

**LAUNCH OF “FOUNDATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION LAW”  
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I am especially pleased to be here with you to make this brief presentation of the book entitled "Foundations of International Migration Law", which was co-edited by Brian Opeskin, Jillyanne Redpath-Cross and myself. At your tables you have received a leaflet that sums up the work in a few lines, but which is no substitute for reading the book in its entirety. I should like to thank the Director General for his introduction and his support for this undertaking. Following his example, I wish to focus on three points in this presentation:

1. First, why such a work? In the past, it was commonplace to hear experts seriously cast doubt on the very existence of international migration law as a separate branch of international law. More recently, such questioning has disappeared and given way to another concern: what does international migration law cover and where can its content be found? Of course there have been specialised articles and publications in recent years addressing particular topics, but no single work has offered a holistic and comprehensive view of the international norms governing migration. It must be acknowledged that migration law is so fragmented that few would hazard an attempt to assemble its various elements into a coherent whole. It was in response to the question of what is covered by international migration law that we decided to produce this work, considering that the last treatise on international migration law was written 25 years ago and had become largely outdated in the light of the major migration-related developments in international law since then.

2. Second point: What was the methodology to be adopted? Our aim was to produce a work using language devoid of legalese or with legal jargon reduced to its simplest form so that it would be accessible to a wide audience and not just to legal professionals fond of esoteric formulas. We also wanted the work to remain relatively modest in size, which is almost the case when a book has less than 500 pages. We called on migration experts from various fields and with practical rather than just academic knowledge of migration. We even asked several persons from outside the legal profession to write certain chapters, for example a demographer, who has presented in very concrete terms the real situation of migration and its evolution over the years to come. It was also the task of the co-editors to ensure a certain overall unity of presentation, writing and style. Based on a strict outline and set of coordinates, our aim has been to illustrate the diversity, the richness and at times the contradictions and grey areas of this law, in 15 chapters. We were guided by a common desire to highlight the fundamental features of this law, which is built on three pillars: the prerogatives and duties of States in their reciprocal relations; the rights and duties of migrants; and finally, the ever-growing number of mechanisms for regional and multilateral cooperation on migration.

Third and last point: Why draft this work in the context of IOM or under its auspices, although it is not a work drafted by and for IOM? Some people and institutions have an outdated image of IOM as a purely technical service institution silently carrying out the instructions it receives. As you are aware, the situation today is different and more sophisticated. Allow me to recall that on 7 June 2007 you adopted a strategy calling on IOM,

*inter alia*, to "enhance the humane and orderly management of migration and the effective respect for the human rights of migrants in accordance with international law." Should not IOM know the content of international migration law so as to be able to comply with it? IOM is not just the administration but also all of you as Member States. The Organization thus bears an institutional responsibility to know and disseminate migration law and if necessary to develop it in order to transpose that law into its programmes and projects. This is the best if not the only way to avoid a hiatus between the organization's thinking, its doctrine on the one hand, and its action on the other. Also at stake is the credibility of IOM in the multilateral community. As I have mentioned, the last work on the subject dates back 25 years, and I hope that IOM will not take another 25 years to update the work that has just been published. International migration law is dynamic and in constant evolution; it is, admittedly, not perfect, but knowledge of it is necessary to understanding and better managing one of the most complex issues of our time.

Thank you very much for your attention and, on behalf my fellow editors, I wish you interesting reading!