

# **UNFPA Regional Workshop on the Impact of Migration on Youth in the Context of the CSME**

## **Demographic Aspects**

### **Introduction**

Mr. Moderator, fellow panelists, young people, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to be invited to speak to you on this most intriguing topic. The United Nations Secretary General has effectively placed international migration on the agenda of the 21st century. The recently held United Nations High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the overwhelming support accorded to the Secretary General's proposal for the establishment of a Global forum on International Migration and Development attest to its significance and importance.

### **Preliminary Considerations**

#### **1. Global Demographic Context**

The concept of "replacement migration" was not a part of the vocabulary of demographers until recently. I was among a group of government experts in 1998 who first reviewed the draft of a paper on the subject at the United Nations. Demographers, prior to this juncture, did not consider seriously the demographic effects on the structure of populations experiencing *below* replacement level fertility.

In fact, Demographers at the time would treat, as isolated cases, countries experiencing below replacement level fertility. However, today most developed countries are either at or below replacement level. The direct consequences for most of these countries are a rapidly expanding elderly age segment and a declining working age and youth population. Some of these countries have also started to experience absolute declines in their total population. Developed countries, therefore, are faced with the option of using immigration as a means for increasing their working age population, reducing dependency and stabilizing their population. In this context, international migration to developed countries is not likely to experience major declines in the near future.

International migration is currently estimated at 191 million (2005, United Nations) increasing by 36 million from 154 million in 1990. Developed countries received 91.7 per cent of the total number of net migrants between 1990 and 2005. Of the 191 million international migrants in the world, developed countries account for 115.4 million. Nearly half of all international migrants are females and female migrants outnumber male migrants in developed countries. United States of America receives 1 in every 5 international migrants.

## **2. Quality and availability of Data on Caribbean Migration**

Data on international migration from the Caribbean Sub-region are more readily available than data on movements within the sub-region. The principal reason is that CARICOM countries have not yet established official systems for the collection and dissemination of data on intra-regional migration. Different agencies may collect data on CARICOM nationals but these are primarily for administrative rather than statistical purposes. Data by age and sex which are necessary for determining the impact of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) on the migration of youth in the sub-region could not be ascertained. Therefore, much of what I will have to say will be preliminary and general in nature and perspective.

### **Caribbean Migration**

#### **Background**

The size, direction and characteristics of migration within and to destinations outside of the sub-region have always been influenced by trends in global and regional socio-economic development. In the 1960s and 1970s, the oil boom in Trinidad and Tobago, US Virgin islands and the Dutch islands attracted migrants from the less developed islands. Since the 1980s, the growth in tourism increased the demand for service workers which influenced the movements within and into the sub-region.

Migration to developed countries is a characteristic feature of the Caribbean. Migration to the United Kingdom commenced in the 1950s. Since the 1960s, the predominant movement shifted to North America. Migration from the Dutch and French islands was directed to their mother countries.

Migration from the Caribbean to developed countries in general and to North America in particular is primarily designed to supply labour market needs. Restrictive immigration policies in these countries have selectively influenced the permanent migration of highly skilled personnel. The exodus of over 400 nurses each year from the sub-region to North America and the UK fully supports this observation. The need for unskilled and semi-skilled migrants is often addressed through temporary labour migration programmes.

Recent studies by experts from the World Bank and the IMF indicate that the Caribbean has the highest rates of loss of tertiary level graduates in the world. The studies found that between 50 per cent and 85 per cent of tertiary level graduates 25 years and over emigrated from the English-speaking Caribbean. Adjustments to the estimate for Jamaica (85%) taking into account those emigrants who received their tertiary level education in developed countries revealed that Jamaica has lost about 60 per cent of its tertiary level graduates annually. This is a refinement of the estimate derived by the experts from the World Bank.

## **Migration of Youth in the Context of the CSME**

### **Free Movement Protocol**

As you are aware, one of the main pillars of the CSME is the commitment to liberalize the movement of labour and to abolish the need for work permits for nationals from CSME participating countries. To facilitate execution, agreements have been reached to proceed on a phased implementation basis. The following have been achieved so far: (a) Free movements of university graduates (11 countries); and (b) Free movements of artists, sports persons, musicians and media workers (8 states). Although Protocol II provides for the free movement of non-wage earners, either as service workers and/or to establish businesses including managerial, supervisory and technical staff, and their spouses and immediate family members, none of the member states has yet adopted any legal framework to allow for the free movement of such persons.

### **Migrant Stock in the CARIBBEAN/CARICOM**

The number of persons born in one Caribbean country and residing in another is estimated at about 2.8 per cent in 2000 increasing marginally from 2.7 per cent in 1990 (see Table 1). The absolute number of persons involved is also considered relatively small at about 1.1 million in 2000. The youth migrant population is roughly estimated at about 40.00 per cent of the total amounting to approximately 428 000.

