



## Migration Symposium 9 & 10 May 2019 Curaçao

### Migration and Socioeconomic Development Policy challenges and options

Organized by the Social Economic Councils of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten

#### Day 1: 9 May 2019

Master of Ceremonies: Nephtalie Demei

#### MORNING PROGRAM

**8.30 Registration (till 9.15)**

**9.25 Protocol**

**9.30 Welcome**

John Jacobs, acting president of the SER Curaçao

**9.35 Opening speech**

Prime Minister of Curaçao, honourable Eugene Rhuggenaath

Video message: Prime Minister of Aruba, honourable Evelyn Wever-Croes

Video message: Prime Minister of Sint Maarten, honourable Leona Marlin-Romeo

**9.50 Opinions on the move**



## 10.00 Migration and sustainable socioeconomic development

Michela Macchiavello (International Organization for Migration, IOM)  
*Advantages and challenges of Labor Migration: trends and best practice*

This short presentation will present an overview of the effects that labor migration has on the involved actors, including the country of origin, migrants and the country of destination. Specifically, it will explore some of the opportunities and challenges that labor migration brings to countries of destination and present some strategies to minimize challenges and reap benefits, with reference to concrete examples.

Gerardo Gonzalez (Centre of Public Policies IESA, Caracas)  
*Las islas útiles: Causes and Opportunities of the Venezuelan Migration to the ABC islands and St Maarten*

The presentation will mention the importance of transnationalism borders in understanding the relationships between the ABC islands and Venezuela. This short presentation will deal with an assessment of causes of the Venezuelan migration due to the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis with the latest data from April 2019 (economic and social indicators, desire to migrate, plans to migrate and conditions in Zulia and Falcon). It will also state the opportunities of allowing low- and highly skilled Venezuelan workers arriving to the islands (based on qualitative data from 2018) and the positive impact it could have on the economy.

## 10.25 Q&A

## 10.40 Facts and figures of migration dynamics on Aruba and Sint Maarten

Norberto Rodrigues (Policy advisor SER Aruba)  
Sharon Arnell (Senior policy officer SER Sint Maarten)

## 11.00 Coffee/tea break

## 11.15 Building a life, building a nation. Facts and Faces of regional migration to Curaçao

11.25 Prof. dr. Flora Goudappel (University of Curaçao)  
*Labor Migration: Legal and policy frameworks*

In this presentation legal opportunities of labor migration in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten will be addressed. Attention will be given to both the policy framework of labor migration, as well as to the historical framework of labor migration in the region. Special attention will be on irregular migration and the subsequent informal economy.

#### 11.40 Challenges of and options for current labor migration policy on Aruba

Edwin Jacobs (Social Insurance Bank of Aruba)

*Without migration there is no future*

The challenge of a sustainable social security system in Aruba. The need of immigration will be assessed based on the projection of the sustainability of the social security system of Aruba in the period 2015-2035. On the other hand, the sustainability of the mentioned system is determined by the ageing process of the Aruban population and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases.

#### 12.00 Vision on labor migration policy Aruba

Ronald van Trigt (Aruba Trade & Industry Association – ATIA)

*Migration in Aruba: the past and the future*

#### 12.20 Vision on labor migration policy Curaçao

*From the perspective of labor migrants; Jamaica and Venezuela*

#### 12.40 Lunch

### AFTERNOON PROGRAM

#### 13.45 Opportunities and challenges of migration:

*Myths and misconceptions, controversies, the liberal paradox and changing the narrative*

Dr. Bonnie Benesh (Think To Do Institute)

*Push or Pull, Open or Close? The Liberal Paradox of Migration*

The Liberal Paradox is based on an economic theory and an economic effect called the “Pareto Efficiency”. In an attempt to not offer an outcome (individual, economic or social) that will not negatively be affecting either party, we come to an outcome that benefits no one. So, how can a migration policy best reach the balance of individual right-based movement of people and the interest-based movement of political economies. Open or Close? Open for some? Open for All? Push or pull? Liberal economic policies that are open or market-protecting policies that are closed? If we allow free and independent choices of both parties, we end up with the outcome which is dispreferred by both parties and is, therefore, not efficient.

