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Society for International Development

## Lecture Series 2010-2011 'Global Values in a Changing World'

### Lecture and Discussion:

## Migration and development: Policy potentials and policy illusions

Hein de Haas (Oxford University, UK)

**Monday 16 May, 2011**

Eighth lecture in the series 'Global Values in a Changing World- Synergy of State and Society in a Globalized World'

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**Abstract:** Since 2000, European governments and international development agencies have “discovered” the potential of migration and remittances to stimulate development in poor countries. However, migration and development is anything but a new topic. The debate about migration and development has swung back and forth like a pendulum, from optimism in the post-War period, to deep “brain drain” pessimism since the 1970s towards neo-optimistic “brain gain” views in recent years. While these shifts are rooted in deeper ideological shifts, a review of evidence yields a much more nuanced picture. Although migration often has considerable benefits for individuals and communities, migrants alone cannot remove more structural development constraints and can actually contribute to development stagnation. Despite their development potential, migrants and remittances can therefore neither be blamed for a lack of development nor be expected to trigger take-off development in generally unattractive investment environments. Recent views celebrating migration as self-help development “from below” are driven by neoliberal ideologies and shift the attention away from the vital role of states in shaping favourable conditions for positive development impacts of migration to occur.

**Speaker:** [Hein de Haas](#) is Senior Research Fellow at the International Migration Institute (IMI) of the University of Oxford. His research focuses on the links between migration and broader processes of development and globalisation. He did extensive fieldwork in the Middle East and North Africa and, particularly, Morocco. He has published widely on issues including migration, remittances and development, migration theory, migration determinants, migration policies, migration from Africa to Europe and rural development issues. In 2009, he was awarded a Starting Grant from the European Research Council (ERC) for a project on the determinants of international migration. He has regularly acted as consultant or advisor to national governments and international organisations including UNDP, UNRISD, IOM and the EU. He also maintains a [blog](#) where he comments on current migration, development and North African issues.

**Moderator:** [Heidi Dahles](#) is Chairholder Organizational Anthropology at the Department of Organization Sciences of the VU University. Her specialization includes reverse migration and entrepreneurship, transnational organizational networks, and development.

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