In spite of the relatively small overall numbers and proportions, there are wide variations in the migrant stock between different islands. The highest proportions are recorded for the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Anguilla, the Netherlands Antilles, Aruba and the United States Virgin Islands while the lowest proportions are reported for Jamaica, Guyana, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.

With specific reference to member states of CARICOM, the migrant stock was estimated at about 1.8 per cent of the total population of 14.7 million in 2000. Wide variations also exist in the migrant stock between the different islands. The highest proportions are reported for the Cayman Islands, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Antigua and Barbuda while the lowest are recorded for Guyana, Haiti and Jamaica. The migrant youth population has been estimated at about 108 000.

Migration from the Caribbean far outweighs the movements within the sub-region. The future prospects for the continuing high outward migration are quite favourable. This is postulated on the assumption that the ageing of the population in developed countries will continue to increase and consequently growth in the demand for Caribbean migrants, particularly the highly skilled, will also increase.

The prospects are also positive for an increase in the growth of migration within the sub-region. The continuing thrust towards free movement within CARICOM, expansion of tourism and the shared vision towards reaching a developed “country status” for many of the islands in the sub-region should provide opportunities to attract prospective migrants.

**Table1: Data on Population and Migration from the 2000 Revision of world Population Prospects. Data on Refugees from UNHCR (Revised 10 September 2002)**

Country or Area	Population (thousands)		Migrant Stock (Thousands)		As Percentage of Population	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
World	5,254,820	6,056,715	153,956	174,664	2.93	2.88
More developed regions	1,148,365	1,191,429	81,424	104,119	7.09	8.74
Less developed regions	4,106,455	4,865,286	72,531	70,545	1.77	1.45
Least developed regions	514,605	667,613	10,992	10,458	2.00	1.60
Latin America & the Caribbean	440,354	518,809	6,994	5,914	1.59	1.14
<b>Caribbean</b>	<b>33,907</b>	<b>37,941</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.82</b>
Anguilla	8	11	2	4	27.97	35.61
Antigua and Barbuda	63	65	12	16	19.18	24.47
Aruba	66	101	14	31	21.91	30.83
Bahamas	255	304	27	30	10.52	9.85
Barbados	257	267	21	25	8.32	9.16
British Virgin Islands	17	24	8	8	44.03	35.49
Cayman Islands	26	38	13	15	48.89	39.12
Cuba	10,629	11,199	100	82	0.94	0.73
Dominica	71	71	3	4	3.53	5.28
Dominican Republic	7,061	8,373	103	136	1.46	1.63
Grenada	91	94	4	8	4.70	8.50
Guadeloupe	391	428	66	83	16.88	19.44
Haiti	6,907	8,142	19	26	0.28	0.32
Jamaica	2,369	2,576	17	13	0.73	0.49
Martinique	360	383	39	54	10.74	14.21
Montserrat	11	4	2	0	18.76	4.86
Netherlands Antilles	188	215	38	55	20.48	25.35
Puerto Rico	3,528	3,915	322	383	9.14	9.79
St. Kitts and Nevis	42	38	4	4	9.64	11.19
Saint Lucia	131	148	5	8	4.06	5.45
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	106	113	4	8	3.79	6.66
Trinidad and Tobago	1,215	1,294	51	41	4.16	3.20
Turks and Caicos Islands	12	17	2	3	18.33	16.23
United States Virgin Islands	104	121	31	35	30.22	28.79
Central America	111,409	135,129	1,836	1,040	1.65	0.77
Belize	186	226	45	17	24.40	7.51
South America	295,037	345,738	4,250	3,803	1.44	1.10
Guyana	731	761	3	2	0.43	0.21
Suriname	402	417	9	6	2.13	1.49

## **Demographic Aspects of the Impact of Migration on Youth**

Most Caribbean islands are experiencing high to moderate rates of ageing of their populations. This is a direct result of declines in fertility and mortality rates. The fertility rates in some islands have already fallen below replacement level.

From a demographic perspective, islands experiencing below replacement level fertility and high rates of external migration, particularly of youths will face serious consequences. Rapid growth of the elderly population, declines in the working age and overall population numbers are inevitable. Islands with small populations will be more severely affected. Some islands are currently experiencing labour shortages in critical areas. One likely strategy to pursue under these circumstances is to encourage migration in order to stabilize their population and to meet development needs.

For islands with fertility rates above replacement level and rapidly expanding working age population as well as declining dependency ratios, these islands can also use migration as a development tool. Programmes for human resources development to satisfy national labour requirements and for export can be effectively utilized for development purposes. The youth population can be a major player under these circumstances.

As indicated above, some islands have relatively high proportions of migrants from other Caribbean states in their populations. These migrants are usually concentrated in the youth and young adult age groups. From a development perspective, it is widely recognized that migrants contribute significantly to the development of their host societies. It is also recognized that migrants in the Caribbean are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, human rights violations and social isolation.