INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION

IC/2010/8

Original: English
Geneva, 7 October 2010

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2010

Migration and social change

21 October 2010

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2010
Migration and social change

1.   This discussion note provides an overview of the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) activities in 2010 since the last Informal Consultations on 27 April 2010 and an update on the activities planned for the Ninety-ninth Session of the Council and IDM 2011. The selected overarching theme for IDM 2011 is "The future of migration: Building capacities for change", and this note proposes three possible intersessional workshops, from which the membership is requested to select two.

IDM 2010: *Migration and social change*

2.   The second IDM intersessional workshop under the theme of "Migration and social change" convened in Geneva on 19 and 20 July 2010 to discuss **"Societies and identities: The multifaceted impact of migration"**. The workshop's primary objective was to foster dialogue between policymakers and experts on the impact of migration in transforming societies in countries of origin and destination, notably in terms of social and cultural change. The workshop was attended by 178 participants representing 66 Member and Observer States, 12 international organizations and 8 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the private sector, academia and the media.[1]

3.   During the workshop, panellists and participants shared best practices and innovative ideas for the development of integration policies that reflect the varied needs of migrants in societies of origin, transit and destination as well as the expectations of these societies. The workshop was made possible in part through the financial assistance of the Government of Australia. Owing to a combination of constraints, the 2011 IDM workshops will depend on voluntary contributions; the Organization is relying on the Member States to provide support, as they have in the past.

4.   Discussions at the workshop highlighted the need to view integration as a process of mutual adaptation of both migrants and societies in countries of origin and destination. Support for migrants throughout the process of migration, integration and possible re-integration mitigates the negative impact and enhances the positive impact of migration.

5.   The workshop drew attention to the importance of embracing the social and cultural contributions of migrants to societies and the role that governments play in shaping the perception of migrants and migration as a catalyst for development. By providing realistic and fact-based images of migrants and by fostering community dialogue geared at facilitating migrant integration, governments can work towards greater social cohesion while counteracting extremist or xenophobic rhetoric.

6.   In concluding the workshop, the benefits of regional cooperation strategies and bilateral partnerships to better manage migration were underscored by several participants. Inter-State cooperation and partnerships among governments, municipalities grassroots stakeholders, hometown associations and diaspora networks were highlighted as critical components of inclusive engagement.

---

[1]   For further information on the workshop, including the final agenda, list of participants, background paper and presentations, please visit http://www.iom.int/idmsocieties.

7.   A "Virtual Dialogue" was hosted in tandem with the workshop by the Online Community on Migration and Integration, a joint project of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAoC) and IOM. Please refer to Annex II for a summary and for selected comments.[2]

8.   As part of its efforts to maximize the utility of its programmes for the IOM membership, the Organization conducted a survey among the participants in order to obtain feedback on the workshop. The majority of respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the workshop overall. More detailed results are provided in Annex I to this discussion note.

Ninety-ninth Session of the Council

IOM Council survey outcomes

9.   In keeping with the Director General's commitment to improve IOM governance and to consult the membership on key issues, in March 2010 the Administration distributed a questionnaire to the Member States on the conduct of regular IOM Council sessions. The survey outcomes are set out below.

- Some Member States expressed a wish to shorten the regular sessions to the extent possible.

- Others requested that the different agenda items be more clearly delineated and their order adjusted.

- The Global Migration Group panel should be maintained as a feature of the regular sessions.

- The regular sessions should include a high-level segment.

10.   The Administration, eager to ensure that future Council sessions best serve the membership's needs, has taken these outcomes as well as organizational constraints into account in planning the Ninety-ninth Session.

Highlights of the Ninety-ninth Session of the Council

11.   Highlights of the Ninety-ninth Session of the Council (29 November- 2 December 2010) will include the following:

(a)   keynote addresses on the theme of "**The future of migration: Building capacities for change"**, the subject analysed in the 2010 edition of IOM's flagship publication, the *World Migration Report* (29 November);

(b)   a special segment to launch the ***World Migration Report 2010 - The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change***, at which the membership will be given an overview of the key findings contained in the report (29 November);

---

[2]   For further information on the "Virtual Dialogue" and the Online Community on Migration and Integration please visit:
      http://www.unaoc.org/communities/migrationintegration/discuss.

(c)   an interactive dialogue with the **Global Migration Group**, with an introductory presentation by the current Chair, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, followed by discussion by heads of agencies and the IOM membership of the Group's priority areas of work (30 November);

(d)   a panel discussion entitled **"Migration and social change"**, the theme of this year's IDM, with high-level presentations followed by discussion (2 December);

(e)   **"Migration highlights":** high-level presentations and discussions of selected key developments related to migration at the global and regional levels (2 December).

