



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

**INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS
OF THE IOM COUNCIL
STEERING GROUP**

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INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2007

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1. This Discussion Note provides an update on International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) activities in 2007 since the last informal consultations on 2 March 2007, and proposes two possible overarching themes to guide the IDM in 2008, for consideration by the membership.

IDM 2007: Migration Management in the Evolving Global Economy

Migration and the Environment: Expert Seminar

2. A small expert seminar at the academic and technical levels on the topic of “**Migration and the Environment**” was held in Bangkok on 22 and 23 February 2007. This seminar aimed to revive the discussion on the environmental dimensions of migration 15 years after IOM and the Refugee Policy Group (RPG) first held a conference on this issue. The purpose of the seminar was to move towards closing the knowledge gap between migration and environmental issues and to begin to examine the nexus between the two by promoting discussion among experts from both communities. It brought together 25 experts from the migration and environmental communities, including researchers, technical experts, government officials from a variety of geographical regions, and agencies dealing with migration and environment issues (including IOM). The experts explored and analysed the links between the migration and environment fields, with respect to both the effect of long-term and sudden environmental changes on migration and the effect of migration on the environment.

3. The materials of the expert seminar are available on the IOM website.¹ A comprehensive report of the seminar, summarizing the discussions and including recommendations on possible follow-up activities is currently being finalized and will also be made available on the IOM website and published as part of the IDM Series. The seminar outcomes will be used to provide guidance for IOM’s research, policy and programmatic work in this area.

4. In addition, should funding be secured, a larger workshop on the theme of “Migration and the Environment”, to which the full membership will be invited plus key stakeholders from the environment community, could be envisaged. The membership expressed interest in such a workshop during informal consultations in October 2005 and in a survey conducted after the informal consultations in October 2006. However, a broader workshop on the topic of “Migration and the Environment” could not be organized due to insufficient funding.

Intersessional Workshops

5. The overall IDM theme for 2007, “Migration Management in the Evolving Global Economy,” is consistent with the *World Migration Report 2007* on the topic of managing labour mobility in the evolving global economy. This enabled the Administration to draw on the research and analysis undertaken in connection with the forthcoming *World Migration Report* in its preparations for this year’s two intersessional workshops.

¹ To access the materials of the seminar, please use the following direct link
<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/eventGLOBAL/cache/offonce?entryId=13112&titleHolder=Migration%20and%20the%20Environment:%20Expert%20Workshop%20-%20International%20Dialogue%20on%20Migration>

6. In keeping with the overall theme, the first IDM intersessional workshop this year is **“Free Movement of Persons in Regional Integration Processes”**, one of two topics selected by the membership through a survey process in October/November 2006. The workshop is in furtherance of IOM’s constitutional mandate to provide a forum for governments, international and other organizations, to exchange views and experiences, and promote cooperation and coordination of efforts on international migration issues. The 2007 theme will also be reflected in the second intersessional workshop chosen by the membership for this year. It will deal with the topic of **“Making Global Labour Mobility a Catalyst for Development”**.

7. The first IDM intersessional workshop in 2007, “Free Movement of Persons in Regional Integration Processes”, will be held in Geneva on 18-19 June (after the issuance of this background paper, but before the related 21 June informal consultations). A significant trend in recent decades has been growing economic and social integration at regional levels. To differing degrees, regional economic institutions and associations have made arrangements for the freer movement of persons within defined territories for purposes of engaging in economic activity (e.g. APEC, ASEAN-FTA, CARICOM, ECOWAS, EU, MERCOSUR, NAFTA, SADC), while a number of others are considering developing special schemes of this sort.

8. This capacity-building workshop will bring together representatives of governments and regional institutions to share experiences with regard to the operation of existing or nascent regional integration processes and discuss various ways in which they provide for freedom of movement of persons. Furthermore, it will explore ways in which economic integration, trade liberalization policies and migration dynamics influence the elaboration of regional legal frameworks governing the movement of persons. The workshop will provide countries or regions looking to develop or to improve implementation of regional free movement regimes with the opportunity to learn from the experiences of States and institutions in other parts of the world that have addressed similar issues. States will be able to exchange information and expertise on the migration-related measures (e.g. legislation, administration, technology, training, inter-State cooperation) needed to facilitate intraregional mobility as well as discuss the advantages of and challenges related to the development and implementation of regional free movement regimes.

