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**INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON  
INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE  
ON MIGRATION**

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**INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2011**

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

20 October 2011

## **INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2011**

### ***The future of migration: Building capacities for change***

1. This discussion note provides an overview of the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) activities in 2011 and a brief update on the upcoming 100th Session of the IOM Council. It also seeks the membership's general feedback on the IDM and asks it to select topics for the intersessional workshops to be held during the IDM in 2012.

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

2. In 2011, the IDM was framed by the overarching theme of "The future of migration: Building capacities for change", which had been selected by the membership in accordance with the IOM World Migration Report 2010 on the same subject. Similarly, the membership had chosen two workshops topics: "Climate change, environmental degradation and migration" and "Economic cycles, demographic change and migration". During the workshops, the membership analysed some of the major trends which are likely to significantly shape future migration and examined relevant policy options and capacity needs.

3. The first intersessional workshop, on 29 and 30 March 2011, was dedicated to the topic of "Climate change, environmental degradation and migration" and was attended by 230 participants from governments, civil society, academia, the media and others. The workshop was framed by the notion that a comprehensive approach to managing environmental migration would aim: (a) to minimize, to the extent possible, forced migration resulting from environmental factors; (b) where forced migration does occur, to ensure assistance and protection for those affected and seek durable solutions to their situation; and (c) to facilitate the role of migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change. Three main areas of capacity-building emerged: building knowledge and improving data collection; strengthening policy, institutional, administrative and legal frameworks; and reinforcing operational and technical capacities.<sup>1</sup>

4. The second intersessional workshop, on the topic of "Economic cycles, demographic change and migration", took place in Geneva on 12 and 13 September 2011. The workshop attracted around 150 participants, including representatives from over 60 countries and 23 international and non-governmental organizations. A guiding theme of the workshop was the notion that migration is inevitable and essential for economic growth and competitiveness given global and regional labour market and demographic trends. Effective governance of migration in this context must not only reconcile short- and long-term priorities, but also balance the interests, needs and rights of migrants, countries of origin and countries of destination. The workshop identified areas in which governments and institutions may need to reinforce their capacities to manage the interfaces between economic cycles, demographic changes and human mobility for the benefit of economies and societies. By way of example, labour market assessments, skills matching to reduce "brain waste", systems for the recognition of qualifications and ways to enhance the potential for circular migration were

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<sup>1</sup> The Administration reported on the outcomes of the first workshop at the informal consultations on 28 April 2011 (please refer to document IC/2011/3). For additional information about this workshop, including background paper, Chair's summary, agenda, presentations and list of participants, please visit: [www.iom.int/idmclimatechange/lang/en](http://www.iom.int/idmclimatechange/lang/en).

among the measures discussed. A full summary of the conclusions is available on the workshop webpage.<sup>2</sup>

### **Hundredth Session of the Council**

5. The 100th Session of the IOM Council, taking place from 5 to 7 December 2011, will be devoted to IOM's 60th anniversary celebrations. Invitations have been issued to 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. The high-level segment of the Council (6 and 7 December) aims to provide a space for reflection on how IOM Member States can address the fundamental challenge of developing humane, orderly and equitable migration policies. In addition, the Council will feature a number of migrant stories in a special session entitled "Migrants' voices" and the launch of the 60th anniversary edition of the World Migration Report, *Communicating Effectively about Migration*. Exceptionally, there will not be a dedicated IDM session.

### **IDM: review and feedback**

6. IDM is one of IOM's core activities, as stipulated in the Organization's Constitution and Strategy.<sup>3</sup> Founded in 2001, the IDM has evolved considerably over the years, while aiming to preserve its fundamental hallmarks – open, informal and non-binding dialogue, addressing the full spectrum of migration issues and incorporating voices from governments, migrants, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, academia and others. The IDM is steered by the IOM membership, which selects the themes and topics of the IDM through the informal consultations process.<sup>4</sup>

7. In managing IDM, the Administration aims to closely align the content and format of the Dialogue with the interests and priorities of the membership. This is done bearing in mind the need to accommodate the diversity of migration realities and perspectives represented within the membership, as well as persistent resource constraints. The Administration tries to ensure, to the extent possible and according to the specific topic, a balanced representation of origin, transit and destination countries, different regions and stakeholders. The Administration constantly strives to innovate and improve the IDM and, to this end, encourages participants to provide feedback, for instance through the informal consultations process or through participant satisfaction questionnaires distributed at the workshops. The questionnaires have provided important feedback and indicate that participants are generally highly satisfied with the workshops. Participant response rates to the questionnaires, however, would have to be increased to obtain a more representative picture.

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<sup>2</sup> For additional information about the second intersessional workshop, including background paper, Chair's summary, agenda, presentations and list of participants, please visit: [www.iom.int/idmeconomiccycles](http://www.iom.int/idmeconomiccycles). Copies of the Chair's summary will be made available during the informal consultations.

<sup>3</sup> See preamble to the IOM Constitution (1989) and activity 7 of the IOM Strategy of 2007 (Council Resolution No. 1150 of 7 June 2007).

<sup>4</sup> For further information about the IDM, please visit [www.iom.int/idm](http://www.iom.int/idm).

8. The success of the IDM also depends on the extent to which the membership takes initiative and ownership of the Dialogue. To this end, the Administration seeks the membership's ideas and suggestions on the following points, or any others the membership wishes to raise:

- Ways to enhance the contribution of the membership to the IDM planning processes, in addition to choosing the overarching theme and workshop topics.
- Ways to enhance participation at workshops, and specifically participation of experts from capitals.
- Ways to enhance levels of discussion and interactive debate at the workshops.

