

Letter to parliament of 10 June 2011 from the Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation and the Minister for Immigration and Asylum Policy on international migration and development

Introduction

We are writing to inform you how we will further develop policy on migration and development on the basis of the coalition agreement. While the policy memorandum on International Migration and Development 2008 remains the guideline for policy, in line with the coalition agreement the emphasis will be on return, including the reception and reintegration of unaccompanied minors in their countries of origin and the protection and reception of refugees in their region of origin. Cooperation with countries of origin is vital if we are to achieve results in these areas. The development cooperation budget for international migration and development can help us to achieve this, and will be deployed where possible. An integrated approach, which will strengthen the development dimension of migration, fits in the wider coherence agenda.

Making an extra effort to promote return requires us to deploy a more effective, and more flexible, range of instruments. We have chosen for a strategic country approach to migration in relation to countries which are a priority from a migration point of view; for keeping the option of conditionality open in our relations with countries of origin; and for opening up the development budget for international migration and development to all developing countries.

This year the activities implemented on the basis of the 2008 policy memorandum on International Migration and Development¹ will be evaluated. We will be looking in particular at whether international migration and development activities financed by development funds have helped us to achieve the six policy priorities² specified in the memorandum. The House will be informed in the 2011 progress report of the results of this evaluation and the related policy conclusions.

The first progress report was sent to you in January 2010.³ The second progress report, which can be found in annexe 1 to this letter, examines how the six priorities identified in the 2008 policy memorandum have been addressed.

I Priorities: return, unaccompanied minors, and protection and reception in the region

1. Encouraging sustainable return and reintegration

In line with the coalition agreement, return and deportation policy will be intensified. This objective will be pursued by the government as a whole in international and bilateral contacts with other countries. Funds from the migration and development budget will be used to help former asylum seekers without a residence permit who wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin to build lives for themselves. This help is usually financial, but in-kind support may be of greater benefit in achieving sustainable return with good prospects. Examples of this include education, help in finding work or help in setting up a business. In 2011 we will be introducing a new framework for voluntary return, based on a combination of

¹ House of Representatives, 2007-2008 session, 30 573, no. 11.

² The six policy priorities are:

- focusing more on migration in the development dialogue and on development in the migration dialogue;
- fostering institutional development in migration management;
- promoting circular migration/brain gain;
- strengthening the involvement of migrant organisations;
- strengthening the link between remittances and development;
- encouraging sustainable return and reintegration.

³ House of Representatives, 2009-2010 session, 30 573, no. 54.

financial support and support in kind. The objective is to achieve both a higher volume and better quality of return, for example by returning families. Civil society will be invited to help design this framework, which will be financed from the migration and development budget.

Supporting return is a major stimulus for voluntary departure. Nevertheless, some aliens do not opt for voluntary departure. That is why it is vital that countries of origin cooperate in forced return. After all, return cannot take place unless the authorities in the country of origin give their permission. That is why the coalition agreement states that this objective will be pursued by the government as a whole in international and bilateral contacts with other countries. This requires extra measures in the form of a long-term, integrated approach. This is set out in greater detail part II.

2. Unaccompanied aliens under 18

The coalition agreement states that every effort will be made to effect the return of unaccompanied aliens under 18 as quickly as possible, under the condition that reception is available for them locally. Funds from the development budget will be used to invest in extra, or improved, reception facilities, in line with existing migration and development policy. Such facilities are already being financed in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and we will work with other European countries to create more of them. We are also examining the options for setting up decent reception facilities in Afghanistan and, in cooperation with other European countries, are encouraging countries of origin to trace family members of unaccompanied minors with prospects of return.

3. Protection and reception in the region

In line with the coalition agreement, the government is working with organisations such as the UN refugee agency UNHCR and reception countries to focus on strengthening protection for refugees in their regions of origin. This will complement our national asylum system, in which the accent will be on countries and regions with a substantial flow of migrants into the Netherlands. Depending on the situation, these extra measures may take the form of:

- emergency aid, primarily strengthening initial reception, as is currently happening in North Africa;
- development aid aimed at making refugees economically independent and strengthening the local infrastructure, benefiting refugees and the local population alike;
- assisting local government and NGOs who, in a practical and legal sense, increase the protection of refugees and/or contribute to their self-sufficiency.