IDM 2011: *The future of migration: Building capacities for change*

12.   At the informal consultations held on 27 April 2010, the Administration proposed two possible overarching themes for the 2011 IDM. At the request of the membership, a follow-up survey was sent out in May to allow delegates to consult with their capitals. The majority expressed a preference for the theme, **"The future of migration: Building capacities for change"**. The proposed alternative theme was "Migration and human security". The Administration now invites delegations to consider the potential intersessional workshop topics listed below, or such other topics related to the overarching theme as the membership might wish to propose at the Informal Consultations. Two topics are to be selected for the IDM intersessional workshops to be convened in 2011.

13.   In an effort to maximize cross-fertilization between the Organization's various activities, the IDM theme for 2011 is based on the topic of the forthcoming *World Migration Report 2010*. While not claiming to cover all possible scenarios for future migration, the topics suggested below are in line with concerns and priorities raised by the membership during the course of IDM consultation and with issues brought to the fore in other processes for dialogue and cooperation on migration, including the Global Forum on Migration and Development. As IOM will be celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2011, the IDM will rely on the analysis of future trends contained in the *World Migration Report 2010* and aim to strike a balance between the need for continuity and innovation in the spectrum of topics covered by the IDM over the last ten years.

A.   Economic cycles, demographic change and migration

14.   With almost all migration being driven by economic and labour market factors, future migration flows and patterns will continue to be sensitive to economic opportunities and fluctuations at national, regional and global level. Migration, however, is also determined by much broader underlying demographic trends and can influence demographic realities. When coupled with such factors as high unemployment and lack of access to social and other services, these trends may be potential drivers of migration. Economic cycles – and recessions in particular – sharply accentuate the interplay and tensions between migration, demographic change and economic or labour market conditions. Demographic change has a range of socio-economic consequences, making policies for managing diversity and promoting social cohesion even more important in the future.

15.   This workshop would aim to draw lessons from the current global economic crisis and previous regional ones regarding the interaction between economic cycles and migration, with

a view to enhancing policymaking capacities to effectively manage the intersection between short and medium-term economic cycles and longer-term demographic trends. Participants would be able to take stock of the consequences of economic crisis and demographic imbalances for migrants and migration in countries of origin and destination, including questions relating to size and patterns of migration flows, the impact on irregular migration and returns, specific vulnerabilities experienced by migrants and their families, and the impact on remittance flows. The workshop would also present an opportunity to assess the various adjustments to migration policy which governments have made in response to the economic downturn and demographic imbalances through country case studies. The focus would be on capacities for migration policymaking that effectively and in a balanced way reconciles labour market needs and demographic trends. This could include consideration of data requirements, short and long-term assessment of labour market needs, the incorporation of gender as a key factor influencing future labour market, migration and demographic trends, and the construction of legal and administrative frameworks in the employment sector to respond flexibly to economic changes.

B.   *Climate change, environmental degradation and migration*

16.   Few issues are likely to be as decisive for the future of societies and economies worldwide as climate change. Environmental factors have long had an impact on global migration flows, as people have historically left places with harsh or deteriorating conditions. However, the scale of such flows, both internal and cross-border, is expected to rise as a result of accelerated climate change and environmental degradation, and to have an unprecedented impact on lives and livelihoods. Such migration can have positive and negative effects on both the local coping capacity and the environment in areas from which these migrants originate, as well as on their temporary or permanent destinations.

17.   The purpose of this workshop would be to explore the policy, research and technical capacities that will be needed to manage the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on human mobility. The participants would discuss, for instance, possible mechanisms and forums for greater policy coherence at the country level, and inter-governmental cooperation and partnerships at regional and global level, to tackle this cross-cutting and multifaceted issue. The workshop would cover the institutional mechanisms, resources and knowledge that need to be in place to design policies which anticipate and mitigate possible adverse effects of climate change, with the goal of minimizing forced migration as a result of climatic or environmental change and of maximizing the potential for adaptation by linking migration to positive development outcomes and more resilient livelihood strategies, primarily in affected areas. Coordination strategies, planning and prevention, and involvement of the appropriate stakeholders, including the role of international organizations, civil society and the private sector, are key capacity areas in humanitarian responses to population movements induced by natural disasters and in achieving sustainable development objectives.

