



# THE RAMPHAL CENTRE

SOCIETIES | ECONOMIES | ENVIRONMENT | GOVERNANCE

## Report

### Ramphal Centre Commission on Migration and Development: First Commissioners Meeting Lecture Room 2, Radcliffe House, University of Warwick Thursday, 13 May 2010

The Ramphal Commission on Migration and Development met again on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May at the University of Warwick. This particular meeting of the Commission dealt with the first cluster which are 1,2,6 and 7 of the Commission's Terms of Reference (ToR) which are:

- (1) to examine the human dimensions of migration, and make appropriate recommendations to improve the development advantage and diminish any disadvantage*
- (2) to consider brain drain, brain waste and brain circulation and, having regard to the need for pro-poor development, to consider the situation of unskilled migrants, gender issues, and the scope for improving training in destination countries*
- (6) to recommend how diasporas, and traditional connections between Commonwealth states, may provide greater benefit for the development of member states*
- (7) to consider how transaction costs in remittance flows between families may be reduced, how community-based and sector-specific organisations may be encouraged, and how a positive relationship between migration, development and trade in goods and services may be stimulated by governments and the private sector.*

The emphasis of the Commission's findings will be on the pro-poor mechanisms, gender issues, and wider development of trade in goods and services which may be a product of appropriate types of migration. The Commission must cover migration AND development. The goal of the investigation is ultimately development and it is in that context that the Commission is looking at the issue of migration. The Commission must produce a report which will not be condemned to the cupboards of the Commonwealth, but have real political and social effect. The main order of business was to create a first statement from the Commission, which would be modelled on the Call to the Commonwealth drafted by Laura Chappell. From this point the process of writing the report was discussed as were strategies for placing migration on the agendas of various agencies within the Commonwealth.

#### **First Statement from the Commission (Laura Chappell)**

Laura Chappell produced her draft with three outcomes in mind:

1. To introduce the idea of migration and development to those who may not be familiar with them, and to demonstrate the profound significance that this issue will have in the near future.
2. To foster wider interest and commitment to the Commission itself.
3. To produce a politically sensitive report which captures an awareness of political stumbling blocks to getting commitment from national governments. This must demonstrate awareness that the issue has very different meanings to different countries of the Commonwealth.

In order for the Commission to succeed, the various stakeholders must be mentioned, and their different perspectives and priorities highlighted. The Commission's potential impact must be clearly argued by providing a precise outline for the future, including giving details for the future areas for investigation, meeting schedules and agendas, and people and resources to be consulted.

### **Section 1:**

Aims to provide the basic information about the Commission and in doing so it attempts to engage people in the report, from the beginning. It uses a clear and direct tone to introduce the Ramphal Centre, the Commission, the Chair of the Commission and the other Commissioners, and to emphasise the importance of the people involved.

### **Section 2:**

Argues the importance of the issue. Whilst migration trends in general were discussed, migration and development were given primacy in terms of position and substance. It made clear the sizeable impacts that migration can have on development under certain conditions. In doing so it pointed towards the large sets of issues which will be addressed by the Commission's report. Specifically it identified brain drain, human trafficking and diaspora engagement as three areas of political interest and social significance.

The Call to the Commonwealth is written from a politically pragmatic point of view. It will outline some of the potential costs of migration which will be explored by the Commission. It will also acknowledge the work that is already undertaken by other organisations in researching migration and development

### **Section 3:**

Details the important role that the Commission will play by contributing a report which will enable and compel governmental action on migration and development. The Commission will research the various effects of different types of migration, particularly examining the impact of different policy choices on development outcomes. This would involve a sharing of knowledge between countries. The report produced would enable and compel governments to go beyond their own domestic politics, by providing valuable information which is lacking: research into the migration and development impacts under different social, economic, political and, critically, policy conditions; shared information as to the experiences and ideas for future migration policies in different countries. This effect can be maximised by ongoing consultation with various stakeholders, involvement of political interests from early stages, and appropriate release strategies.

The Commonwealth is emphasised as a crucial platform for the development of these migration and development structures as it has a strong legacy of migration (see Bela Hovy report), a history of pioneering work on international policies, a mandate for further action from CHOGM, and could provide a valuable addition to the UN migration framework, which is incomplete at best.