In 2011 we will be focusing in particular on countries in the region receiving many Somali refugees, such as Kenya. The Netherlands will draw up a survey of channels for these extra efforts; funding will be made available from the international migration and development budget.

It is also significant that the Netherlands is a major partner of and donor to UNHCR, contributing €42 million in 2011. UNHCR is responsible in practice for much of the reception and protection of refugees in regions of origin.

As part of the extra focus on protection in the region and establishing the reception of refugees as part of development-related activities, the Netherlands endorses the joint UNHCR and UNDP transitional solutions initiative. The initiative aims to improve the alignment of emergency aid with development-oriented activities in long-term refugee situations. During the recent visit of Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, to the Netherlands we expressed our interest in being involved in the development of this initiative and making an active contribution. The Netherlands is examining opportunities for contributing in Kenya, Georgia, Sudan and Yemen.

Moreover, in the framework of protection in the region we are also working towards a more strategic use of resettlement, where possible. As part of agreements with governments in the region of origin on encouraging the local integration of refugees, the prospect of resettlement may be offered to specific groups of refugees. For example, refugees from eastern Sudan in Eritrea are currently being selected for resettlement in the Netherlands.

II The instruments: strategic country approach, conditionality, opening up the development budget for international migration and development to all developing countries, and making better use of the EU.

1. The strategic country approach

The previous government had already made moves to anchor return more firmly in Dutch foreign policy. This has not yet, however, achieved the desired results. In the case of a number of major return countries, cooperation on return will not be achieved or stabilised unless the Netherlands is prepared to embed the issue in a wider cooperative relationship.

The government, led by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior & Kingdom Relations, is therefore developing a strategic country approach, under which countries of origin will be actively approached. The aim is to establish a cooperative relationship with these countries that addresses all aspects of migration: legal migration, migration flows, combating illegal migration – including informing people of the risks of illegal migration and the options for legal migration – return, protection in the region, border control and capacity building, and involving the diaspora in the development of countries of origin. Other, non-migration-related policy areas are also relevant for the strategic country approach. After all, countries of origin do not base their willingness to cooperate with forced return purely on cooperation on migration, but also on other aspects of their bilateral relationship with the Netherlands, including the development relationship. Other European countries – Spain and the United Kingdom, for example – have learned that entering into a more sustainable relationship has facilitated dialogue and made it easier to reach agreement on return.

2. Opening up the development budget for international migration and development to all developing countries

In the letter to the House of Representatives presenting the spearheads of development cooperation policy, the government chose to reduce the list of developing countries to 15. At the same time, migration and return is one of our priorities. That is why we have decided to open up the development budget for international migration and development to all countries that are eligible for development aid according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Priority is given to activities relating to countries which are important for the Netherlands in terms of migration, and with which the Netherlands wishes to build up a broader, more sustainable relationship on migration and development in the framework of the strategic country approach.

3. Conditionality

Countries that can cooperate constructively with the Netherlands on return can expect support in wider migration issues, as described above, if they so wish. If, however, countries of origin do not cooperate on the return of their own nationals, or do not cooperate enough, this may have consequences for bilateral cooperation, especially when it comes to any development funds channelled via the government.

The Netherlands is keen to see the conditionality principle – i.e. setting conditions – adopted by the EU in the future.⁴ European efforts could be mirrored by establishing obligations for

⁴ The government response to the Commission's consultation 'What funding for EU external action after 2013?' of 31 January 2011 (House of Representatives, 2010-2011 session, 21501-04 no. 121) states that reciprocity should also be a major consideration when shaping EU development policy. In

development partners, particularly in the areas of migration and return. This conditionality in the relationship with developing countries could be further expanded on when the Country Strategy Papers for 2014 to 2020 are drafted.

Annexe 2 summarises the countries that are significant to the Netherlands in terms of the coherence theme migration and development, using subdivisions for each priority category (return, unaccompanied minors, and protection and reception in the region). It should be emphasised that this summary reflects the current situation and may be adapted in response to changing problems.

4. Making better use of the EU

The European Union finances a number of migration projects through various external policy funds (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), European Development Fund). The EU has specifically earmarked €179 million between 2011 and 2013 for the thematic programme 'Cooperation with Third Countries in the areas of Migration and Asylum'. Key objectives include combating illegal immigration, encouraging return and addressing the link between development and migration. The Netherlands is urging the Commission, in the interests of achieving these aims, to continue to make funding available post 2013.

