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MIGRATION: MANAGING SOCIAL COHESION, REDUCING CONFLICT

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INTRODUCTION

It is a pleasure for someone who comes from Cape Town, the southern tip of the African continent, where the Atlantic meets the Indian Ocean, to participate in a Tri-Continental Atlantic Initiative in Morocco.

It is far-sighted and visionary indeed that Morocco's High Commission for Planning has convened us in their planning for 2030. It states that Morocco correctly understands that national planning cannot be done without the broader Global Community. In complex and integrated times, more than one country has their hands on the levers of key variables that shape our common destiny.

This has never been more eloquently articulated than in the current context of financial, economic, environmental and security co-dependence that we are living through. Crises do not respect national borders, and problems do not confine themselves to the country of origin, whether we speak of banking irregularities, excessive dependence on fossil fuels, or diseases. Even Swine Flu can find its way to places where pork is haraam.

Never before has the world found it so necessary for Joint Planning to manage both the opportunities as well as the distempers of Globalisation. Morocco has taken the initiative to gather its neighbours from all shores of the Atlantic Ocean to plan around those issues which affect us all.

MANAGING GLOBALISATION

Globalisation is a reality. We must neither deny it nor simply succumb to it. We must manage and direct it as much as what we can, by joint planning, building partnerships, identifying its variables, and acting on them to increase its positives and reduce its negatives.

Globalisation has contradictory impulses : it has produced enormous wealth and driven economic growth, but deepened poverty and inequality between and within countries ; it has created great progress and development, but often at the expense of the natural world and the environment ; it has expanded knowledge and spread information rapidly, but has eroded spiritual values and distorted identity ; and it has resulted in massive mobility of people from rural to urban and from continent to continent, but it has resulted in less social cohesion at the hand of suspicion, hostility, and conflict between people.

Today, all the world's key decision-makers are engaged, in one way or the other, in managing and trying to find solutions to the various crises that either resulted from, or been exacerbated by, Globalisation: we are living through the deepest and most devastating financial and economic crisis; increasingly we are acknowledging the extent and destructiveness of the environmental crisis; our airports are eloquent testimony to the depth of the security crisis we face; and we have yet to act decisively to meet the crisis that arise from the mobility, the migration of people – the crisis of Social Cohesion !

These crises are all facets of a complex whole. We do not only need Global Governance to be strengthened over the financial and economic institutions of the world, but we need better Global Governance over the ability to harm or improve the Environment, over exacerbating or mitigating the world's security situation, and over whether we demonise and alienate « the other » or bring people into solidarity with each other.

We have shown great urgency to deliberate and act on those crises which are most visible, such as 9/11, or those which affect the powerful among us, such as the collapse of banks, while delaying on inconvenient crises, or exploiting for political gain the crisis of social cohesion that arise from the migration of people.

A tri-Continental Atlantic Forum such as this has the opportunity to anticipate the potential crisis that may arise from the changes in demographic trends in the world, the movement of people within and across borders, and the planning and actions required to avert a potential crisis.

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

The Transatlantic Council on Migration projects that by 2050 the population of the world would have increased from 6.6 billion to about 9 billion people, and that this population growth will largely be in the developing world, with Sub-Saharan Africa having the largest increase. Sub-Saharan Africa will, in fact, increase its share of the world's population from 10% in 2000 to 19% in 2050. This will correspond with countries in Europe growing in the Ageing population, while declining in population growth. (Lutz, Wolfgang, Warren Sanderson, Sergei Scherbov, and Samir K.C. 2008.

Demographic and Human-Capital Trends in Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, DC.: Migration Policy Institute).

The implications of this projection is that in the developing world, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, there will be massive growth in the workforce, and the current economic crisis does not create optimism that such countries will be able to develop their educational systems adequately to skill this workforce or develop their economies sufficiently to absorb this workforce. If left unattended, the results could be a proliferation of conflicts, humanitarian crises, and the increase in migration flows.

On the other hand, the declining labour force in countries in Europe resulting from ageing and lower population growths create the need for semi-skilled and skilled labour.

Clearly the table is laid for continued and increased migration of people, and judging from the economic and political climate, especially across Europe, the conditions exist for hostility and conflict on the issue of migration and further challenges to social cohesion and co-existence.

UNDERSTANDING MIGRATION

Migration typically occurs because of at least three major factors:

1. Massive movement of people happens as a result of conflict, civil war, genocide, or political repression. There are many such exiled communities across the world, either interspersed with indigenous communities, or in refugee camps. Such communities suffer their own hardships, and are often the focus of intolerance and conflict resulting from expression of xenophobia.
2. In situations where local and national economies are unable to absorb its citizens or its citizens have not had access to an education system that equips them with skills, or the national economy faces collapse, such citizens seek access to economies in cities or countries where they have a better chance of survival. Such migration occurs over time, and can be either legal or illegal.
3. We are used to movements of people on a great scale in the wake of natural disasters such as floods, fires, earthquakes, etc. what we may have to prepare for are far more insidious movements of people resulting from environmental changes and the effects of global warming and climate change. People will move from areas affected by growing desertification, water shortages, drought, and rising sea levels.