## **Commission's response and recommendations from the draft.**

### **Targeting Heads of Government :**

There have been many Commissions on migration in the past, but these have fallen flat as they have not been successful in their pitch to governments. The Call to the Commonwealth must garner interest from heads of state, by showing the benefits of the Commission's report to them. The Call should explicitly state that the report will be aiming to provide best practice solutions to many of the problems of migration, as well as policy options to maximise the development potential of migration. The Commission will be Calling for nations to use the apparatus of the Commonwealth to deal with these issues, and so this should be emphasised in the report. Overall the Call to the Commonwealth must promote the report as something which will provide positive solutions to what are currently pressing problems for many countries of the Commonwealth through a new set of protocols, best practices and governance framework.

### **Development Effects :**

Migration and development offers the potential for countries to capitalise on movement for the benefit of the Commonwealth at large and the wider world, especially the poor. The development potential of migration should be given great importance within the report. Success stories should be highlighted, and areas for potential investigation outlined. Training schemes offer a central area for research. They offer the potential of delivering gains to the sending and receiving states, as well as to the migrants themselves. While the onus must be on sending states to provide the appropriate education, there is also the potential for investment from development partners. Such schemes could be implemented throughout the Commonwealth, with the Commission offering a framework of best practice.

**Appropriate Audience and Style :**

The Call to the Commonwealth will be the first statement from the Commission and must make an impact. It should be a clear statement of intent, and an invitation for people to get involved. However, requests for financial contributions should not be part of the Call. The Call to the Commonwealth must be a serious attempt to engage with the issue, but must be written in a way which appeals to heads of states. They will have certain time constraints, and have an interest in clear positive suggestions of what should be done. Stylistically it must be concise with important directions for the Commission, being clearly and structurally defined.

**The Potential within the Commonwealth Framework :**

The Commission sought to build upon this area of the draft. They recognised that migration is a global issue, and for the Commonwealth specific issues must be placed within this international context. There is a need to recognise that non-Commonwealth countries are significant sending and receiving countries in Commonwealth migration patterns, and that any Commonwealth migration flows must be considered in this light. For instance, within Britain, there has been a large political focus on Eastern European migration from within the European Union. Migration from the Commonwealth has been sidelined from discussion by this.

However, the whole migration dialogue has been tainted by the sorts of discourses which surround migrants from A8 countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia). In this context, the Commission needs to explain clearly the focus on specific Commonwealth solutions. The Call to the Commonwealth must show cognisance of the similarities between different migration flows, but also needs to recognise the disparities between Commonwealth and global migration. Certain ties between Commonwealth nations have been altered irrevocably. For example preferential visa arrangements and voting rights have all but ended. Yet the history of movement between Commonwealth nations, political relationships and cultural exchange provides the Commonwealth with an advantage in dealing with the issue of migration and development.

The Commonwealth's composition of many sending and a few receiving countries will match well, both with development models, as well as previous models applied in the Commonwealth to set protocols for the movement of education and healthcare professionals. The Commonwealth seems to be in a unique position to provide political support, as the Secretariat has been mandated to include migration in their strategic plan.

The Commonwealth Secretary General and the Commonwealth Secretariat have offered their support in principle to the Commission as have the various nations represented by the Commissioners. Much of this information was already in the draft, but must be given more prominence in the final statement.

**Political Sensitivity :**

The Commission must recognise that migration and development is a highly politically sensitive issue. The worries about brain drain were covered in the report, and the domestic issues within the receiving nation have been discussed previously by the Commission. This report must read as an objective piece of work, making reference to multiple perspectives. It would be a disservice if it could be discarded by a particular group, as this would undermine the cooperative potential within the Commonwealth framework. At this stage and later, the Commission must present a nuanced picture of the impacts and benefits of migration. All examples should be thoroughly investigated and corroborated, as it is crucial to present cases which cannot be attacked on factual grounds.

Additional clarity could be achieved by being careful with the use of terms. Both migration and development have different connotations in different contexts. Migration should be divided into permanent and temporary, also recognising the difficulty presented by illegal migration to these categories. Migration should be discussed in terms of its individual and state developmental effects. Thus, in the case of the training schemes, it is crucial to emphasise that inappropriate or poorly managed schemes, may contribute to an increase in brain drain or the undermining of basic services in the sending country, both contrary to development aims. Receiving state goals, often in terms of short term labour supplies, might be undermined by more permanent migration flows. There is great potential for mutually beneficial relationships, however, the Commission must emphasise its role in ensuring the appropriate conditions are in place.

