political decision-making); 16 per cent provide services to internally displaced persons; and 10 per cent have special institutions on migration. More-urbanized countries, and those with faster urban growth, were no more likely than other countries to have adopted multiple measures to address internal migration.

Three fourths of all governments, and nearly 80 per cent in developing countries, reported they were dissatisfied with the spatial distribution of their populations. The global survey indicates that a majority of developing countries have formulated policies on migration or allocated development investments with the aim of influencing population distribution. But the degree of attention given these issues varies widely.<sup>6</sup> Further development of policies addressing rural-urban movements and the conditions of life within cities will require more detailed data and research.

## ADDRESSING MIGRATION'S CAUSES

*Governments of countries of origin and of countries of destination should seek to make the option of remaining in one's country viable for all people. To that end, efforts to achieve sustainable economic and social development, ensuring a better economic balance between developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition, should be strengthened. It is also necessary to increase efforts to defuse international and internal conflicts before they escalate; to ensure that the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, and indigenous people are respected; and to respect the rule of law, promote good governance, strengthen democracy and promote human rights.*

—from ICPD Programme of Action, para. 10.3

### International Migration

According to the United Nations Population Division,<sup>7</sup> in 2000 there were 175 million international migrants in the world—1 in every 35 persons—up from 79 million in 1960.<sup>8</sup> Nearly 50 per cent were women, and 10.4 million were refugees. Between 1990 and 2000, two thirds of the growth in migrants took place in North America. Before 1980, the less-developed regions had a higher share of international migrants, but by 2000, three fifths were found in the more-developed regions.

Today, in an increasingly globalized economy, migration often provides employment opportunities, giving rise to an unprecedented flow of migrants, including increasing numbers of female migrants.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, there are growing numbers of refugees and people internally displaced by natural disasters, armed conflict, social unrest, or economic and political crises.

International migratory movements have big economic, sociocultural and demographic impacts on sending, transit and receiving areas.<sup>10</sup> Transit and receiving areas have had difficulties managing migration flows and integrating migrants into society. Sending areas have lost skilled labour and families have been divided, with women often becoming household heads after the departure of their husbands.

The migration of younger workers has left behind those too old for physical work in agriculture.

Heightened concerns about terrorism have prompted many countries to enhance security at their borders, leading to increased illegal immigration, particularly through smuggling and trafficking. Migratory movements have contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

The economic effects of migration run in both directions. Remittances from migrants flow from more- to less-developed countries. The World Bank reports that in 2002, total workers' remittances to developing countries amounted to \$88 billion (\$30 billion more than official development assistance), and that remittances flowing through official channels more than doubled between 1988 and 1999.<sup>11</sup>

The ICPD called on countries to: address the root causes of migration, especially those related to poverty, for instance, by promoting sustainable development to ensure a better economic balance between developed and developing countries, and defusing international and internal conflicts; encourage more cooperation and dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination, to maximize the benefits of migration; and facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants.<sup>12</sup>

Recommendations included using short-term migration to improve the skills of nationals of countries of origin, collecting data on flows and numbers of international migrants and on factors causing migration, and strengthening international protection of and assistance to refugees and displaced persons.<sup>13</sup>

Echoing the ICPD and other international agreements, the Millennium Summit in 2000 agreed that countries should respect and protect the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families. The 2003 Final Report of the Commission on Human Security<sup>14</sup> stated, “The movements of people across borders reinforce the interdependence of countries and communities and enhance diversity”.

Nevertheless, international migration remains a sensitive subject, and countries have not been able to agree to convene a United Nations conference to provide guidance to countries in addressing the issue, as some have proposed.<sup>15</sup>

### Policy Response

The 2003 UNFPA global survey found that 73 per cent of developing countries responding (110 out of 151) reported having taken some action to deal with international migration, compared to 18 per cent in a similar inquiry in 1994. Nearly half of the countries had adopted programmes or strategies on international migrants or refugees; 37 per cent had enacted legislation on international migrants and migrant workers; 33 per cent had adopted a migration policy; 11 per cent had undertaken efforts to enforce international conventions on refugees, asylum-seekers and illegal migrants; and 10

per cent had passed laws on the trafficking of humans, especially women and children.

A growing number of countries have established coordination mechanisms of various types—across government agencies, between governments, and among governments, NGOs and international donors.

Policies in some African countries, like Ghana and the United Republic of Tanzania, emphasized settling refugees. In Latin American and Caribbean countries, the focus was on providing incentives for returning nationals, while the emphasis in Eastern Europe, the Arab States and Central Asian Republics was on protecting labour markets and combating drug trafficking.

To better integrate immigrants into their society, a few countries have adopted measures promoting equal opportunity in access to jobs, housing, health and education. Some developed countries have changed their family reunification policies in the past decade.

Since July 2002, for instance, Denmark no longer offers a statutory right to reunification with a spouse, and in most cases does not grant reunification if one of the spouses is younger than 24. New Zealand recognizes a wider range of family structures than it used to, but has also strengthened the legal responsibility of sponsors for the family members they bring into the country. Canada’s policy, on the other hand, has

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#### MAPPING PEOPLE AND THEIR NEEDS

Information systems developed in the past decade provide precise geographic information about people responding to demographic surveys. This will allow more detailed examination of the distribution of wealth, opportunities and challenges within countries, and better understanding of the push and pull factors driving population relocation and the impact of policies addressing it.

For example, recent research combines census and survey data to map the distribution of populations. The results suggest the land area covered by urban centres and their peri-urban settlements—and their impact on the environment—may be much

greater than earlier estimates based on administrative boundaries. The new methods also allow measurement of populations along coasts and in other ecologically sensitive regions.

This mapping has been used to study infant mortality in 10 West African countries. The results reaffirmed long-established findings (e.g., higher male mortality, urban advantage over rural areas, and the protective effects of mothers’ education and improved sanitation), but also provided unexpected new insights into the high concentration of the poorest performing areas, which could lead to better targeting of programmes.

Significant investments in capacity building and technology transfer will be required to take full advantage of new data

collection technologies and analysis methodologies. More-detailed analyses of urban social networks and the characteristics of neighbourhoods also need to be incorporated into developing country research and programming.

This could facilitate more local development decision-making, and lead to better policies addressing the variety of settlement patterns with the aim of reducing poverty and improving the quality of life. For instance, mixed income communities may offer avenues for quicker advancement of the poor. Geographic targeting and use of local associations may help realize the ICPD vision of social participation.

become less restrictive, now including dependent children under 22 instead of 19.

A number of developed countries have introduced initiatives encouraging the immigration of skilled workers in response to labour shortages. Some have adopted policies aimed at attracting and retaining highly skilled students from developing countries.

To counter the growing trafficking of human beings, countries have tightened border controls and made asylum policies more restrictive; in some cases this has inadvertently made trafficking more profitable. In response, some countries have introduced severe penalties for human trafficking.

Although most receiving countries recognize the positive contributions of migration to the economic, social and cultural development of both migrant-receiving and migrant-sending countries, the growing levels of illegal immigration and the continuing flows of refugees and asylum-seekers remain major concerns.

Many countries favour more international cooperation to manage migration more effectively. Since 1994, eight regional and subregional consultation processes have been set up, covering nearly every country. The International Migration Policy Programme begun in 1998 has organized 15 regional meetings to promote cooperation and capacity building. And a Global Commission on International Migration was launched in December 2003; it is scheduled to issue recommendations to the UN Secretary-General in mid-2005.