The direction of movement of people is often towards a former colonizer or imperial power, countries which share a linguistic or cultural affinity or countries which have ease of access

because of relaxed immigration regimes arising out of being in the same Commonwealth or its equivalents.

If these constitute that which we know, then a futures exercise should begin to anticipate the challenges that arise from the migration of people, and the investments which need to be made in social cohesion to reduce or eliminate conflict between people.

MOROCCO AND MIGRATION

From studies about demographic and migration trends in the Middle East and North Africa, and more particularly around the Mediterranean, much can be anticipated about the centrality of Morocco in the movement of people. (Fargues, Phillippe. 2008. Emerging Demographic Patterns across the Mediterranean and their Implications for Migration through 2030. Washington, DC : Migration Policy Institute). The following facts stand out :

1. Countries like Morocco have a large supply of young, active and quite educated workers ;
2. The MENA countries together have shed about 20 million peoples to Europe, of which, by 2005, Morocco had 2,7 m first generation migrants in Europe ;
3. Morocco had seen a phenomenal growth of remittances from its migrants – it had grown from US \$ 8,8 billion in 1980 to 28,5 billion in 2007 ; and
4. Morocco has also been a recipient of lower skilled migrants from Sub – Saharan Africa and other MENA countries over the same period.

The pattern, therefore, exists for Morocco to shed its relatively skillet workers to Europe, and to receive lower skilled workers from, amongst others, Sub – Saharan Africa. A forward looking exercise, therefore, has to address the challenge of the Moroccan economy's ability both to absorb its educated youth and to manage the potential movement of people from Sub-Saharan Africa.

It also means that an Atlantic Forum such as this could discuss an orderly migration regime where Moroccans can indeed assist the skills and labour challenges of Europe with its ageing population. It also provides the opportunity both in Morocco and Europe to embark on major campaigns aimed at demystifying the migrant, ridding indigenous people of the misplaced notion of migrants replacing natives in the job market, creating truly multicultural exchanges, and establishing the foundations for societies which are socially and economically integrated.

This will be critical if we are to avert the conflict and violence which are threatening. As growth slows and the global recession deepens and jobs are lost and migrants in Europe face life unemployed and without welfare , benefits while European natives are told by rightwing politicians that they are unemployed because of migrants, we must prepare for a loss of social cohesion and solidarity. As sub-Saharan Africa's population growth without adequate education systems and an economy that can absorb their the movement to the North will happened and similarly threaten social cohesion.

BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION

I want to suggest five thoughts on meeting the challenges posed by migration that emerge from the experience of south Africa as we try to build social cohesion after the devastation of Apartheid.

1. We must accept the Mobility of People, and understand the demographic dynamics that inform it, just as we accept the mobility of capital and Goods in a globalised word. Accepting the Mobility of people is the Key to planning for it, not simply regulating it.
2. Planning for the migration of people means choosing the best way to accommodate migrants. We are living through the dangers of allowing migrants to be in isolation in spatial, cultural and religious ghettos, just as we must recognize that assimilation is increasingly not an option. You cannot insist that migrants leave their identity at the ,order and adopt the pre-existing identity of the host, without the host examining the impact of new cultural, linguistic and religious influences in reshaping their own identity for this reason integration is preferred if it values both the integrity of whole(the nation) and the integrity of the parts (the communities in the nation).
3. The economies of the today are knowledge driven. More than the muscle and sinews of the human bodies, what the knowledge economy requires is the constant application of creativity and innovation to add value, and this is derived from different people, different cultures, differing worldviews interacting and challenging each other to unlock the creative impulse. The mobility of people ensures a drive to multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism as the key to the knowledge economy.
4. The challenge in ensuring social cohesion lies in finding the balance between building unity (that which makes us different). Too much of either jeopardizes social cohesion because you could end up either with uniformity in a melting pot or atomized communities with no responsibility to the whole. This balance allows for the emergence of people who comfortable with multiple identities, and allow minority communities to live where they do not necessarily make the rules.
5. Finally, rather than simply regulating for migration, we also need regulation against all intolerance that spawns extremism, racism; anti-Semitism, sexism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia. The success of such a project lies in admitting that increasingly our

nations and societies are more diverse and we need to educate citizens about by « other » so that stereotypes and phobias are replaced by knowledge of, and respect for, the culture, religious and practices of the « other ».

Unless we do some of these things and others, we will not avert the dangers in a world that will see more, not less, movement of people. We must intervene not only because we want to keep the peace, but because the world needs the interaction of difference for its own progress. Countries that are progressing are those who have invested in nurturing and harnessing the difference in their own borders or have welcomed the differences that have come from outside. Those who try insulate their mono-cultures from change, who repress differences; and deny the contribution of others, especially of women, to a society, are on a path of eventual decay.

We need diversity, multi-culturalism and the creative impulse it unlocks both for social progress as well as social cohesion.