Some issues were highlighted by the Commission as needing careful presentation in the Call to the Commonwealth so as to excite interest in the report rather than condemn it to political obscurity. Illegal immigration produces huge problems for sending and receiving countries. Receiving countries are concerned about security, social welfare and labour issues. Sending countries, such as Bangladesh, are concerned about the exploitation of migrant workers by migration agents as well as receiving countries.

Similarly, diaspora are viewed in vastly different ways by different nations. Many diasporas are now being celebrated as a source of development potential, yet in other instances they are regarded as agitating domestic politics. For example, within negotiations in the South Asian sub-continent, whenever diaspora is raised as a possible issue for discussion at an international level, the issue of the Tamil diaspora, for example must be carefully avoided. Similarly, in all negotiations, India is careful that the discussion of migration and development in no way accepts, normalises or tolerates movement of people across the border. In such negotiations between sending and receiving countries, the threat of sending migrants home is a tremendous lever in negotiations, with sending countries dependent upon remittances for much of their GDP. Given this, the Call to the Commonwealth must deal with both sides of the issue in a way that recognises all positions and encourages dialogue between them.

In the post 9-11 world, security is a dominant consideration everywhere. The report must separate the issues of trafficking and other migration flows associated with criminal activity. The Commission's recommendations about migration flows might lead to some improvements in security by allowing further control of migration flows. At this point it must be clear that the Commission will carry out an investigation which will encompass the concerns of all the stakeholders. If the Commission can successfully negotiate these political hazards then the contentious nature of the issue will mean that governments will be interested in the final findings.

#### **Mass Migration Future :**

Migration management is likely to become an even greater issue in the future as the world may be on the edge of seeing a truly massive increase in the level of migration. According to certain reports, the impact of climate change could see the movement of millions of people away from their traditional lands in response to decreased productivities, or natural disasters. The Commonwealth is peculiarly positioned in this light due to the high proportion of its member states which are small island nations, likely to be adversely affected by rising sea levels. In these and other contexts, the Commonwealth has an obligation to look at issues of food security, food supplies, and general livelihoods. The Call should not be alarmist, but point out that there are realistic estimates of massive increases in migration to levels unmanageable within the current frameworks. If this prediction does eventuate, the question will not be in preventing migration but rather in how best manage it.

#### **Writing the Report**

In consultation with Dr Alan Gamlen, the Commission then discussed the plan of action for the interim report, due to be released late 2010.

**Coverage:** Terms of Reference 1, 2, 6, 7. Outlining the possibilities for development advantage and less disadvantage from migration. It would detail the issues of brain drain and waste, gender impacts of migration, the role of diasporas in development, and the general increase in trade that might occur as a result of migration.

**Length:** Document of around 10,000 words. Anything longer might be a deterrent to serious consideration, while a shorter version might fail to encompass all issues.

**Structure:** Dedicate a section to each of the terms of reference. Each section would be distilled into a few key findings from which policies could be built.

*Section 1 (ToR1): Review of migration and development impacts -* The section would draw upon various academic sources on migration and development in general, as well as those with a specific Commonwealth focus. There would be an attempt to put current migration in a historical context. There would be a focus on looking at how the understanding of the relationship between migration and development has developed.

*Section 2 (ToR2): Understanding current thinking on international migration and development, with particular reference to human capital agendas -* This section would focus on some of the most contentious political issues surrounding migration.

*Section 3 (ToR6)- Understanding and advancing diaspora engagement with homeland with special reference to Commonwealth -* This section would look at policies of diaspora engagement and how these can lead to homeland development.

*Section 4(ToR7): Understanding and enhancing the links between economic remittances and development* - This section would draw upon the work of Taylor and others who have developed the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) model of migration practice.

#### **Writing Process :**

The report would contract an expert consultant (likely to be Dr Alan Gamlen of Oxford University) to do the research and write the draft of the report. This consultant would draw upon existing academic literature and new data obtained by the Commission from various government sources. Whilst further consultants could be used to write reports for the individual terms of reference, there was a concern about having too many people involved in the process. The primary consultant would have to provide the majority of the writing work. The literature needs to answer the following: What are the major problems which the Commonwealth faces from migration? How can policy and other actions influence the whole process? The report should present ideas to turn migration from being a trouble for receiving countries to being something that can enhance development. These should include an investigation of the possibility of skilled labour transfer, return migration, training schemes, and remittance programs. These will attract the attention of Commonwealth heads and decision makers, and galvanise them into action. Each of the Terms of Reference have derived from some of the issues which are creating problems, and so they should form a focus for governments to engage with the report.