C.   *Knowledge for migration management: building data and research capacities*

18.   Sound knowledge and reliable data are undisputed prerequisites for effective policymaking in any field, yet as far as migration is concerned, knowledge gaps and data deficits have been identified as key impediments to the capacity of governments and international organizations to respond to and manage migration and associated phenomena. This is the case both for areas in which the systematic inclusion of the "migration factor" may

allow for crucial conclusions to inform policymaking (for example, as regards employment and labour market data or educational participation and performance) and the way in which migration data are collected. Gender and age-disaggregated migration data, for instance, continue to be absent in many cases, reducing government abilities to adequately identify needs and target groups for policies and programmes. The social function of research and information should also not be ignored: given the misperceptions that still abound about migration, accurate data and information are vital in promoting realistic public debate about the phenomenon and its impact, including in the media.

19.   This workshop would be an opportunity to advance the dialogue between policy and research communities in the field of migration and to identify obstacles and opportunities in creating effective feedback mechanisms between the two. Areas of focus could include: the capacities needed to fill data gaps and promote research (particularly in developing countries); how better to use and harmonize existing data sources; how to factor the gender dimension into migration research and data more effectively; how to improve access to and exchange of information, for example within regions and regional bodies; and how to ensure more systematic monitoring and evaluation of migration policies.

20.   In seeking funding for the IDM intersessional workshops, the Administration encourages donors to support the IDM annual programme as a whole, while understanding that some donors may wish to earmark their contribution for a specific workshop. The total budget for IDM 2011 for which donor support is sought is USD 200,000 (USD 100,000 per intersessional workshop). Approximately two thirds of that amount will be used to fund the participation of developing country officials from capitals to ensure that the workshops and subsequent publications form an integral part of the Organization's capacity-building activities.

Annexes

I.   Summary of results of the Participation Satisfaction Survey distributed at the IDM intersessional workshop, "Societies and identities: The multifaceted impact of migration"*, 19-20 July 2010 (*English only*)

II.   Summary of discussions and selected comments of the "Virtual Dialogue" hosted by the Online Community on Migration and Integration, a joint UNAoC/IOM project *(English only)*

Annex I

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2010 – INTERSESSIONAL WORKSHOP
"SOCIETIES AND IDENTITIES: THE MULTIFACETED IMPACT OF MIGRATION"

Participant Satisfaction Survey[3]

General Appreciation: 82% Overall Satisfaction

➢ All in all, participants were highly satisfied with the workshop and the background paper. There were some requests for material and resources, e.g. notepad available on tables or logistical information to be sent earlier.

Objectives: 80% Learning Benefit

The workshop helped enhance **understanding** of the issues; helped identify measures of international **cooperation**; contributed to **mutual learning** among governments and other actors; and helped identify **effective policies**.

➢ All participants who answered the questionnaire stated that the workshop helped them to better understand the topic. Respondents also mentioned that summaries at the end of each session and a workshop report would assist them in synthesizing what they had learned.

➢ Approximately 60% of participants who answered the questionnaire found that presentations and speeches helped identifying measures for advancing international cooperation.

➢ All the comments made emphasized the usefulness of the workshop in learning from counterparts from other countries.

➢ When it came to identifying effective policies, participants opined that this was a work in progress that will need to be continued in the future. 61% explicitly affirmed that the workshop helped them identify effective policy solutions.

Workshop Content & Format: 81% Satisfaction

81% of participants were satisfied with the **quality of presentations**, the **composition of panels**, the **time allocated for discussion**, and the session **"Migrant's Voice"**.

➢ Many comments highlighted the considerable variations in the quality of the different presentations, especially regarding their length and relevance to the subject.

➢ Overall, the composition of the panels was considered well-balanced although several participants found that certain regions were over-represented while others were under-represented.

---

[3] The figures and comments presented below are based on a survey distributed to participants at the abovementioned IDM workshop. The response rate was 16% (28 / 178).

➢ In several comments participants expressed a desire for shorter presentations and more time for interactive dialogue, including opportunities for informal discussions in roundtable settings, smaller rooms or over lunch.

➢ The comments indicated that attendance of the side events was low, but those participants who did attend found them very interesting. Translation for the side events was requested by several participants.

➢ The session "Migrant's Voice" received particularly enthusiastic and emotional responses.

Annex II

"Virtual Dialogue" on migration and integration

In the week preceding the IDM workshop, the following four discussion topics were proposed to the forum of the Online Community on Migration and Integration, a joint project of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAoC) and IOM:

1.   How does migration lead to social change in countries of origin and of destination?

2.   In what ways can policymakers, civil society and the media deconstruct negative perceptions of migrants and counteract xenophobia?

3.   What policies can help to better integrate migrant children, both first and second generation?

4.   How can we enhance migrants' social contributions to society, and promote social inclusion?

From 12 to 25 July, the online forum was visited more than 350 times. A short summary is provided below of the main points raised in response to the above questions.

