Forum: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Issue: Global Migration

1. About the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):

ECOSOC is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations; it is the UN’s largest and most multifaceted subsidiary body. It’s mainly responsible for the direction and coordination of the economic, social, humanitarian, and cultural activities carried out by the UN. ECOSOC has 54 members, its membership is based on geographic representation: 14 seats are allocated to Africa, 11 to Asia, 6 to eastern Europe, 10 to Latin America and the Caribbean, and 13 to western Europe and other areas. Members are elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly. Four of the five permanent members of the Security Council have been constantly reelected because they provide funding for most of ECOSOC’s budget.

The ECOSOC functions as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for articulating policy recommendations addressed to member states and the United Nations. It coordinates with key financial entities including the World Bank and the International monetary Funds. ECOSOC has broad responsibility for about 70% of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system, including 14 specialized agencies, five regional commissions and 9 “functional” commissions.

The current president of the committee’s sixty-ninth session is Néstor Osorio. He was elected on the 28th of January 2013. He is currently the Ambassador and Permanent representative of Columbia to the United Nations in New York. The vice chairs also elected by acclamation are Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman (Sudan), Masood Khan (Pakistan), Ferit Hoxha (Albania) and Martin Sajdik (Austria).
2. Background/History of the issue:

Global migration is a worldwide phenomenon that is growing in impact, span and complexity. Migration is both a cause and effect of broader development progressions and an inherent feature of our increasingly globalizing world. Although there are no substitutes for development, migration can have a positive effect on development if supported by the correct form of policies. It has however become one of the most critical issues in our modern day and that is because it involves both developed and developing countries. Today, due to developments in transportation and communication, globalization managed to noticeably increase the number of people who want to move to different countries. Recent statistics show that there are more than 214 million migrants worldwide.¹

3. Main Problems

Although there are many highly skilled and highly educated immigrants, most immigrants tend to be low skilled and therefore they lower the standard of the workforce. Because immigrants usually come in big quantities, the host nation must provide for them, and because many of them are low skilled labor the nation ends up paying more for hosting them than they actually gain.

The overpopulation of immigrants may lead to the formation of slums due to lack of resources to accommodate them. This can harm the image of the host nation because it causes eyesores, therefore decreasing the land prices, which ends up causing economic problems for the country.

In such occurrences of overcrowding of low-skilled labor, crime rates might increase as a factor of poor living conditions. This may therefore act as a deterrent by increasing social problems in the host country.

In some instances, a surplus of migration can deteriorate the state of the native country of the migrants. That is because even though they send back remittances, the deficiency of workers does not allow industry to develop in the native countries. Therefore, although the remittances are very helpful in the short run, that is not the case in the long run.

Immigrants can also harm the environment of the host country by occupying additional land and using extra supplies. That puts a burden on natural resources, thus leading to the deterioration of the environment.

¹ http://www.springer.com/social+sciences?SGWID=0-40384-6-1006221-0
4. Key Players

Middle East

The countries in the Middle East attract a huge number of immigrants due to possibilities of a better life, eventually resulting in immigrants making up a very large percentage of their population. The United Arab Emirates has the largest percentage of immigrant population with 71.6% of the population being immigrants, constituting 90% of the workforce. Saudi Arabia has 25.3%, Israel with 37.9%, Jordan with 39%, Kuwait with 62% and so on. According to recent approximations, the majority of the working population consists of Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and few European and African. These immigrants usually sought after a better life and so immigrate to such countries for better paying jobs. It is in Middle Eastern countries where most instances of immigrant Human rights violations take place. Studies show that immigrants are paid low wages and are mistreated by employers. There have even been recruitment programmes such as the Kafala sponsorship programme, where almost complete power over immigrants has been allocated to employers. Therefore, in effect allowing them almost total control over migrant workers’ pay, living conditions, nutrition, and their ability to return home. The Human Rights Watch has also exposed various instances of human rights violations such as the overcrowded and unhygienic living arrangements of migrants, which has resulted in the spread of diseases as seen in the Sharjah labor camp in 2008.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The International Organization for Migration is an intergovernmental organization that was established in 1951, it works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. It was first established to help relocate people displaced by World War II. It is the leading organization in the world for migration and tries to advocate for the benefits of migration by encouraging international cooperation on migration issues. IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people. It provides services and advice to governments and recognizes the link between migration and economic, social and cultural development.

United Nations Population Fund

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3 http://www.iom.int/cms/about-iom
UNFPA began operations in 1969 as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and was placed under the authority of the United Nations General Assembly. Its goals are to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health (including family planning), promote reproductive rights, reduce maternal mortality and accelerate progress on the ICPD agenda and MDG. UNFPA also focuses on improving the lives of youths and women by advocating for human rights and gender equality and by promoting the understanding of population dynamics. Its work involves providing supplies to internal migrants and refugees, etc. It supports programs in more than 150 countries, territories and areas spread across four geographic regions: Arab States and Europe, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa.

5. Key Terms

Migrant
At the international level, no universally accepted definition of migrant exists. The term migrant is usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of “personal convenience” and without intervention of an external compelling factor. This term therefore applies to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family.

Emigration
The act of departing or exiting from one State with a view to settle in another. International human rights norms provide that all persons should be free to leave any country, including their own, and that only in very limited circumstances may States impose restrictions on the individual’s right to leave its territory.

Immigration
A process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement.

Illegal migrant
Someone who, owing to illegal entry or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The term applies to migrants who infringe a country’s admission rules and any other person not authorized to remain in the host country (also called clandestine/illegal/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation).

Remittances
Monies earned or acquired by non-nationals that are transferred back to their country of origin.

**Refugee**
A person, who “owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”.

**Asylum (territorial and diplomatic)**
Protection granted by a State to an alien on its own territory against the exercise of jurisdiction by the state of origin, based on the principle of non-refoulement, leading to the enjoyment of certain internationally recognized rights. The refuge which States may grant beyond the boundaries of their territory in places which are granted immunity from jurisdiction, to an individual seeking protection from the authority who persecutes or claims him or her.

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**Median age of international migrants and total population, 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median Age - International Migrants</th>
<th>Median Age - Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Northern America</td>
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<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **International migrants**: Green bars
- **Total population**: Red bars
6. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What policies can be implemented in order to alleviate the human rights violations that migrants face?
2. What solutions can be implemented in order to control illegal migrants?
3. Do remittances have a key role in the economy?
4. What policies can be executed in order to promote the benefits of migration in our progressively globalized world?
5. What mechanisms can be developed for ensuring a more equitable distribution of benefits from international migration?
6. What becomes of asylum seekers if they are not granted asylum?

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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<http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/about>.

Migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)