

**Mr Sergio MARCHI, Global Commission on International Migration
IOM Council – International Dialogue on Migration - 30 November 2004**

Pleased to join my colleagues on this panel as part of this “International Dialogue on Migration”

Compliments on this initiative

Particularly pleased to see emphasis shared on “benefits” and “opportunities. In Canada, millions of migrants have been granted a second lease on life. In the process, migration has helped build a great country. And we are still building.

And Canada is not alone !

Throughout the world, millions are contributing to their new home, making that economy and society stronger.

Migrants also don’t forget their original homeland easily, and in their own ways help those countries with its cause of development (remittances, trade and investments, or returning periodically / permanently bringing new skills, resources and perspectives).

So, migration can be a positive, dynamic force. But it needs to take place in a appropriate and conducive policy environment. Otherwise, the costs and challenges can pile up and run the risk of overwhelming the benefits.

What do I mean by a conducive policy environment ? Let me propose five ingredients which I think are indispensable.

First, countries must adopt proactive – progressive and comprehensive migration policies. These policies must have clear, transparent, fair criteria. Right now, countries which have this are in a shockingly small minority.

We see more ad-hoc policies, or closed door policies – and this aggravates an already critical problem.

Most countries handle migration through ministries of security / interior – Not exactly a welcome mat.

Countries must also shed the “old world” thinking, where we divided the world into sending and receiving countries. Today, all countries are both. The new language is not “they”, it is “we”. The movement is not only S–N, it is also S-S. So, the political will “we need to create migration policies” is a shared collective one – Developed and Developing countries.

Secondly, countries need the appropriate human resources to back up and run their migration policies. They need to have the capacity for trained and experienced civil servants, and a capacity for research and evaluation. Otherwise, a poorly executed policy becomes a failed policy.

Thirdly, civil society needs to be fully engaged in the development and execution of the policy. Migrants, their communities and migrant associations and NGOs, must have a sense of ownership and involvement.

In the Canadian experience, a close partnership with all these actors has been invaluable to the ultimate success of the policy.

Fourthly, countries need to foster an open, public, ongoing political discourse on the issue of migration. Sweeping things under the carpet don't help ! In fact, it worsens the situation as tensions only build to dangerous levels. Hoping that migration pressures will simply go away, also is wishful thinking. Instead, we need to foster a candid, constructive dialogue so that a society is comfortable and confident that they and their governments are on top of the files, and not squeezed by their weight, which only breeds xenophobic views which in turn seduces short-term politicians, who try to build a constituency on this hot push button controversy.

On migration, we need to talk it through and not shout it out.

Finally, the issue of effective integration is paramount. Allowing a migrant in is one side of the coin, the flip side of that coin, is ensuring they are full contributing members. In this regard, countries must be progressive on residency and citizenship status, and on programs that help, facilitate a successful integration (long training, education, finding job services ...). Denying migrants, this is not only a wrong response but it can plant a cancerous seed at the heart of society. Promoting second class citizens and marginalizing people is a sure way to class stratification and social divisions which ultimately creates future nightmares for governments and their citizens.

In closing

The world needs a dispassionate, reasoned discourse on migration. Again compliments to IOM on its efforts and I hope our Commission will help in this regard.

Today's reality is that a sea of humanity is on the move, everywhere, and the reality of the future is that they will increasingly have several careers in their lifetime, performed in more than one country and they will likely call several countries their home.

Our challenge and opportunity then is how to globally manage migration so that it can become an efficient, fair and secure movement.

And to manage migration, we also need to find a way to manage human nature and human emotions. It's not the easiest two things to do in the world. But again, do we really have an option ? Not really.

They need to be done / and they can be done !

Thank you.