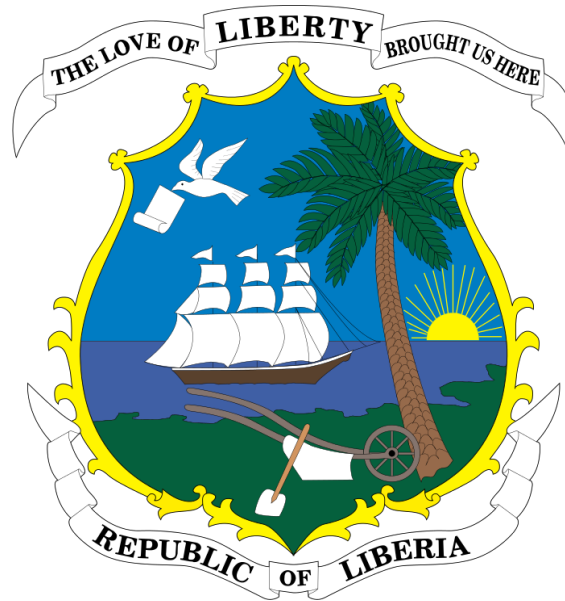

The 14th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development



Round Table:
Looking Beyond Emergencies:
Ensuring Job Creation in Migrant Sourcing Transiting Countries

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15:00 – 16:30



1. Excellencies,
2. Distinguished Delegates,
3. Ladies and Gentleman,
4. Good Afternoon.
5. First let me take this opportunity to extend warm greetings from HE Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia.
6. I am honoured to be here today with you all to participate in the 14th UNCTAD Conference, which comes at a turning point for global ambitions.

Introduction

7. Fellow colleagues, distinguished delegates, today our world is currently witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. The United Nations estimates that an unprecedented 65.3 million people have been displaced from their homes worldwide. 54% of these people come from three states alone: Somalia, Afghanistan, and the largest from Syria.¹
8. Once again, it is becoming evident that the world is interconnected and interdependent, a phenomenon that has largely been regarded as a positive development, advancing peace, stability and prosperity. However, this also means that global issues such as the refugee crisis must also be addressed by the collective, rather than individual affected states.
9. Currently, a large part of the burden is carried by countries opening their borders to refugees. Together we must develop concrete solutions that allow us to leverage the benefits of growing Diasporas for development.
10. Liberia learned a few important lessons during the Ebola Outbreak. Two of the main issues are relevant to the refugee crisis as well, and I would like to briefly address them:

¹ UNHCR: <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

² <http://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/origins-political-order-review-francis-fukuyama-s->



- a. First, developing comprehensive systems not only to respond to such a crisis but also to mitigate the risk of an influx beyond nations' ability to manage such influx. It is our shared responsibility.
- b. Second, understanding that all lives matter and addressing the root causes for such challenges is absolutely important if we are to prevent such crises in the future.

System Development

11. Widespread media coverage of the refugee crisis has highlighted fears refugees may be harmful to host nations by draining resources and taking away jobs. In this context I find it especially important to highlight the fact that there are advantages that can be exploited if the right systems and tools are in place.
12. The geographical distribution of international migrants is heavily influenced by the availability of employment opportunities and the relative openness and accessibility of receiving countries. Migrants often fill critical labor gaps, create jobs as entrepreneurs, and contribute in terms of taxes and social security contributions. Migrants, some of the most dynamic members of society, can also forge new paths in science, medicine and technology and enrich their host country by promoting cultural diversity. Gaps in human capacity can be filled through migrations - skills transfers are a welcome side effect of migration.
13. Currently, Europe has an ageing labor force and declining birth rates that will ultimately hamper economic growth. According to OECD, 50 million people must be added to the workforce of the EU to maintain growth. The current crisis could offer the much-needed influx – however systems to integrate the high number of refugees are of the utmost importance. Those systems must include access to education, labor, and capital.



14. Remittances are have proven to be a main transmitter of migration's development benefits to sending country economies. According to recent estimates by the World Bank, recorded remittances to developing countries in 2008 were estimated to have reached \$305 billion, equivalent to nearly 2 per cent of aggregate developing country GDP and well over half of estimated FDI inflows (\$490 billion) and over twice as large as official development aid (\$119 billion) received by developing countries. The contributions to distressed economies can contribute to addressing some of the root causes of migration, poverty.

Root causes

15. It is important to remember the root cause of current displacements. There must be a common responsibility to address the ongoing political, environmental, and social situations throughout our world to avoid crises of such magnitude in the future.