The Commission must accept ultimate responsibility for the report. Hence, there is a need to establish a system which will allow the consultant to get direction from the Commissioners when needed. Questions could be directed to the Commission in general, or to Commissioners with specific expertise in a particular area. It was agreed that the work would be divided into four week periods, with the Commissioners to expect some contact at the end of these periods. The Commissioners agreed that they would have a seven working day turnaround for any draft that was sent to them with appropriate notice. The Commission commented that the best use of committee time will not be to draft the report, but rather to offer comments and responses. The Commissioners will be able to suggest policy directions which an academic might not be able to do. Policy directions cannot be formed exclusively from research findings.

As the purpose of the report is to influence CHOGM, the executive summary will become a key document. This cannot be an academic in style or focus, but rather must be capable of having an impact upon government policy. This is the document which must be correct in tone, length, purpose direction etc. Reading time is scarce, so examples must be chosen carefully, and recommendations clearly presented at the start of the document. For the report to be successful it was envisaged that the Commissioners would have to play a major role in guiding the executive summary, as they will be better in tune with the expectations of policy makers.

#### **Emphasis of Report :**

- Migration and Development as a major issue
- The Commonwealth provides a useful and actionable platform for the creation of national policies international relations needed to deal with this issue
- Practical solutions which government could use to build policies that could provide benefits for sending countries, receiving countries, migrants and their families and communities
- Political awareness accompanied by strategies for engaging important stakeholders in the report

Migration is a global issue of great political interest in many different countries. The development potential of migration has been the focus of numerous recent studies, indicating the possibility of benefits for migrants, families, sending and receiving countries from migration. However, appropriate policy directions remain unclear.

Whilst this is a global issue, the Commission will focus on the Commonwealth, which it believes provides an appropriate platform for the development of national policies and an international framework of cooperation around migration. Commonwealth entitlements and trade preferences have all but disappeared, but the Commonwealth remains a family of nations, bound through cultural links and a long history of migration. The Commonwealth in the past has been used as a platform for developing sets of protocols similar to those which this Commission will recommend. The make-up of the Commonwealth, with many small island states greatly affected by outmigration, a few receiving countries deeply concerned by the social and economic effects of immigration and a history of strong cooperation over migration issues, make it an issue that this platform can provide genuinely novel and profoundly useful framework for cooperation.

Most reports into migration policy and development possibilities have had little impact on policy or political will. This report will distinguish itself by its provision of solutions rather than problems, and by its clear communication of these solutions. Thus, whilst the report has to be founded on sound factual bases, and rigorous analysis, this is a study for action not for academic discussion. Outlining best practices and success stories will be very useful guidance for the policy makers to move forward. The report must identify not only

what exists but what is functional. The literature does not necessarily deal with best practice very well. Instead there might have to be different tactics to come at this type of information. One tactic will be to hold conferences in which different experiences are discussed. The Commission has access to various diaspora conferences in the Caribbean, the U.K. and the South Asian sub-continent. Material from these countries could be forwarded to Dr Gamlen. Commissioners Oucho and Yeoh, as well Keith Nurse and Sadhana Manik might have special contributions to make to the question of best practice, particularly in terms of policy recommendations. Tapping into the results of conferences on migration and consulting widely will complement the literature review in producing recommendations for best practice, probable pitfalls, and possible solutions.

### **Building support within the Commonwealth for the Ramphal Commission**

The Commission would interact with the Commonwealth on a number of different levels in order to get the issue of migration and development onto the political agenda, and build up momentum behind the issue before the CHOGM meeting in 2011. The Call to the Commonwealth will be the launching pad for the rest of the project.

At the national level, Commissioners' contacts will be used to engender support within several important nations. The UK is important, and will be approached through contacts in DFID and other departments. In Australia, the Commission will flag its work with different levels of government. There is already a sub-committee within DFAT (Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia) and the Prime Minister's Office which are preparing for the CHOGM meeting, and the Commission will aim to work with these groups in promoting migration and development as an agenda item.

