

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

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### *Wonderful Hope Khonje*

Over the past two decades, the migration–development nexus has received increasing attention from experts, policy-makers and the international community as a whole, with many studies emphasising the need to mainstream migration into development planning and, more recently, into the global development agenda. The concept of migration has moved away from that of a mere brain drain to that of a twenty-first-century international phenomenon requiring careful attention to maximise its benefits at a minimal cost. However, the majority of the studies on the topic have dwelt on the migration–development nexus in general terms, often putting developing countries into one homogeneous group without considering the unique characteristics that other subgroupings, such as ‘small states’, have.<sup>1</sup>

This book is an attempt to highlight the dynamics of migration and development in a small-state setting, with case studies on some aspects of migration from small states in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The book is concerned with their special characteristics and the developmental challenges that these countries encounter as a result. It aims to determine the dynamics of migration in terms of both the impacts and the required policy responses. The overall findings point to the unique set of developmental challenges that small states encounter, posed by their small size, remoteness, limited human and institutional capacity, indivisible fixed costs, small markets, lack of diversification and opportunities restricted by scale. These challenges put small states at a dual disadvantage in that they function as ‘push’ catalysts for emigration and, at the same time, hamper any efforts by small states to embrace and benefit from migration.

The book is an outcome of the Secretariat’s 2010–12 migration and development work, which culminated in an expert meeting on the development costs and benefits of migration in small states, held in Kingston, Jamaica, on 2–4 July 2012. At this meeting, experts discussed and brainstormed on the draft chapters in this volume, which were later finalised and presented at the Second Global Biennial Conference on Small States, held in London on 17–18 September 2012.

This collection addresses a number of specific themes with chapters grouped accordingly. Chapter 2 in this volume is an analysis of the dynamics of migration and development in small states by Wonderful Hope Khonje. Specifically, it looks at the peculiar characteristics of small states that set them apart from other developing countries and explores how migration affects these countries in relation to these characteristics. The analysis infers that migration has a distinctive effect on small states in that their inherent vulnerabilities limit their ability to maximise the benefits from migration at a minimal cost.

The chapters on temporary labour migration schemes recognise the existence of a plethora of agreements between sending and receiving countries and look critically at how effective these agreements have been in meeting the development needs of participating countries. Chapter 3 on temporary labour migration schemes in the Caribbean, by Bernard Headley with Kay Ann Henry, focuses on Jamaica and on Trinidad and Tobago. It concludes that, although some challenges have yet to be resolved, the programmes in operation have worked reasonably well. Chapter 4 on temporary migration labour schemes in the Pacific, by John Connell, reports that the schemes on the ground have thus far produced 'triple wins': for workers and for the countries of both origin and destination.

There are three chapters on migration, remittances and development in this volume. Chapter 5, the Guyana case study, by Claremont Kirton and Patsy Lewis, reports that migration has negatively affected development, particularly in the crucial sectors of health and education, and the country has not been able to reap the full benefits of remittances. In Chapter 6, on Tonga and Samoa, Professor Connell notes that remittances have improved the welfare of these countries. The chapter further notes that increasing the per capita volume of remittances is unlikely but increasing their effectiveness is possible. The Jamaican case study, Chapter 7, by Patsy Lewis and Claremont Kirton, infers that remittances significantly contribute to the income of households, especially female-headed households, and that the challenge for the government is to harness resources from the diaspora.

This volume has two chapters specifically looking at diasporas. Connell's chapter (8) looks at the dynamics that have characterised the Pacific diaspora over the decades and concludes that this group of people makes a limited contribution to their home countries. The study also notes that most countries in the region have made little or no attempt to engage with their diaspora. In Chapter 9, Eugene Campbell investigates the contribution of the diaspora to the development of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland, and the analysis has produced divergent results for the different countries. Because of their buoyant economies, Botswana and Namibia have had much smaller diaspora communities, and current benefits from these groups seem to have been overlooked. On the other hand, Lesotho and Swaziland have relatively high numbers of migrants in other countries but there is no evidence of policies in place to address migration.

Chapter 10, by Daniel Tevera, explores the migration–development nexus in Lesotho. It points to an absence of frameworks that could promote the positive linkages between migration and development.

Finally, Jon Sward explores the current trends in the international recruitment of skilled workers, with particular emphasis on the impact that this has on small countries within the Commonwealth. The study shows that the challenges presented by the emigration of skilled people, which in many cases is encouraged by recruiters, are often particularly acute for small states, partly because they may lack both the training facilities and the fiscal resources to easily replace these workers.

Collectively, these chapters present some of the unique dynamics of migration in small states and provide policy options for policy-makers within small states and the international community that could be considered in the light of those states' particular challenges.

## Note

- 1 The Commonwealth defines small states as sovereign states with a population of 1.5 million people or fewer. Within the Commonwealth, larger member countries – Botswana, Jamaica, Lesotho, Namibia and Papua New Guinea – are also designated as small states because they share many of the small states' characteristics. Of the 53 member countries of the Commonwealth, 31 are small states.