At EU level the Netherlands will continue to press for including readmission of immigrants denied admission in broader cooperation agreements with third countries. We will ask for extra effort to be made to this end in various EU thematic and regional working groups. Where necessary the Netherlands will approach other EU member states which are experiencing similar problems with specific third countries to discuss joint action at EU level.

The Netherlands will also call for the Commission's financial instruments to be coherently deployed to support activities relating to asylum and migration, taking account of both migration and development priorities. We will also call for European decision-making on the deployment of funding for third countries to take cooperation on key migration themes into account. Examples could include combating illegal migration, protecting refugees and readmitting migrants denied admission.

In the EU the Netherlands is advocating the expansion of Regional Protection Programmes (RPPs), which are still only small-scale. These RPPs should become part of the multi-annual agreements on development cooperation with the countries in question. The Netherlands would prioritise RPPs in the Horn of Africa and North Africa.

III Budget for international migration and development

Given the importance of the theme of international migration and development, the government has decided to keep the budget at current levels. Accordingly, €9 million is still available this year for international migration projects.

This budget will go towards projects that reflect Dutch migration and development-related priorities specified in the 2008 policy memorandum on International Migration and Development. In line with the coalition agreement, projects most likely to receive funding are those that contribute to return and sustainable reintegration of former asylum seekers with good prospects – including local reception for unaccompanied minors – and which contribute to reception and protection in the region.

reviewing European readmission policy the Netherlands will do its utmost to ensure that incentives to encourage return may also be sought outside the field of migration (see BNC file Evaluation of the EU readmission agreements; House of Representatives, 2010-2011 session, 22112 no. 1154).

Additional funding for the strategic country approach to migration and development will be provided from any savings made on the first-year reception of asylum seekers from DAC countries, compared with the anticipated costs specified in the 2011 Homogeneous Budget for International Cooperation (HGIS) policy document. The reception costs fall under the development budget.

Annexe 1:

Progress report on international migration and development

Introduction

This progress report provides a summary of concrete activities that took place in 2010 relating to the six priorities set out in the 2008 policy memorandum on International Migration and Development. The activities concern the 40+3 countries, i.e. the 40 former development cooperation partner countries plus Angola, Iraq and Morocco.⁵ In 2011 an interim external evaluation of migration and development activities will take place. The House will be informed of the results of this evaluation and the related policy conclusions in the 2011 progress report.

The Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation earmarked €9 million for migration and development activities in 2010, including an extra €4 million added to the Foreign Affairs budget, in response to amendment 31 700 V submitted on 12 November 2008 by MP Kathleen Ferrier, for the return and sustainable reintegration of former asylum seekers with good prospects in their country of origin.

Many of the activities funded by the Netherlands are new and will run for a number of years. The aim is to initiate substantive dialogue between governments and/or NGOs, or to try out proposed approaches, for example concerning circulatory migration and support for sustainable return and reintegration. In contrast to 2009, the 2010 budget was only partly spent. Expenditure per policy priority was as follows:

Policy priority	Expenditure 2010 (in millions of euros)
Migration in development, development in migration	1
Migration management	0.2
Circular migration	0.7
Diaspora	0.6
Remittances	--
Sustainable return and reintegration	3.3
Total	5.8

This underspend can be ascribed to less being spent than was anticipated on the circular migration project, the temporary return of migrants educated to secondary level, the Sustainable Return Foundation, and assistance with return to and reintegration in

⁵ Iraq was added to the country list in response to motion 31 700 VI, submitted by Sybrand van Haersma Buma and Khadija Arib on 5 November 2008 during the debate on the Ministry of Justice's budget. The motion called for extra efforts to be made regarding return to Iraq. At the same time Sierra Leone was removed from the list.

Afghanistan and Iraq. We will look at the reasons for underspend on these projects – which can partly be ascribed to delays in implementation – when discussing the six policy priorities.

Policy priority 1: Focusing more on migration in the development dialogue and on development in the migration dialogue

The Netherlands actively contributes to national and international discussions on migration and development, and also supports many projects spanning the range of international migration and development.

International

The fourth meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) was held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in November 2010. Government representatives, representatives of civil society (NGOs, migrant organisations, trade unions and the private sector) and researchers are all involved in the GFMD. The meeting consisted of two interlinked sections for civil society and government delegations. The emphasis was on the importance of cooperation between governments and civil society. The Netherlands prepared for this GFMD meeting in close cooperation with the diaspora and civil society organisations in our country. We also actively supported the GFMD in 2010 with funding, substantive input and a secondment.