### **IDM 2012: Managing migration in crisis situations**

9. At the informal consultations held on 28 April 2011, the Administration proposed two possible overarching themes for the IDM in 2012. The majority of the membership expressed a preference for the theme of "Managing migration in crisis situations".<sup>5</sup> The recent political upheaval in North Africa, the food crisis in the Horn of Africa, major natural disasters such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake or the floods in Pakistan in the same year, and other events of similar magnitude, have captured global attention and entailed immense humanitarian challenges. Population movements are a typical consequence of such crises and their aftermath. Forced migrations of this kind often involve a wide variety of groups with a range of protection and assistance needs, including age-, gender- and health-specific needs. Furthermore, and in particular where conflict or humanitarian crises are at the root of movements, migrants may be further victimized by criminal or armed elements. As a result, States face a combination of human rights, humanitarian, protection and security concerns in addressing the movement of people in crisis situations. IDM 2012, through the workshops described below, aims to highlight different dimensions of the issues and to approach the overarching theme from different angles (making a degree of overlap between the proposals inevitable). Attention is also drawn to the fact that crisis migration is not always limited to a single point in time – repercussions may be felt long after the initial trigger. Furthermore, preventive and preparedness strategies must also have their rightful place in the discussions. IOM, together with States and partner humanitarian agencies, works to ease the worst human suffering when crisis situations lead to population movements, and IDM 2012 will draw on IOM's long-standing experience in this field.

10. 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 2012 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.

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<sup>5</sup> The proposed alternative theme was "Families and migration".

11. The Administration now invites delegations to consider the potential intersessional workshop topics listed below, or such other topics related to the overarching theme that 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 2012.

### *Moving to safety: Migration consequences of complex crises*

12. Complex crises arise out of political conflict, natural disasters, food shortages, and fragile economic, political or social institutions – or, commonly, a combination of such factors, with one exacerbating another. For example, where a natural disaster occurs in the context of an unstable political situation, weak governance or other social tensions, the humanitarian repercussions are often grave. Migration is a typical consequence in all of these scenarios: displacement can be internal or external and often takes place under forced, irregular and chaotic conditions. Such movements also usually manifest themselves as mixed flows, including a variety of groups, such as unaccompanied minors, migrants with specific health needs, trafficked persons and potential refugees. It is important to recognize that population movements in the context of complex crises can be both a cause and consequence of instability, making effective management and timely responses critical. While the primary responsibility to guarantee protection and assistance to those on the move due to such crises rests with States, the complexity of the tasks calls for international cooperation, including support by humanitarian actors. More broadly, States need to find integrated responses that address the humanitarian, peace-building, governance and development dimensions implicit in crisis situations. This workshop would centre on the migration consequences of complex crises, highlighting the importance of addressing population movements as part of managing emergency situations. Discussions would revolve around questions of providing immediate assistance and protection to displaced persons and broader preparedness and response strategies to manage the migration consequences associated with complex crises.

### *Protecting migrants during times of crisis*

13. Where countries of destination experience crises, turmoil and war, it is increasingly common to see migrants caught between the front lines, often with little or no means to escape the situation and ensure their own safety. These vulnerabilities are exacerbated when migrants are in the country of destination in an irregular situation and when the home country lacks the capacity to effectively protect and assist its nationals abroad. To make matters more complex, migrants may be forced to cross borders into neighbouring countries to evade often life-threatening situations.<sup>6</sup> Thus, repercussions may be felt throughout entire regions, particularly in border areas and neighbouring States, while migrants sometimes find themselves entering adjacent countries without permission. Moreover, the consequences of such situations can outlast the original crisis – especially for home countries as they experience sudden and large-scale returns, or when vital tasks in the country of destination are left unattended due to the departure of migrant workers. This workshop would highlight the plight of migrants during crises in the countries of destination. It would analyse the

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<sup>6</sup> While there is no officially agreed terminology for such situations, the term “third-country nationals” is often used to describe migrants who, due to a crisis, crossed a border from their original country of destination to a country that is not their country of origin. Note that the term is not to be confused with “third-country national” as used in the vocabulary of the European Union. A broader, alternative term is “stranded migrants” whose journey is unexpectedly interrupted in transit and who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to continue to their intended destination or return to their country of origin.

repercussions for countries of transit, origin and destination and examine the measures taken by States and the international community to meet humanitarian, protection and consular responsibilities and security concerns. This workshop would also open up the debate to the related issue of migrants who become stranded during the course of their journey and the urgent need for international cooperation to resolve such situations, which frequently result in serious challenges for States (and countries of transit in particular) and in grave suffering for migrants.

***Beyond the emergency: Long-term solutions to crisis migration***

14. Effective migration management in response to crises requires both addressing the immediate consequences of emergency displacement and developing durable solutions for those who had to leave their homes. Too often, displacement becomes a protracted condition, or the same communities are displaced again and again. Challenges range from ensuring safety and livelihoods for displaced populations to guaranteeing the rights of those displaced and mitigating the impacts on receiving communities and environments. Classic solutions include local integration, return, resettlement and internal relocation, but many protracted situations also require consideration of camp management in long-term displacement scenarios. Increasingly, there is a focus on more concerted preparedness strategies such as disaster risk reduction, and ultimately sustainable development. This workshop would focus on how governments can address crisis migration in the long term, in cases of both internal and cross-border displacement. Following the cycle of migration management in crisis situations from emergency response to sustainable solutions, the purpose of the workshop would be to examine effective policies and practices to minimize the duration of displacement and resolve long-standing displacement situations where they arise. Potential areas of discussion could include displacement within and to urban areas, management of returns and other population movements in post-crisis situations, migration-related challenges encountered during reconstruction and peace-building phases, and the relationship between displacement, land and compensation. The workshop would give particular attention to the role of receiving communities in the context of long-term displacement or return and the support and stabilization efforts required by these communities.