EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION
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ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE MIGRATION MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

1.   In a world characterized by global networks for producing and exchanging goods, services and information, international movements of people, whether of a transient, long-term or permanent nature, are established features of the contemporary world. Together with globalization, trade liberalization and global economic integration encourage a more mobile labour force, but also increase differentials in standards of living between the developing and the developed worlds. As a result of this, and of enhanced technological possibilities for movement, new responses are needed to achieve and maintain the orderly movement of persons in the midst of a global society that is more and more committed to mobility.

2.   Historically, governments have responded to changing migratory trends on an *ad hoc* basis, responding to the "issue of the day", often without considering broader impacts. For instance, to the extent that increased control has been effective, it has often had the secondary effect of pushing more people into the hands of smugglers. This in turn has led to exploitation and trafficking, as well as to growing levels of insecurity because of links to organized crime, violence and corruption. More and more governments are recognizing that this "unidimensional approach" creates other problems, and there is a growing awareness that contemporary migration can no longer be treated as an isolated "issue", but must be considered as a process to be managed in a comprehensive manner. While forced and other abusive types of migration must be prevented and curtailed, most migration, if properly managed, can be positive for individuals and societies and is indeed necessary for today's mobile world.

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE MIGRATION "PROCESS"?

3.   The migration process could be said to begin with the impetus for migration (root causes - the push and pull factors, forced or voluntary), moving through the various stages of travel and entry (either by regular or irregular means, and either facilitated – legally or illegally - or spontaneous), settlement and/or return, integration and/or reintegration and, ultimately, in some cases, the acquisition of nationality. There are a number of offshoot relationships, including the potential contribution that diaspora can make to the economic development of their countries of origin, as well as cross-cutting themes, such as protection.

4.   The stages of the migration process are interlinked, and involve a variety of actors, partnerships and policy considerations at different levels and of varying degrees. Participants in today's migration process include such diverse public and private individuals and institutions as employers, family members and community organizations, government migration managers, international organizations, and smugglers and traffickers. The migration process includes complex linkages between, *inter alia*, economic, social, trade, labour, health, cultural and security policy areas, as well as rights and obligations including, at the international level, those of migrants and States.

5.	This complex set of relationships underscores the need for a global understanding and approach to migration management which takes account of the relationship of migration to other contemporary issues of a social, economic and political nature, and pursues a comprehensive approach to addressing these dynamics. In this regard "it will be important to recognize those areas where, and under what conditions, migration can contribute to economic, cultural and social development, as well as those areas where it does not." [1]

6.	At the same time, partnerships and international cooperation operating within this framework might benefit from some basic shared understandings, for example, that migration properly managed benefits migrants and societies; that legal migration should be encouraged and irregular migration should be discouraged; and that all migrants are entitled to protection of their basic human rights, etc.

A COMPREHENSIVE AND COOPERATIVE MIGRATION MANAGEMENT APPROACH

7.	The challenges in managing migration effectively at the national and international levels include finding and maintaining a balance between measures addressing various migration-related issues, without creating improvement in one sphere to the detriment of another. Identifying essential component parts of a national migration policy is one important step in the development of a strategy to manage migratory flows at the national and international levels. But beyond that, the various component policy elements should be developed to take account of the impact one has on the other, and integrated into a comprehensive whole, capable of managing migration in an orderly manner.

8.	Should any or all migration policy issues be considered within a national, regional and/or international comprehensive approach? Are some elements more important than others? Should the elements be common to all States or will each State develop its own package based on domestic priorities?

9.	Any discussion on elements of a managed migration approach would need to take into consideration both what constitutes a comprehensive set of elements, and who are the partners required to implement these elements.

10.	In considering which elements are key to a comprehensive approach, the following could be a starting point:

- opportunities for legal migration;

- effective border management arrangements (for the security of borders, protection against crime, combating trafficking, and maintaining the integrity of the asylum system);

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[1]	See MC/1842, "IOM Strategic Planning: Toward the Twenty-first Century", 9 May 1995, para. 11.

- voluntary return in safety and dignity, and sustainable reintegration of unauthorized migrants;

- acceptance and participation of migrants in the host society;

- recognition and respect of the rights of migrants and refugees; and

- programmes to address the "root causes" of forced migration, including targeting of international trade, investment and development aid to facilitate development of countries of origin.

11.   Who are the key partners for managing each of the elements?   How are partnerships established and maintained? When there are so many players involved, how is consistency in approach assured?