In Puerto Vallarta the Netherlands and Ecuador co-chaired a roundtable session on joint strategies to address irregular migration. The session emphasised the importance of respecting the human rights of irregular migrants in countries of destination, while countries of origin proposed regularisation (legalisation) as a solution. Some, mostly Western, countries replied that regularisation could result in reduced public support for immigration in general. There was consensus on the right of sovereign states to protect their borders, with some countries, mostly countries of origin, stating that obstacles to migrants thrown up by states should be kept as low as possible.

In the roundtable session on the influence of migration on development, participating states agreed to share available information concerning impact assessments at an early stage. Moreover, it was emphasised that migration profiles (analyses of the migration situations in specific countries) could prove a useful instrument. In the session on climate migration it emerged that more information was required on climate change and its impact on migration, the first step being to agree common terminology. Moreover, climate migration is relevant to themes such as food security and water management, so that policy coherence is necessary.

European Union

The Stockholm Programme,⁶ the EU's multi-annual plan for 2010 to 2014, sets out the main political and strategic objectives for justice and home affairs (JHA). One of the priorities is stepping up cooperation with partner countries, particularly on asylum and migration. The Global Approach to Migration (GAM) provides the strategic framework for cooperation with third countries on asylum and migration. Cooperation with the most closely involved countries in Africa and Eastern and Southeastern Europe is a priority. The GAM is meant to encourage coherent and balanced cooperation between the EU and third countries in three subareas: encouraging mobility and legal migration, facilitating the link between migration and development, and preventing and combating illegal immigration. The EU is in dialogue with Africa on migration (including the subarea migration and development) as part of the Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership (MME), the Rabat process and the EU-ACP partnership. The migration dialogue with Eastern and Southeastern Europe primarily takes place within the Prague process. The main GAM instruments are migration missions, migration profiles and mobility partnerships. Where the external dimension of asylum is concerned, the Stockholm Programme calls for regional protection programmes to be further fleshed out in consultation with UNHCR and integrated with the GAM, and for aid to refugees to fall under national poverty reduction programmes. Member states and/or NGOs can submit project proposals for funding under the European Commission's thematic programme for cooperation with third countries on asylum and migration.

The EU High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration (HLWG) coordinates and monitors activities on the external dimension of asylum and migration. Under the Spanish and Belgian Presidencies in 2010, under the theme migration and development, the focus within the external dimension of asylum and migration was on migration dialogue with third countries and on GAM instruments.

Migration dialogues

- In November 2010, a new action plan on the Mobility, Migration and Employment Partnership was adopted at the third Africa-EU summit held in Tripoli. The aim of the action plan is to sustain dialogue at expert level on subthemes and to implement a number of agreed projects, including enlarging the role of the diaspora in developing countries of origin. See also policy priority 4.
- In reviewing the Cotonou Agreement in 2010, the EU and ACP countries adopted a declaration stating that the parties were entering into a stronger partnership on migration, which will be developed in more detail in a migration dialogue that may lead to changes in the Agreement's provisions on migration.
- In 2010 a thematic meeting on migration and development took place between the EU and the Latin American and Caribbean area (EU-LAC). Dutch representatives gave a presentation on migration and development policy.

GAM instruments

- Migration missions. The aim of migration missions is to exchange information on asylum and migration between the EU and a third country, and to underscore the EU's willingness to step up dialogue and cooperation. In 2010 the Netherlands took part in a mission to Ukraine.
- Migration profiles. Migration profiles involve analysing the migration situation in a specific country, and are intended to assist policymakers. Profiles have been drawn up for a number of ACP and Eastern and Southeastern European countries as part of the Building Migration Partnership project.
- Mobility partnerships. These partnerships form a framework within which concrete cooperation and agreements are shaped on various aspects of migration (combating

⁶ Council of the European Union. 5731/10, 3 March 2010. The Stockholm Programme – an open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens.

illegal immigration, and facilitating return; human trafficking and people smuggling; migration and development; legal migration; and refugee protection). The Netherlands is involved in mobility partnerships with Cape Verde and Georgia. In 2010 participating EU member states and their partner countries developed a targeted initiative (or project proposal), to be funded from the Commission budget. In Georgia's case the emphasis is on return and reintegration. The Netherlands is represented by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations' Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V). In the case of Cape Verde, the aim is to strengthen migration management, with the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations' Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) responsible for Dutch participation in the activities.