Dr. Rose Mary Allen (University of Curaçao)

*Framing and reframing of immigrants in the Dutch Caribbean*

The Dutch Caribbean, as many other Caribbean societies, like to brand themselves as societies in which people of different cultural backgrounds have been living together peacefully for centuries. At the same time, the public opinion in support of immigrants is not always favourable. The discourse on migration is often framed in terms of the dichotomy of us against the others and seems to flare up in certain periods when the movements of people are more intense. This presentation will elaborate on how this process of “othering” and framing of migrants has taken place in Caribbean societies in the course of the years, and how “othering” can be reframed.

Charles do Rego (Independent researcher)

*Labor migration, diverging paths and development challenges in historic perspective*

Movement of people is a constant factor and a fact of life for Caribbean communities. Historical evidence shows that immigrants form their own network, create bridges and develop a living through varied mechanisms and along diverging paths, searching continuously for other niches that offer new opportunities. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a high amount of labor migrants came to Curaçao and Aruba to work in the refineries; they were asked for and often contracted in larger groups. In the new waves of immigrants most are free movers, individuals or in small groups. A short overview of recent immigration patterns and places of origin will be presented. Changing demographic factors such as a new panorama of ethnicities, the prevalence of female immigrant workers, the increase of the senior population segment and a decreasing fertility rate, even below the replacement rate. The resulting demographic imbalance adds to problems in the fields of social security and government expenditures. Steady immigration flows are not posing a serious threat, on the other hand a sudden dramatic influx can also be very disruptive for a small island economy and society. Controlled immigration, social inclusion and cooperation in a wider context should be the leading policy elements.

Prof. dr. Antonio Carmona Báez (University of Sint Maarten)

*Migration, Borders and Higher Education for Development: Considerations for the Dutch Caribbean*

This presentation will comprise a review of current border issues, demographics and migratory patterns as it relates to the hybrid systems of higher education and accreditation across the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The case of Sint Maarten and its peculiar bond to other English speaking islands within the Kingdom, as well as with its largely migrant-based student body, allows observers to consider how education policies impact the future of socio-economic development in the region.

#### **14.30 Q&A**

#### **14.45 Coffee/tea break**

#### **15.00 Trends in labor migration and labor-related refugee policies:**

*Effectiveness of policies & best practices*

Kate Hooper (Migration Policy Institute Washington)

*Designing selection systems that can respond to labor market needs*

This presentation will explore how governments can design immigrant selection systems that can meet economic and labor market priorities, examining the approaches tried by different immigrant destinations. It will discuss the respective roles that government and employers can play in assessing labor market needs and selecting migrants, and how to balance employer requests for foreign workers with efforts to protect the domestic workforce and safeguard labor conditions. Finally, it will reflect on how to equip selection systems to adapt to fast-changing labor markets.



Prof. dr. Jan Rath (University of Amsterdam)  
*Promoting Migrant Entrepreneurship*

A growing part of the migrant labor force is involved in self-employment and some migrant groups are extremely entrepreneurial indeed. Self-employment therefore constitutes an interesting route towards upward mobility and integration to the benefit of both newcomers and the society at large. Related to this phenomenon, the ways in which national and local governments have tried to promote self-employment will be addressed. Policy matters, of course. The importance of migrant self-employment is underscored by the fact that a consortium of the UN institutions being the IOM, UNHCR and UNCTAD has developed a joint Policy Guide. Never before have such institutions embarked on a joint initiative.

Michael Watts (Canadian Embassy Bogota)  
*Canadian Economic Immigration Policies and Programs*

Are there lessons from the Canadian experience that can help address questions around effective matching of workers and skills to labor market needs, particularly for lower skilled migrants, to help both migrants and the receiving communities maximize the positive impact of migration while minimizing any adverse effects.