9. Plans for the second intersessional workshop, **“Making Global Labour Mobility a Catalyst for Development”**, scheduled for 8-9 October 2007, are now under way. It is now widely recognized that migration holds significant potential for both countries of origin and destination. For example, remittances can contribute to poverty reduction and improve foreign reserves and the balance of payment in countries of origin, while knowledge and skill-transfer offer further advantages. In countries of destination, migration can help mitigate labour shortages, enrich the human capital of host countries, and improve the flexibility and productivity of their economies. Although today both supply of and demand for migrant workers are high and the current demographic realities indicate that this trend will continue, adequate regular channels and programmes for labour migration are limited. Consequently, there is a high risk that the resulting supply-demand gap on the labour market will be filled by irregular migrants through the unscrupulous practices of smugglers and traffickers. It is therefore crucial to find ways for governments and private recruiters to ethically and effectively channel labour migration into safe, legal, humane and orderly avenues. This would maximize the societal and human development potential of global mobility of people, and also improve the protection of migrants’ human rights and help to counteract irregular migration. The workshop will look into what is currently done and what could be done to more reliably assess present and future gaps in the emerging international labour market. It

will seek to build on the discussions on these issues that will take place during the Global Forum on Migration and Development in July and focus on what can be achieved through collective efforts of relevant stakeholders, including governments and employers, on creating means to better match labour supply with labour demand today and in future. As mentioned earlier, the Administration has been able to draw on the research and analysis undertaken in connection with the forthcoming *World Migration Report* in its preparation for this workshop.

IDM Training Sessions

10. In partnership with the Graduate Institute for International Studies in Geneva (HEI), in 2007 IOM will continue the series of training sessions on pertinent migration issues for the staff of Permanent Missions in Geneva. These training sessions began in 2006 following requests by a number of Member States to conduct regular briefings on migration issues for the Geneva diplomatic missions. The training sessions will be based in part on IOM's capacity-building tool, *The Essentials of Migration Management: Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners*. The first training session in 2007 will be on the topic of **International Migration Law** and will be held at IOM Headquarters on 6 July 2007. Similar training was held in March 2006 but was only available in English due to a lack of funds for interpretation. In response to a specific request from a number of Member States, the training will be repeated with simultaneous interpretation in all three official languages (English, French and Spanish), thanks to the generous contribution of the Government of Switzerland. This training will cover such issues as migration actors, context and terminology; State authority and responsibility with particular reference to admission, detention and expulsion; the principal international instruments related to migration; and the crucial relationship between migration and security. The Administration is planning to hold a second training session on the topic of **Labour Migration** in the summer or autumn of 2007, prior to the second intersessional workshop, "Making Global Labour Mobility a Catalyst for Development", scheduled for 8-9 October 2007. The precise date of this session is still to be determined and will be communicated to the membership in due course.

IDM 2008

11. As requested by the membership, the Administration is proposing for consideration two possible overarching themes to guide the IDM in the coming year. Once an overarching theme has been selected, the Administration will propose to the membership, for their selection, workshop topics relating to that theme. As with all IDM activities, partners would be sought in organizing relevant workshops, and a broad range of stakeholders would be encouraged to participate, depending on the specific intersessional workshop themes that the membership would select.

12. The Administration takes this opportunity to request delegations to give consideration to the two potential overarching themes listed below.

(a) Mainstreaming Gender into Migration Management

Female migrants constitute nearly half of the approximately 200 million migrants worldwide. Moreover, more and more women are migrating as independent actors or as heads of households. It is becoming increasingly evident that migration is not a "gender-neutral" phenomenon: men and women display differences in their migratory behaviour and decision-making and face different risks and challenges. Within the framework of the proposed theme, the IDM in 2008 would explore the reasons and ways

to factor gender into migration policy and legislation and planning and discuss gender implications of migration-related policies, law and programmes. It would also analyse several contemporary current migration challenges and opportunities from a gender perspective.

The questions which could be explored within the proposed overarching theme include:

- How do gender roles, relations and differences in countries of origin and destination influence who migrates, and where and how they choose to migrate? What are the resulting implications for migration policy?
- In what ways should gender be given special consideration in international labour migration? What is the nature and profile of employment opportunities for migrants and what are the challenges and opportunities for women and men, respectively, in accessing these sectors?
- Which labour market sectors are typically dominated by female and male migrants, respectively, and with what policy implications? What are the implications, if any, of current demographic trends and related structural changes in the labour markets of industrialized countries (e.g. rising demand for health and care services)?
- What are the reasons for and implications of the growing feminization of migration? How do barriers to mobility and freedom of movement differ for men and women (both nationally and internationally)? How do the socio-economic challenges and opportunities differ for female and male temporary and circular migrants (e.g. transferability of benefits, portability of pensions)? What are the related policy implications?
- What are the effects of international migration on gender relations, particularly the role of women and men in households and communities?
- How to capture the gender dimension in migration research, including in data collection? How to mainstream gender into migration policy, legislation and programming?
- How can migration law better reflect a gender balanced approach? What issues should be taken into consideration by States when developing national migration law (including laws on labour migration, prevention of irregular migration, integration and assistance to migrants)?
- Does the migration of women affect development, social structures and family relationships in countries of origin differently from the migration of men? If yes, how, and what are the policy implications?
- What are the links between migration and the empowerment of women? What is the role of migrant women's associations?
- What are the particular vulnerability issues pertaining to female migrants (including factors leading to irregular and unsafe migration of women, special protection needs of migrant women, vulnerability to exploitation, triple discrimination - based on gender, race/ethnicity and nationality - trafficking and health issues)? How can policymakers best address these vulnerabilities?
- As a result of their gender, do male and/or female migrants face any particular integration challenges that suggest specific policy interventions?

(b) Return Migration: Challenges and Opportunities

While return has been on international agendas for some time, the various and multifaceted aspects of return migration and, in particular, how return migration relates to development is just beginning to receive the dedicated attention it deserves. For example, return migration holds the potential for bringing about triple-win solutions – for individual migrants, host and home societies. In the case of temporary and circular migration schemes, host countries can fill temporary job openings, labour migrants can earn income and acquire skills, and some of the challenges associated with permanent migration can be avoided. Nonetheless, it is essential to ensure that the human rights of migrants are observed in all aspects of return migration policies and measures and that these are in line with relevant international legal standards.

Whether return is permanent or temporary, actual or virtual depends not only on the circumstances in the country of origin but also on the policies put in place both by countries of origin and destination to stimulate and facilitate return of persons and resources. For example, what investment, tax and other policies can countries of origin introduce to encourage the return and/or investment of their nationals overseas in the home country? Similarly, what visa, citizenship and other nationality and migration policies can countries of destination develop to stimulate temporary and circular migration that can provide mutual benefits for home and host countries? Current debates about the potential development benefits of temporary and circular migration depend on temporary migration remaining truly temporary. What kinds of incentives and other mechanisms can be put in place, and what examples exist, to make this so?

In addition to spontaneous return flows and temporary and circular labour migration schemes, it is also important to consider other situations: for instance, the case of persons unable to enter, stay or remain in the host/intended destination country. In such cases, return is recognized as essential to the proper functioning of effective migration management and asylum systems. But how to ensure that such return takes place in a dignified and safe manner? What steps need to be taken to ensure that it remains sustainable and cost effective? What is the role of accompanying measures relating to the well-being and reintegration of returnees, in particular with respect to vulnerable migrants? What can be done to avoid the potential vicious circle of return of irregular migrants to a situation where they might once again be tempted to migrate through irregular channels? The importance of cooperation and consultation among countries of destination, origin and transit in many of the scenarios illustrated above cannot be underestimated.

Home countries can and do benefit from the considerable human, financial and other resources of returning migrants. Much return migration occurs spontaneously, without the involvement of States, and is not necessarily recorded. In addition, there is generally a need to manage, facilitate and gauge the impact of other types of return migration. Assessing the combined developmental and other impacts of return migration, in order to maximize the positive and minimize the negative effects is warranted.

Should the membership select the theme of *Return Migration: Challenges and Opportunities* to guide the International Dialogue on Migration as the overarching theme for 2008, drawing on IOM's research and programmatic experience, it could be envisaged that questions of return migration could be explored, among others, in the following contexts:

- As a contribution to development in countries of origin and destination, whether through:
 - temporary and/or circular migration schemes;
 - as part of virtual or temporary return of skills and talent programmes involving diasporas; and
- When stay is not authorized in a host country.

In each context, motivations for and impediments to return, as well as policy and programmatic interventions by relevant stakeholders to facilitate and sustain return would be considered. In addition, relevant legal frameworks and standards at national and international levels would be an important element for consideration.

13. If final agreement is not reached during the informal consultations on which of the above themes to select for IDM 2008 and to ensure that the membership's deliberations during the informal consultations are fully reflected in the final decision regarding the overarching theme, the Administration would send a survey to all Member States and all observer States and organizations shortly after the informal consultations. The survey would include the two potential overarching themes described above, modified as may be necessary based on the informal consultations. The membership would have two weeks within which to complete and return the survey. The final decision concerning the theme that will guide the IDM in 2008 would be based on the survey results.