



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)  
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

## CONCEPT NOTE

### High-level segment of the 100th Session of the Council

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#### Introduction and rationale

The 100th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to be held from 5 to 7 December 2011, coincides with the Organization's 60th anniversary. This year's Council session includes a high-level segment, taking place on 6 and 7 December. As an objective, this session will seek broadly to advance collective thinking on how IOM's Member States, as the proprietors of the Organization, can best address the fundamental challenge of developing humane, orderly and equitable migration policies and arrangements that acknowledge national sovereignty on population movements and simultaneously respect and facilitate people's age-old desire to migrate to improve their lives.

The high-level segment will also enable Member and Observer States to address specific migration issues, challenges and opportunities as well as broader, forward-looking recommendations for the future work of the Organization. On 5 December, the day before the high-level discussion, the IOM Director General, William Lacy Swing, will present the "State of the Organization", an examination of IOM's growth and evolution in tandem with migration's increasing complexity, the needs of its Member States and emerging institutional challenges. The Administration is keen to listen to the Member States' views on the current status of the Organization and how it might be further strengthened to ensure that it continues to be highly effective and relevant in responding to the needs of Member States and migrants in general.

The high-level segment of the 100th Session of the Council represents the culmination of a year of special events and outreach activities across the world to mark IOM's 60th anniversary (more information is available from <http://60years.iom.int/en/welcome.html>). The event will feature government ministers and other senior officials, prominent keynote speakers, notable migrants, distinguished personalities in the field of migration, and former Directors General and Deputy Directors General of IOM. A special reception hosted by the Swiss Government on the evening of 6 December will be an occasion for delegates to interact with one another in an informal setting.

#### Migration: A geopolitical "megatrend" of the twenty-first century

The twenty-first century is destined to be, in sheer numbers, the era of the greatest human mobility in recorded history. Globally, there are now more people on the move numerically than ever before – 214 million international migrants along with 740 million internal migrants, bringing the migrant total to nearly 1 billion persons, one in every seven persons in the world. States are placing increasing priority on migration as the rate of human mobility exceeds countries' ability to manage migration on their own.

While the transport and communications revolution of the last century may have launched today's unprecedented movement of people, it is the convergence of a range of elements that will ensure that migration remains a "megatrend" of the twenty-first century. These include, in addition to the driving force of the social media revolution, continuing demographic and

skills deficits in much of the developed world – ageing populations and dramatically declining birth rates, amounting to longer-term negative population growth – compounded with expanding population growth and surplus labour in the developing world.

The more immediate migration crises caused by natural, man-made and slow-onset environmental disasters – for example those in Côte d’Ivoire, Haiti, Libya, Pakistan and Somalia over the past year – have also brought into stark relief the extent to which humanitarian emergencies affect migrants and migration. Likewise, these recent humanitarian crises demonstrated the limitations of existing tools and resources to manage the mobility-related consequences of natural and man-made disasters.

### **Migration challenges**

The high-level segment will also offer participating States an opportunity to canvass the policy implications of global population mobility and the difficulties involved in migration governance. The immediate challenges that States face include youth unemployment and underemployment in much of the developing and developed world – aggravated by the global financial crisis; demographic disparities between developed and developing countries; and widespread anti-migrant sentiment manifesting itself in the form of harmful stereotypes, discrimination and even xenophobia.

Among the longer-term challenges States face are the effective matching of supply and demand in the global labour market; managing migrant integration and social diversity at a time when multi-ethnic and multicultural societies are increasingly the norm; and determining the most effective international migration architecture to complement national and regional instruments and policies.

### **Way forward**

The IOM Director General will discuss these challenges and opportunities in his statement on the “State of migration: Current realities, future frontiers” when he opens the high-level segment on 6 December. The objective is to provide Member States with a set of recommendations for consideration, drawn in part from the findings of the 2011 World Migration Report, *Communicating Effectively about Migration*, which will be launched officially during the high-level segment. Deliberations will be enriched by an interactive panel entitled “Migrants’ voices”, which will feature a group of migrants from various walks of life and showcase individual migrant stories, all highlighting the positive impact of migration on culture, society and the global economy.

The Administration looks forward to listening to and learning from Member States about their migration concerns and issues, and their thoughts on the role of IOM in supporting them in responding to the immediate and long-term challenges and opportunities of human mobility. In this regard, the Administration would encourage Member and Observer States to address the following elements in their remarks:

- Contemporary migration experiences, including migration management priorities;
- The future of IOM in terms of the Organization’s mandate, role, responsibilities, capacity and relevance within the global migration debate.