Kelly Bendelow (UNHCR Aruba-Curaçao)  
*Protection-sensitive migration: Understanding outflows from Venezuela*

With more than 3.5 million Venezuelans outside of their country, the situation in Venezuela has caused unprecedented regional migration of both refugees and migrants to countries in the region and farther afield. The presentation examines the regional responses and efforts to ensure protection-sensitive migration pathways for refugees and migrants.

## **16.00 Panel discussion related to the topics of the day**

Panel leader: Guido Rojer

## **16.55 Closure**



## Day 2: May 10

Master of Ceremonies: Nephtalie Demei

### MORNING PROGRAM

#### 8.00 Registration

#### 8.45 Caribbean perspective on effective migration policies

*How can we best govern migration to enhance socioeconomic development?*

##### Presentations and panel discussion

Panel leader: Deva-Dee Siliee

Michela Macchiavello (International Organization for Migration, IOM)

*Overview of Labor Migration in the Caribbean: Challenges and Opportunities*

This brief presentation will offer an overview of the main intra-regional and extra-regional corridors of labor migration in the Caribbean, touching upon free movements systems and some measures to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration in the region. Facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration means also taking preventive action to ensure that nationals who want to migrate abroad for employment and migrants coming to our country are not victims of abuse, exploitation and trafficking. The presentation will also touch upon ethical recruitment and IOM's International Recruitment Integrity System, IRIS.

Dr. Bonnie Benesh (Think To Do Institute)

*Caribbean Perspective on Effective Migration Policy as a Pathway to Resilience*

To create a resilient society, many wealthy societies use migration as one of the seven components to create the people, economy and society they need. The relationship among and the synergy between migration, aid, trade, finance, security, climate and technology are changing the perceptions about the role of migration. Migration policies are one of the most underused and important tools to promote development and reduce poverty. With the fourth industrial revolution, our perceptions will be challenged. Well-managed migration will bring increases in incomes, well-being for individuals, their families and their countries. Migration, when tied to good population policies bring higher earning potential, remittance trade, and, most importantly, circulation of ideas and knowledge. The MIPEX (Migrant Integration Policy Index) will be presented as an example to measure the effectiveness of migration policy in the Caribbean to improve and promote social, economic and cultural integration.

Guido Rojer (University of Curaçao)

*Best practices on Migration Policy in the Caribbean*

Migration more often than not adds value to both receiving and dispatching countries. With regards to the receiving nation takeaways may include technology transfer, trade linkages and the likes. There are many countries that have turned migration into a source of growth and have involved both their diaspora and immigrant residents as a factor in economic development. Lebanon and Israel are known small states that promulgate their diaspora. The Caribbean is no different, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominica, St Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda, St Lucia, and Grenada have all developed policies to maximize the net return of immigration. Conversely Bahamas and the Dominican Republic have regressed on the matter declaring (some) migrants or their descendants unwanted constitutionally.



What is at play with regards to immigration in small states and what can we learn going on forward?  
What is important for the Dutch Caribbean?

Gerardo Gonzalez (Centre of Public Policies IESA, Caracas)  
*Experiences in Migration Policies for Venezuelans in Latin America and the Caribbean*

This presentation will explore the options of migration policies in the region for Venezuelans classified in five groups: 1) As members of regional pacts 2) Special permits 3) Regularization of irregulars 4) Deportation and no access policy 5) Cartagena Pact policies. Migration policies of Chile, Panama, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Ecuador under these groups with the pros and cons of each one. A final thought will be given on the current situation in the ABC islands.

Brendan Tarnay (Caribbean Migration Consultations, CMC)  
*Migration Governance in the Caribbean – The Caribbean Migration Consultations and other Regional Initiatives.*

The Caribbean is the last region in the world to have a regional consultative process. Brendan Tarnay will discuss progress made towards the establishment of the Caribbean Migration Consultations, in which the Dutch Caribbean countries can play and have played a significant role.