16. This begins with the challenges of climate change, responsible trade that does not impoverish parts of the world, and stable political systems that over the long term bring about the stability and prosperity that leads to improved human development indicators and a long term reduction in migration flows.

Conclusion

17. Building systems and addressing the root causes of the crisis are important, but the right instruments are just as meaningful. That includes a clear and effective leadership role and efficient collaboration between stakeholders. Without effective management systems, effective responses to any crisis remain difficult.



18. To paraphrase political economist, Francis Fukayama, one can argue that economic growth, developing state capacity, strengthening rule of law and mechanisms of accountability can be important means of helping countries become more prosperous places for the next generation to live their lives.²
19. Demographic studies suggest that by 2050, an additional 630 million people will join the labour market in the least developed countries, where a quarter of the world's young people reside today.
20. We must also understand that many of these young people are audience to the prosperity of the few. Voice and simple data connectivity in the world's 48 UN-designated Least Developed Countries has risen to nearly 30 percent of the population at the end of 2010 from an average of 1.2 percent 10 years ago, according to the ITU, which describes the phenomenon as a "mobile cellular miracle". While this growth of mobile technology to almost 250 million people in LDCs is a miraculous achievement, it also delivers real time exposure to the world islands of prosperity amidst the oceans of suffering and hopelessness. These real time exposures are redefining the definition of prosperity for the majority poor while impacting their consumption behavior.
21. For example, if one were to poll the average young person in Africa today to name five manufactured products they consume in their daily life that is made in Africa, we might all be stunned at the results.
22. If we were to poll the average young African today on naming five countries they would rather wake up in tomorrow if they had a choice, we would be surprise at the results.
23. If we were to poll the majority youthful African population to name five people they would consider their mentors we will be most surprise.

² <http://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/origins-political-order-review-francis-fukuyama-s-impressive-history-state>



24. Ladies and gentlemen, having had these chats in my country I can tell you the answer for them lies in the west. Hence lie a major fundamental challenge that we must collectively and responsibly address. This is why in our commitments in the implementation of the SDGs we must do all we can to tackle poverty at its source on the streets of the oceans of hopelessness.

25. To do this we must do the following:

- a. First, we must promote prosperity at home, we must use this same mobile technology to re-enforce those cultural norms and traditions that build self-confidence in a youthful population bombarded every day with information that is redefining their self worth. Governments, development partners, civil society must collectively support such efforts. Today the average youth in Liberia can tell you the name of all the players on his or her favorite European football league, but is likely not able to name five players on a team at home.
- b. Second we must ensure that trade rules enshrined in multilateral agreements carry a human face – it respects the principle of transparency embedded in the rule of law while sensitive to the social implications of how nations trade. It must foster equal access for equal prosperity for all. It must contribute to the transformation of the lives of all of our people.
- c. Third, we must make every effort to understand the root causes of our global challenges today and seek local innovations to local challenges. In my own country, the success of tackling the health crisis came from the communities, communities traditions of collectively protecting their communities, and community ownership of that collective response to a foreign invasion in the form of Ebola, reverse that situation.



- d. Fourth, we must all accept that countries like mine can never truly benefit from global market access; can never truly be competitive, without quality infrastructure, investment in human capacity, and the use of information technology to leapfrog strategic gains to ensure our transformation. As such, much strategic support must be given in terms of technical support and technology transfer for the improvement of domestic resource mobilization and a clear fiscal framework of borrowing that is align to investment in infrastructure defined by our development agenda.
 - e. Finally, we must recognize and respect the magnitude of the challenge that why we live in a world of the few islands of prosperity, the primary beneficiaries of increased global market access, the devastation to our natural endowments in those pursuits represent the greatest threat to our very existence and as such, collectively, we must do all we can to ensure that our continue pursuits are not to the detriment of the oceans of the majority living in hopelessness. Our failure to do so will increasingly come with a costly price.
26. Ladies and gentlemen, this is our world, in our everyday existence many of us in this room wake up to children who knows nothing of what it means to go without a meal in a day, knows nothing of what it means to flee your comforts to save your life; of what it means to walks for miles to access education, a human right. We must collective commit to a world where the children of the majority can too be blessed with such fortunes. We must make every effort to protect global peace and foster greater dialogue with a promise of a shared prosperity for all of our people.
27. With these few words, let me once again say thank you for this thought provoking session and a big congratulations to the UNCTAD family for these series of meetings.
28. I thank you.