- Regional protection programmes. The EU is funding initiatives aimed at strengthening the protection of refugees in the region of origin. These regional protection programmes (RPPs) primarily involve building the capacity of projects, such as projects to help register refugees and set up asylum systems. Following an initial, cautiously positive evaluation by the European Commission, the EU has decided to improve current projects (in Belarus, Moldova, Tanzania and Ukraine) and expand the RPP to cover the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Kenya and Yemen) and North Africa (Egypt, Libya and Tunisia).⁷ These projects are implemented together with UNHCR. The EU has earmarked €5 million for the Horn of Africa and €6.6 million for North Africa, Tanzania and Eastern Europe, in addition to other contributions by the EU or individual member states.

Policy priority 2: Institutional development

In recent years the Netherlands has cofinanced a number of projects from the budget for international migration and development to help developing countries develop and implement their own migration policy. Most were multi-annual projects geared to data collection and strengthening policy and regulations (migration management in Cape Verde, return to and reintegration in Georgia, and an electronic database to support the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue), border control (combating document fraud in Ghana and a regional training institute for the border police in Tanzania) and strengthening reception and protection of refugees (local integration in Tanzania and Yemen and setting up an asylum system in Mauretania).

Policy priority 3: Promoting circular migration/brain gain

Circular migration

As part of the Blue Birds circular migration pilot, Dutch businesses can employ up to 80 Indonesians and South Africans with vocational training at secondary school level for up to two years in regular vacancies at a salary in line with market conditions in professions where there are labour shortages (mainly technical professions, logistics and IT). After this period the migrants should return to their own country, where they can put the knowledge gained in the Netherlands to use. The objective of this pilot is to assess whether circular migration achieves the supposed triple win:

1. development of the participating migrant;
2. development of the country of origin;
3. positive effects for the Netherlands, particularly the Dutch employer.

⁷ First annual report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Immigration and Asylum (2009) (Com (2010) 214), p.6. See also Annexe 5 of the Annual Action Programme 2010 part 2 of the Thematic Programme for Cooperation with Third Countries in the areas of migration and asylum.

Many complications have been encountered in implementing the pilot. The official steering committee overseeing the pilot – in which the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs & Employment and the Interior & Kingdom Relations are represented – will, in consultation with the implementing organisation, conclude that as things stand it makes no sense for either party to continue with implementation. We will be looking to wind up the pilot satisfactorily. An evaluation of how the circular migration pilot was conducted will be carried out in the near future, and the lessons learned identified.

Temporary return – posting of experts

IOM is currently implementing phase 2 of the project on temporary return of qualified nationals, which is due to end in mid-2011.

The expectation is that in June 2011, 300 migrants from the Netherlands and other EU member states will return temporarily to their country of origin to communicate the knowledge they have built up. To date, 256 migrants have been posted from the Netherlands. For each participating country (Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Georgia, Sierra Leone and Sudan) a limited number of priority sectors have been identified, in consultation with various government parties. The majority of postings have taken place in these pre-selected sectors. There have also been a number of 'virtual postings' to Afghanistan and Sudan (in the form of e-learning, in which the migrant transfers knowledge via internet instead of actually travelling to the country of origin). The budget has been underspent because most of the postings lasted for less than the anticipated three months. The economic crisis (and the migrants' fear of losing their jobs in the Netherlands) also played a part.

In addition, the migrants' organisation the Dir Foundation is implementing a project funded by the Netherlands, in which 30 Ethiopians living in the Netherlands return to Ethiopia for a period of 6 to 12 months to share the knowledge and experience they have gained in the Netherlands with local organisations active in development cooperation and economic development. As a result, 14 Ethiopian migrants are working in Ethiopia and 8 new migrants have been selected for posting.

Study of the added value of migrants in the development of their countries of origin

In the policy memorandum we promised to conduct a study of the conditions under which the added value of migrants can best be realised. In late 2009 a study was begun by Pharos and the Global Society Foundation (SMS), focusing on the added value for the development of their countries of origin of migrants returning there temporarily. The results are expected to be presented in the second quarter of 2011.