12.   Establishing a **comprehensive** approach to migration management is not an easy task. On the contrary, it requires a number of necessary preconditions, which must be progressively developed, through **cooperation** and coordination at both the national and the international levels. Discussion of methods to ensure effective management of the key elements to migration management could include:

I.   Increasing coordination among government agencies concerned

13.   Working towards a more and more systemic approach to migration management begins at the national level. Unless there is rationalization within the country, there will be little progress at the international level. Often migration-related issues are managed with relatively little or even no coordination among concerned government agencies within the same government. Typically, for example, Ministries of Interior or Justice deal with entry control issues, Ministries of Foreign Affairs handle humanitarian issues, Ministries of Social Affairs are responsible for integration, etc. A comprehensive approach would include consideration of the implications and impact of certain policies *vis-à-vis* others, requiring coordination and partnerships among all relevant government agencies within a national government.

II.   International Cooperation

14.   Very   few   countries   are   unaffected   by   international   migration.   Given   the internationalization of migration, national migration strategies developed in isolation are unlikely to result in effective migration management. Thus, a *sine qua non* for migration management is inter-State cooperation.[2]

15.   One clear trend in this regard is the regionalization of international consultation and cooperation as evidenced by the increasing number of Regional Consultative Processes emerging

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[2]   The case for international cooperation in migration management was made most comprehensively and succinctly at the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5 to 13 September 1994, where a Programme of Action, including for international migration, was adopted.

in all world regions.[3] Regional Consultative Processes are cooperative mechanisms for managing international migration which include, *inter alia*, discussions on the benefits of common approaches and even, in some cases, harmonizing policies. There is a clear convergence of ideas among most Regional Consultative Processes regarding many key elements and principles guiding international migration management, including safeguarding migrants' rights, refugee protection, border management and addressing root causes.

III. The inclusion of all actors involved within the policy-making process

16. A comprehensive approach should consider migration issues from all perspectives, with relevant governmental and non-governmental partners, and recognize the interrelationship with other cross-cutting issues. Therefore, with the elaboration of a comprehensive approach to the process of migration, a range of stakeholders needs to become involved, including governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, employers, community organizations and migrants.

IV. Migration policy consistency and coherence

17. Consistency, coherence and transparency of migration policy and practice are key elements of a comprehensive management approach. It is important that all actors involved in the migration process, including migrants and the host population, have access to consistent and unambiguous information regarding roles, rights, procedures and expectations. For example, to limit the incidence of migrant trafficking and smuggling, it is important for migrants to be aware of the legal migration possibilities. And to limit the incidence of xenophobia and discrimination in host societies, it is important for migrants to be aware of the requirements of local law (and to abide by them) and for migrant-hosting societies to be aware of the positive contributions that migrants can make to their communities.

18. A comprehensive migration management approach should be based on an agreed framework of guiding principles/common understandings rather than a prescriptive set of measures. This framework would also serve to enhance policy consistency and coherence. While States obviously must continue to have prime responsibility for migration management, common principles would serve to facilitate this. Among others, consistency, coherence and transparency, including common principles, may serve to mitigate irregular movements, facilitate the acceptance of migrants and enhance social cohesion.

V. The development of statistical standards regarding migration

19. Meaningful data on migration stocks and flows is one key element of effective migration management. At present, much of the statistical and documentary information required for sound

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[3] For more information on Regional Consultative Processes, see A. Klekowski von Kopenfels, "The Role of Regional Consultative Processes in Managing International Migration", IOM Migration Research Series, No. 3, and "Managing Migration at the Regional Level: Strategies for Regional Consultation" from IOM's Round Table on Managing Migration at the Regional Level, 5 June 2002.

decision-making is not available or does not reach policy makers. In addition, information is not shared between governments, partly because information provision and requirements vary from country to country. Reliable data are essential for monitoring flows and understanding trends, as a basis for policy and programme development and cooperation.

CONCLUSION

20.   The world's population is increasingly mobile. As the level of international migration rises, so does its impact on economic, social, cultural and political policies in most countries of the world. The phenomenon of international migration brings into play many sensitive issues of national security and identity, of social change and cultural adaptation, and of resource allocation. All these questions represent important challenges to migration policy makers. Policy choices made now will help to determine whether migration is managed to maximize its benefits, or whether it will continue to be a source of concern, potential social disruption and friction between States. The key is not to prevent mobility, but to manage it better.

21.   A comprehensive and cooperative approach to international migration management is required to deal with the migration pressures of this century. To be successful, such an approach should include basic elements that would encourage orderly migration and enhance social cohesion. Since regional and unilateral migration policies are likely to have an impact, not necessarily in predictable ways, on neighbouring countries or regions, international cooperation and partnerships are also essential features of a managed approach.

22.   To this end, States' migration policies should be reviewed, strengthened or established so as to ensure more correspondence between external pressures and domestic needs, and strong governmental migration structures should exist which could both manage national migration programmes and participate in cooperative international solutions.[4]

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[4]   See MC/1842, op. cit., para. 12.