Summary

The forum participants examined ways in which societies of origin and destination can shape the perceptions of migrants and contribute to their social inclusion. It was suggested that societies need to construct a new identity which takes into account existing values and traditions as well as the new cultural and social diversity generated by immigration.

Forum participants encouraged awareness training for journalists with regard to migration matters but also agreed that, beyond the media and policymakers, society as a whole is responsible for promoting realistic and positive images of migrants. For instance, NGOs and migrant associations can offer positive stories about migration and encourage journalists to publish them. Participants also suggested that the past and present contributions of migrants to society be advertised through events, exhibitions, books and curricular activities in schools as a way to advocate and enhance social inclusion of migrants.

While considering intercultural peer groups, proficiency in the destination country's language, and the promotion of higher education among migrant families to be crucial for the integration of migrant children and youth, the participants also highlighted the importance of accepting and strengthening roots with the societies of origin.

Selected comments

Topic 2: In what ways can policymakers, civil society and the media deconstruct negative perceptions of migrants and counteract xenophobia?

Quote:

"In the 1970s, it became more and more usual to see entire South Asian families in Paris and around. I don't remember any real sarcastic comments, except at school among children who as usual have this specific ability to make nasty comments. Ten years and more after, came the Maghreb migrants, but for them the situation was (and still is) far more tricky and difficult: for them it's not only 'nasty comment' – they endure real racism.

Now again, Paris is 'flooded' by Chinese and East European immigrants. And as 20 years ago, the perception of these populations is completely different. So why? Firstly, it's obvious the media treatment was and is still different, depending on the origins of these immigrants. Vietnamese, and recently Chinese, were presented as humanitarian victims, having suffered the injustice of wars or political regimes they couldn't influence. Rescued Boat People, banished Tiananmen students, the media clearly made headlines with their sufferings, supporting their papers by spectacular pictures titillating our Christian unconscious culture, and secondly our guilt feelings (we were the cause of their fate, after all, the politicians said, no?). Media and policymakers were in fact working in the same direction, educating the 'indigenes' in accepting these families which for the most part rapidly succeeded in creating businesses, finding places to live among the 'indigenes' and raising their children without big issues. Now comparing with Maghreb populations and East Europe immigrants, the gap is definitively significant. Are their sufferings and needs so different? Is their fate not similar? In fact, no. The thing is that the media and policymakers were somehow not prepared to deal with these new crises or failed to make these waves of immigration a positive story.

Is there a 'migration myth' then? Not really, there are myths, positive and negative ones. Are migrants responsible for the nature of these myths? No less or more than the policymakers and media."

Topic 3: What policies can help to better integrate migrant children, both first and second generation?

Quote:

"In my experience, having worked with second and even third-generation immigrants in Spain, I have identified three major issues. The first one is the language. Linguistics experts affirm that the language of the country of origin is lost in the third generation. In my experience, this is true when the community of immigrants in the host country and its networks are not solid or large enough. Large national communities that keep strong ties among their members make linguistic integration difficult. I believe that immigrants should keep the language of their origins. However, after a few generations, young people should ideally become bilingual, or at least their mother tongue should become that of the host country. I can think of two main reasons. First, it is essential for the young people to be proficient in the national language in order to compete for equal opportunities in education

and the labour market. Second, because a language is not only a vehicle for communication; it creates a whole mindset and structure that will either assist or make it difficult for individuals to integrate.

The second issue is the peer group. One of the indicators of integration is the existence of groups of friends from different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds. Many times I have found that, even if they study together, many young people tend to group around nationalities. Sharing a mother tongue enhances these dynamics.

And the third issue relates to roots. One of the major challenges for immigrants is the question of identity. I don't want to repeat myself about this, because I already spoke about it in other forum. But the experience of being rooted is essential for human psychology. Being able to recognize one's roots, having a sense of connection, accepting those roots, strengthening the links with them and projecting them to develop a strong personality in the present are very important points to consider.

I can think of three concrete measures to address these three issues. Regarding the linguistic issues, it is important to promote high education in immigrant families through grants and awareness. It is also important to have an active policy in housing. The creation of national/linguistic ghettos does not help to promote integration. Regarding the peer group, several experiments conducted in schools in Spain can be recalled: the creation of intercultural teams of work, working throughout the year in learning about a classmate from another country (going to his house, meeting with family), etc. Finally, regarding the issue of roots, an interesting initiative is being conducted by the Canadian Government in collaboration with the Lebanese embassy. They enable students of Lebanese origin to return to Lebanon to collaborate with NGOs in order to learn and increase their awareness of the reality of their country of origin: traditions, problems, etc."