Policy priority 4: Strengthening the involvement of migrant organisations

The Netherlands seeks to strengthen the positive role that migrant organisations can play in the development of their countries of origin, and is supporting a number of related initiatives.

Supporting the formulation of a diaspora and development policy

Following on from the 2009 Global Forum on Migration and Development meeting in Athens, the Netherlands is supporting the development of a handbook summarising each country's government policy on diaspora. Its primary objective is to provide an instrument for policymakers for involving the diaspora and working with them in countries of origin and destination. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is compiling the handbook together with the Migration Policy Institute (MPI). It should be completed in summer 2011.

In the EU, the Netherlands is leading the discussion of diaspora policy within the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership's theme Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME). In 2010 the Netherlands funded two activities to support governments of countries of origin in setting up diaspora policy. Firstly, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) conducted a comparative study into diaspora policy in 12 primarily African countries. This study on linking emigrant communities for more development has now been completed. The Netherlands will support a follow-up ICMPD project, using the study's results to strengthen the capacity of the governments of the countries in question.

The Hague-based African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) is active in the same area, working with the University of Ghana's Centre for Migration Studies (CMS). The ADPC is conducting a project encompassing both a research component and training in strengthening diaspora policy for 24 public servants from 12 African countries' ministries whose work relates to this area. The Netherlands has also financed the ADPC's project on Participation of the Diaspora in the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. The project's aim was to raise awareness among African and European policymakers of the strategic role the diaspora can play in this partnership. Different stakeholders took part in various consultative meetings, including diaspora organisations from EU member states, professionals and representatives of various African countries, international organisations, academics, African civil society forums and representatives of EU member states, the European Commission and the African Union. One important outcome of the project is diaspora organisations' pledge to set up a European diaspora network. The European Commission has now approved the project proposal for this activity under the thematic programme. The Netherlands will help fund the project's implementation.

Capacity building for migrant organisations

So as to give migrant organisations with the necessary potential the opportunity to grow into equal partners in development cooperation, the Netherlands has made a financial contribution to three capacity-building programmes.

The evaluation of the now completed professionalisation project for migrant organisations, implemented by the development organisation Context showed that the training helped the 30 participating organisations develop a more robust structure.

The second capacity-building project to which the Netherlands contributed was the Development Marketplace for African Diaspora in Europe (D-MADE), set up and implemented by the World Bank. The project's aim is to encourage African migrant organisations in six European countries to set up and implement innovative development activities in their countries of origin. The activities focus on combating poverty by stimulating local economic growth. Examples of projects include establishing a butter factory in Mali, developing a brewery in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and installing public toilets in Kinshasa (DRC).

The third project was Migration and Development 2008-2010, implemented by the Seva Network Foundation (Seva). A total of 123 migrants from 89 organisations participated in the training programme. Providing these organisations with training and support helped professionalise their activities. Once the training was complete the organisations could submit project proposals to Seva. A total of 42 projects received funding in various countries (50% in Africa), contributing to the economic and social development of countries of origin.

Policy priority 5: Strengthening the link between remittances and development

The Netherlands believes that governments should not, in principle, direct how remittances are spent. We do, however, believe in fostering favourable conditions for strengthening the relationship between remittances and development. The priority is to improve transparency in the Dutch market for remittances, primarily by supporting the website www.geldnaarhuis.nl. The website is managed for this purpose by the IntEnt Programme. The site is available in eight languages and can be used to compare the costs of remittances to 34 countries. A 2010 evaluation showed that the website was seen as informative and that it contributes to greater transparency in the Dutch remittance market. However, not enough people in the target group are aware of it, so the objective of attracting at least 300,000 users within a year has not been reached. In 2009, 32,680 users visited the site: there were 31,127 visitors between January and August 2010. Together with IntEnt we will look at whether a targeted promotional campaign can increase site traffic.

Policy priority 6: Encouraging sustainable return and reintegration

In 2010 the main developments relating to sustainable return and reintegration were:

Return and Reintegration Scheme

The IOM's Return and Reintegration Scheme (HRT) offers financial support to former asylum seekers so they can return independently and voluntarily to their country of origin. The scheme was introduced in 2004 and has been repeatedly extended for two years at a time. In 2010 the number of returnees under the scheme was 1,160 (compared to 1,018 in 2009), some 50% of whom were Iraqi.