The Commission will continue its involvement with the Bangladesh government to build support here and there. Professional contacts will be used to raise the issue within India. Here, the Prime Minister might take some interest in the issue, due to India's interest in its diaspora. Regional organisations will also be targeted. The Commission will negotiate for the issue of migration and development to be part of discussions amongst leaders from the Caribbean and South Asian Sub-continent. A similar process of promoting the Commission's work will take place in Africa. In each of these regional and national contexts there will be an ongoing consultation with different members of government in order to best position the report to have an impact. The Commission will gain interest by circulating interim reports (fully drafted reports on each cluster of ToR) to various individuals of influence. Their opinions and recommendations could provide valuable feedback for the report. This could produce a report which would be more reflective of the political situations and agendas of particular countries. It would also provide contact points with heads of state in advance of the report's eventual release.

The Commonwealth Health Ministers met at the same time as the Commission. It is possible that migration might be put forward as an issue for future investigation. On this note the Commonwealth health professionals' alliance will have regional meetings. Meetings between the finance and education ministers will also be targeted. All these provide a useful forum for the discussion and promotion of the issue of migration and development.

At a Commonwealth wide level, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Secretary General have assured the Commission of their total support for the Commission's efforts. The issue of migration and development is regarded as important and warranting further investigation. The Commission will request that the secretariat contact all member states to introduce the Commission and its role. The exact format of this message is dependent upon the concordance of the secretary general. The Commission will also deal with Commonwealth institutions, civil society and NGOs. To lock in NGO support the Commission needs to engage these groups with the Commission at an early stage. The Commission needs to convince them that it is their ally and not their rival. Allowing ongoing input from these groups will go some way towards this. Finally the Commission stressed the importance of information flows to the wider public audience in the Commonwealth. Including diaspora organisations and Commonwealth organisations more broadly in the process, would facilitate the Commission by fostering a public will around the cause.

It was suggested that the Commission should be represented and a paper presented at the next Global Migration Forum, scheduled for later this year in Mexico. This could become an ongoing presentation at the forum. It could be very useful for the Commission to gain observer status at the forum and to present in this way. The Commission will also work to have the issue raised in the Colombo series of negotiations to be held in Dhaka. These will provide another avenue to gain international recognition for the Ramphal Commission.

**Practical point on the release of the Call to the Commonwealth:**

The Call to the Commonwealth should be released in June. At this point the Commissioners will release information in their own countries, and through their own contacts. The main press conference will be in London, at the Royal Commonwealth Society. The Commission would arrange for substantial media and NGO attendance.

It is important that in advance of this release all the national leaders will be sent a letter of introduction and at least a draft of the announcement. This should be done through the Secretary General, with a personal note from the Chair of the Commission. It is also crucial that the secretary general approaches the civil society bodies to inform them of the imminent report.

The message needs to be that out of this Commissions report something actionable will happen. We may suggest a code/protocol which countries could sign up to. The solution to the problems of migration could come from an organised framework galvanised by the migration and development issue.

**Use of technology and wider consultation**

The Commission spoke about the need to get more people involved in the discussion process through the use of modern electronic technologies. Increasing participation will bring in new ideas and possible solutions and also heighten interest in the issue. Suggestions tabled were:

- Video taped conversations of meetings. Making these available online could bring far more people into the discussion of migration and development. Organisations who may be interested in migration and development could be encouraged to have their own conversations based upon the videos which the Commission will produce.
- Think Tanks. There could be events hosted by individual think tanks on the issue. The discussions could be distributed electronically. E.g. The Bangladesh Institute could host an event on migration and development. The release of the Call to the Commonwealth might provide an opportunity for these institutes to have such a conversation.
- Media. Journalism and editorial articles written by the Commissioners could foster mainstream interest on the issue. A link to the Commission's web page could be published along with the articles.
- Email networks. Mark Collins has offered assistance to get information about the Commissions work throughout the civil society network. However, these might not have the best coverage. Linking in with email lists of the Commonwealth societies, and newsletters could supplement this coverage and be able to reach many people with little effort. The Commission would have to provide information on what exactly what people could be doing.
- Notice board or web page. A forum where people could post comments could be created. Monthly progress reports of about 400 words could provide enough information to maintain interest in the project. These could be written by individual Commissioners. Outsiders could be invited to post at different stages. These individuals would come from governments and NGOs.

**Future Meetings**

Meeting in Cyprus; October 2010, to settle on the interim report into the first cluster of Terms of Reference. Following this there will be a meeting to discuss the second cluster in the second half of February, to be held in the Caribbean. The final meetings must be held by late June, in order to give the report enough time to have an impact at CHOGM.

*Daniel Guinness, University of Oxford, May 2010*