Global Migration Futures Project

Second Stakeholders Workshop, Cairo, Egypt, 13-14 May 2011

Coming together in Cairo

On 13–14 May 2011, the Global Migration Futures (GMF) project convened its second stakeholders workshop in Cairo, Egypt. The workshop, which brought together 23 representatives from academia, governments, NGOs, and civil society organizations across the globe, was hosted by the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo, Tahrir Square.

The primary objectives of the two-day event were to:

- gain feedback from stakeholders on four scenarios depicting potential migration futures created by participants at the first GMF workshop and further developed by the research team;

- challenge participants' existing assumptions about migration and prompt creative thinking about future migration drivers, patterns, and trends;

- improve GMF's understanding of future migration in North Africa and Europe;

- think critically and across sectors and regions about responses to possible international migration futures.

The GMF research team and stakeholders were excited to come together in Cairo and witness the historic political transition taking place.

Examining potential futures

On the first day of the workshop, the GMF team presented the main 'megatrends' – or future trends with a relatively high degree of certainty and potential to impact future international migration – and four 'second-generation' scenarios about future international migration in North Africa and Europe.

Stakeholders worked in groups to examine the uncertainties underlying the scenarios and to challenge any elements they found problematic. During this process, the research team and participants identified their own assumptions about migration and challenged one another to think creatively about future drivers and trends.

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On the second day of the workshop, stakeholders broke up into groups to discuss how to prepare for potential migration futures. This group drafted a plan from the perspective of a migrant civil society organization.

Egypt's Minister for Manpower and Migration, H.E. Dr Ahmed El Borai (right), gave the keynote address at the workshop.

Thinking innovatively about policy responses

On the second day of the workshop, stakeholders engaged in role-playing exercises and developed strategic plans to prepare for the potential migration futures described in the scenarios.

In the morning, stakeholders had to draft plans based on their current professional roles and insights; for example, someone working in the government had to think about governmental interests and objectives in preparing for future migration. In the afternoon, stakeholders exchanged professional roles, which prompted them to consider unfamiliar interests and perspectives. After each session of role-playing, stakeholders presented their strategies to the entire group and discussed points of convergence and divergence across the sectors.

Insights from the methodology

Based on the stakeholder discussions during the exercises and debriefing sessions, the GMF team identified four factors that share a high potential to impact future international migration and that deserve greater study and attention:

- advancing technology
- shifting demographics
- changes in the environment
- public opinion and policy making.

To learn more about the future outlook of these drivers and trends and their potential future impacts on migration dynamics, the GMF team has structured its third stakeholders workshop in September 2011 as a series of roundtable discussions led by experts in each of the four fields. The team hopes that through these expert exchanges, new research initiatives will be formed that reflect the innovative and long-term thinking that stands at the centre of GMF's scenario methodology.

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