Sustainable Return Foundation

This pilot project provides in-kind support for return, such as help in setting up a business, training and courses, and assistance in finding housing. The foundation is a partnership between the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), Healthnet/TPO, the HIT Foundation, IOM, Nidos, the Mediation Agency for Return, the Global Society Foundation, Pharos and the Dutch Council for Refugees. The project was launched on 1 March 2010. An interim evaluation that was recently conducted concluded that the initiative has not resulted in extra return, and thus has failed to meet expectations. Nor has the foundation achieved the desired qualitative results. There are a number of reasons for its disappointing record, including the fact that in-kind support is less attractive than the financial support offered by the Return and Reintegration Scheme. More information on this evaluation has been submitted in a separate letter.⁸

Assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) in Afghanistan and Iraq

These two country-related voluntary return and reintegration projects offer in-kind support, plus small-scale projects for local communities dealing with many returnees. The target group makes very little to no use of the projects, apparently preferring the Return and Reintegration Scheme.

⁸ House of Representatives, session 2010-2011, 29 334, no. 80.

As a consequence of the limited interest in assistance from the Sustainable Return Foundation or from AVRRE for Afghanistan and Iraq funding, expenditure for these projects in 2010 was under budget.

Unaccompanied aliens under 18

The Netherlands has so far financed two reception facilities for unaccompanied aliens under 18, in Angola and the DRC, offering shelter, training and mediation in finding suitable work. These are reception and/or educational facilities for local young people. In practice, unaccompanied minors almost never need to use them, as they usually go to live with family members and/or friends on their return. It is nonetheless important that such facilities continue to be available to returnees, so that responsible return is an option for those without family support at the moment of return. Since early 2010 the Netherlands has been in talks with the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish governments on creating joint facilities for unaccompanied aliens under 18 and local young people in Afghanistan.

European cooperation and best practices

In 2010, as part of the AVRRE project for Iraq, IOM organised an international meeting on best practices in bilateral AVRRE projects (in Iraq in particular) and on the opportunities and need for European cooperation in this area. This revealed that funding from other European countries is more often linked with in-kind support. This link does not yet exist in the Netherlands, where returnees must opt for one or the other. Policy is currently being reviewed in consultation with the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

Current research

IS Academy⁹

Maastricht University is currently conducting a policy support study as part of the IS Academy's programme 'Migration and Development: A World in Motion'. The project is running from 2009 to 2014. The aim in funding this research is to strengthen the relationship between research and policy. As part of the project, five PhD studies will be conducted on remittances, brain drain, return, migration and development as part of EU external policy, and EU cooperation with third countries in mobility partnerships. The IS Academy will make policy recommendations for the areas in question.

The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration (THP) – scenario study

Together with the International Migration Institute (IMI),¹⁰ THP is conducting a study, cofinanced by the Netherlands, on the direction and nature of future global and regional migratory flows and their effect on countries of destination in Europe and countries of origin in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. A number of brainstorming sessions were held in 2010, involving researchers, government officials and representatives of the business community, to develop several scenarios and analyses for specific regions in research reports.

⁹ The IS Academy's aim is to narrow the gap between research and policy by setting up joint projects between recognised knowledge institutions (faculties, departments and research institutions) and various units of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁰ Part of the James Martin 21st Century School, Oxford.

Annexe 2:

Countries for the policy coherence theme 'migration and development' (April 2011)

Return*	Care and reintegration of returning unaccompanied aliens under 18 (AMVs) *	Reception and protection in the region
Algeria	Afghanistan	Djibouti
Angola	Angola	Ethiopia
Armenia	Belarus	Iran
Burundi	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	Jordan
China	Eritrea	Kenya
Egypt	Guinea	Pakistan
Ghana	Iraq	Somalia (= Somaliland and Puntland)
Guinea	Nigeria	Syria
India	Sierra Leone	Yemen
Iran		
Iraq		
Morocco		
Nigeria		
Sierra Leone		
Sri Lanka		
Sudan		
Suriname		
Turkey		

*Applies to failed asylum seekers and illegal aliens. Under OECD criteria, only asylum seekers and refugees qualify for ODA-funded assistance with voluntary return.

■ Country included on the new list of partner countries proposed in the policy letter to parliament of March 2011. The Netherlands' current aid relationship with Egypt, Suriname, Pakistan and the DRC is being phased out.