## 10.25 Coffee/tea break

## 10.45 5 parallel breakout sessions Migration policies and sustainable development, part 1

*BREAKOUT SESSION 1. Reaping the benefits and minimizing the cost of migration*

**Location: Voyager Lounge**

Migration is an aspect of development itself and brings significant and long-lasting benefits. What are socioeconomic advantages of immigration? For example: meeting labor demands, cultural diversity, innovations, tax incomes. But immigration comes also with challenges for individuals, communities and institutions. For example: fear for displacement of local labor, fear for less social cohesion and cultural identity. What kind of policies are needed to address these challenges? And to maximize the benefits? The Caribbean perspective.

**Moderator: Michela Macchiavello (IOM)**

**Introductions by:**

**Guido Rojer (University of Curaçao): *Risks and responses towards migrants in small states***

How do we attract preferred talent, and how do we maximize average talent?

**Shirley Pantophlet Gregoria (SER Sint Maarten): *Migration, the rise above poverty***

The advantages of both the low and high-skilled immigrants on the country of origin and host country will be explored. The benefits for the migrant, his/her local counterpart as well as the children of the migrant, and ways to curb the negative effects by means of policies and the like, will be discussed.



**Michael Watts (Canadian Embassy Bogota): *How migration drives Canada's economic prosperity and nation building***

The Government of Canada has adopted a multi-year levels plan for 2019 to 2021. The longer planning horizon helps all partners better prepare for future admissions and reflects a commitment to a well-managed system. This plan builds on an increase to 330,800 in 2019, 341,000 in 2020 and 350,000 in 2021. These are the most ambitious immigration levels in recent history. The Plan supports economic growth, helps spur innovation, and helps employers address labour market needs across the country. It helps in planning for the future and help address demographic challenges related to an aging population. Finally, it demonstrates leadership in a rules-based international migration environment with an openness to trade, talent, and protecting those in need.

***BREAKOUT SESSION 2. Migration is a tool to safeguard the socioeconomic model of the ACS-countries: migration approaches revisited***

**Location: Voyager meeting room**

What are rationales for modernization of migration policies (such as meeting labor demands, as a tool to safeguard employment opportunities for local employees, driver of innovation, other economic factors as drivers, demographic trends, etc.)? What are the challenges of the current migration policies? Should the ACS-countries design juridical and fiscal measures to make the ACS more attractive for labor migrants or not? If yes, how? Should the countries be more selective, for example by attracting (temporarily) high productive labor migrants?

**Moderator: Alicia Liverpool (SER Sint Maarten)**

**Introductions by:**

**Edwin Jacobs (Social Insurance Bank of Aruba)**

**Clark Russel (Association of Business Organizations Curaçao)**

***BREAKOUT SESSION 3. Brain drain and brain gain: a matter of reversing the coin?***

**Location: Belle Alliance Antesala**

Brain drain and brain gain are characteristics of the same economy. What are disadvantages and advantages of a brain-drain? Measures to prevent brain-drain / bring back diaspora and/or profit from diaspora? One of the factors concern moderate socioeconomic perspectives in the ACS-countries versus positive socioeconomic perspectives elsewhere. This means that push and pull factors work simultaneously, causing net negative migration and a (risk of) decreasing population and in particular (the risk of) a decreasing labor population. At the same time relative welfare levels, especially in the region, make that the ACS islands attract labor migration from the region. What are the advantages and disadvantages? What are means and ways to address this situation? Could for example the management of inter-island labor migration be a viable response: what is the rationale? What other measures are needed?

**Moderator: Ir. Damien Richardson (SER Sint Maarten)**





**Introductions by:**

**Glenn Thodé (University of Aruba)**

**Prof. dr. Antonio Carmona Báez (University of Sint Maarten)**

**Anni Corridor (Venezuelan migrant)**

*BREAKOUT SESSION 4. Changing the narrative on migrants*

**Location: Trupiaal meeting room**

What are popular misconceptions about migrants? How to counter these misconceptions? How to deal with the liberal paradox? Integration of (irregular) migrants: what is the rationale? Is policy needed? Why? Or do migrants integrate themselves? If so, under what kind of policy frameworks?

