



حوار أبوظبي بين الدول الآسيوية المرسلية والمستقبلة للعمالة
Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian Labor-Sending and Receiving Countries

Special Meeting on Inter-Regional Cooperation

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BACKGROUND NOTE

Introduction

Over the years, state-led, voluntary consultative processes (RCPs) have been founded in many regions of the world. Some of these cover a clear geographic region, like southern Africa; others link countries along migratory routes, for example between West Africa and Europe. These RCPs offer a platform for consultation among Member States of a particular region for discussing, and deliberating on, how they can jointly improve the governance of human mobility and amplify the development returns of migration, while also addressing challenging aspects such as irregular migration or trafficking in human beings.

Meanwhile, platforms for the global discussion of migration governance have come to recognise that a lot of what transpires in terms of collaborative action and discussion of lessons-learned takes place at a regional level. The Global Forum for Migration and Development, for example has recognised that, as does the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.

Article 47 of the GCM, for example, invites RCPs to “provide platforms to exchange experiences in the implementation of the Global Compact”, while Articles 50 and 52 invite RCPs to review progress within their regions and report back to the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF).

Vertical integration of RCPs into the global conversation has not, however, been matched by horizontal integration: RCPs, with their various rich experiences, do not engage among themselves in an inter-regional dialogue. Other than the biannual IOM-convened Global RCP day, there is no meaningful structural exchange of experiences between state-led RCPs. There remains an opportunity to leverage their work in an inter-regional context.

A second shortcoming is that, while global dialogues have recognised the role of RCPs, RCP participation is uneven and there is no collective contribution to global dialogues.



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Strengthening Inter-Regional Cooperation

Although each region is faced with unique contexts and specific challenges, and the nature and structure of the various RCPs vary, experiences in one region can be highly relevant to those of another region.

For example, the Bali Process focuses on the causes and consequences of irregular migration and, in particular, human trafficking, people smuggling and transnational crime. As part of their efforts, the Bali Process has emphasised the importance of recruitment practices, with recommendations including Member States developing “policy guidelines on supply chain transparency, ethical recruitment, worker protection and redress frameworks”: all issues of critical importance to the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

Likewise, the Prague Process’ recent focus on migrant skilling or the Budapest Process exchanges on Migrant Resource Centres and regional law enforcement cooperation are complimentary with the work of other RCPs.

Strengthened engagement between RCPs at an inter-regional level would help RCPs to draw on the experiences of other regions and to bridge knowledge gaps. Initiatives that would help to ameliorate this might include:

- Granting mutual observer status to other RCPs
- Inviting presentations from other regions at RCP meetings
- More frequent meetings of RCPs at both inter-regional and global levels
- The development of digital knowledge-sharing platforms

Contributing to Global Processes

It is widely recognised that over 30 years RCPs have played a significant role in shaping international migration governance at a national and regional level, building the foundation for enhanced cooperation at a global level. They have contributed to the alignment of concepts and language used, and shared good practices, new developments and opportunities. Their informal, state-led nature allowed for discussions on sensitive matters and has helped create numerous networks between government officials. As such, migration dialogues function as the oil in a very complicated global migration regime.



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At the same time, however, both long-standing and more recent global platforms have rarely facilitated real opportunities for RCPs to elaborate on what is happening within their regions.

Strengthening collective RCP contributions to global dialogues would yield dividends for their Member States. Firstly, global fora would have a 360-degree view of what is happening in global governance, improving multilateral decision-making. Secondly, it could also lessen the burden on Member States, as global platforms proliferate, increasing the frequency of reporting requirements.

This need not require a burdensome, top-down approach: the key is to strengthen existing mechanisms that can enable RCPs to interact with global platforms. For example, RCP's could seek to coordinate their participation in - and contributions prior to - global meetings, like the GFMD, the International Dialogue on Migration and, for those RCP's whose member states have signed on to the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF).

Guiding Questions:

1. How can RCPs organise to encourage inter-regional cooperation?
2. What are the key barriers to and main advantages of enhanced cooperation among RCPs?
3. How can RCPs organise to strengthen input to global fora?
4. What are the key barriers to enhanced input to global fora?