**Moderator: Kate Hooper (MPI)**

**Introductions by:**

**Joeri Arion and Ieteke Witteveen (Human Rights Caribbean): *The politicization of the Venezuelan migratory flow and re-evaluating citizenship***

The idea of citizenship is contested/debated across citizenship regimes. The public discourse shows a contestation of the concept/category of migrant along juridical lines and matters of (cultural) belonging. However, HRC determines that the inability of local government(s) to meet the humanitarian requirements of the migratory movement in a sound manner, is counterproductive and affirms the hostilities underlying this public debate.

**Charles do Rego (Independent researcher): *Moving in a wider context: not limiting ourselves too much to the actual borders***

Policy makers will have to take a greater geographical area as their point of reference. People are coming in from a great variety of countries and regions, and we should take this geographical factor more into account and not limit ourselves too much to the actual borders. This asks for efficient and transparent processes of admission with adequate control, and above all: enough time to give the process of inclusion a real chance. Controlled immigration, social inclusion and cooperation in a wider context should be the leading policy elements.

**Izza Leghtas (Refugees International): *Migration - Correcting Misconceptions, Recognizing Opportunities***

Overview of some common misconceptions about migrants and refugees. How the narrative on migration often contributes to divisiveness, hostility towards people who were displaced; What is missing in the debate about migration: a recognition of the opportunities migrants and refugees provide to their host society (skills and expertise, taxes, consumption). Laws and policies to enable refugees and migrants to access legal status and livelihoods: examples of best practices in Latin America and in the Syria context.

## *BREAKOUT SESSION 5. Informal and formal labor market approaches: towards win-win- approaches*

### **Location: Koetshuis meeting room**

Mismatches on the labor market (quantitatively and qualitatively) lead on the one hand to emigration (of higher educated and high productive persons) and on the other hand to immigration (of lower-educated persons in lower productive sectors, such as the hospitality sector). What short-term policies do we need and what mid-term policies? Simultaneously, informal labor markets seem to be expanding rapidly, providing labor to a growing number of irregular and regular migrants, and local workforce. Effects of irregular (labor) migrations: socioeconomic, fiscal, social security system. How to improve responses to influx of irregular migrants? For example: temporary special regularization to enable applications for short-term residence and work permits for those who have passed the screening (no criminal record, no communicable diseases)? What are advantages and disadvantages of such and other measures? What short-term do we need and what mid-term policies?

### **Moderators: Jeroen Jansen and Denise Vijber (Government of Curaçao)**

#### **Introductions by:**

#### **Kelly Bendelow (UNHCR Aruba-Curaçao): *Livelihoods and self-reliance: Formal and informal inclusion for vulnerable populations***

For refugees and migrants, particularly in an urban context, livelihoods and self-reliance form the cornerstone of their resilience and the key to their future. Supporting the formal integration of refugees into the labor market and enhancing access to informal livelihoods activities have gained increasing attention and commitment. This presentation describes policy and practical initiatives towards labor market inclusion of refugees and migrants, providing examples from around the region and globally.

#### **Prof. dr. Jan Rath (University of Amsterdam): *Many faces of informality, many trajectories out of it***

Informality has many faces and many forms and there are, therefore, multiple trajectories out of it. In practice, however, we usually observe crackdowns, a response the authorities commonly use to address informal practices. An interesting question is how to address informality while maintaining the entrepreneurial drive and its positive effects.

#### **Prof. dr. Flora Goudappel (University of Curaçao): *Legally managing a possible influx of temporary labor; regional comparison of options***

In the Caribbean, where the tradition is that you move to the next island when there is no work on the island you're on, attempts have been made to control the influx of temporary laborers while trying to avoid having to deal with a large group of illegal laborers.

**12.00 Lunch**



## AFTERNOON PROGRAM

**13.00 5 parallel breakout sessions Migration policies and sustainable development, part 2**

*Policy priorities*

**14.05 Plenary: video message**

**14.15 Presentation outcome of breakout sessions**

**14.40 Coffee/tea break**

**15.00 Panel discussion: major findings and policy recommendations**

Panel leader: Deva-Dee Siliee

**16.15 Opinions on the move**

**16.25 Closing remarks**

**16.30 Farewell drink & Social Networking**

