



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

**INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON
INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE
ON MIGRATION**

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Migration and social change

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1. This discussion note provides an update on International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) activities in 2010 since the last informal consultations took place on 18 February 2010, and proposes two possible overarching themes for the membership to choose from to guide the IDM in 2011.

IDM 2010: Migration and social change

2. The first IDM intersessional workshop for 2010 took place in Geneva on 9 and 10 March 2010 and discussed “Migration and transnationalism: Opportunities and challenges”. This workshop was attended by 225 participants. Of these participants, 154 were government representatives from over 70 countries, 35 were from international organizations and 26 were from non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia and the media.¹

3. Speakers who gave presentations and participants shared local, regional and international experiences on the opportunities and challenges of migration and transnationalism. One of the main objectives of this workshop was to engage in a conceptual and practical level of enquiry regarding experiences of and responses to migration and transnationalism. New policy challenges were outlined and emphasis was placed on innovative policy solutions geared towards making transnationalism beneficial for migrants and their families in both countries of origin and destination.

4. Several key themes and common understandings emerged from the discussion. First, it was considered critical to rethink migration policy formulation, coordination and implementation so as to incorporate transnational realities that shape interactions in societies of origin and destination. This requires policymakers to think beyond national spaces in policy formulation and actively reach out to diasporas and migrants alike, creating room for positive engagement and increased opportunities for social and political participation as well as enriching exchanges.

5. Second, participants stressed the importance of providing support to migrants and their families throughout the migration process, in countries of origin, transit and destination in order to enhance the benefits of their experiences and minimize any adverse consequences for them, as well as for the societies with which they are affiliated. The precarious situation of undocumented migrants, vulnerable women and children requires focused interventions aimed at addressing the specific needs of these groups.

6. Third, an all inclusive approach, involving governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at the global, regional, national, local and intra-governmental levels, and the forging of partnerships across borders, societies and cultural divides are crucial. All these levels of involvement are inextricably linked and determine the extent to which opportunities are maximized and challenges addressed in a transnational context.

¹ For further information on the workshop, including the final agenda, the list of participants, the background paper and presentations, please visit www.iom.int/idmtransnationalism.

7. Subject to the availability of funding, the second intersessional workshop, on the theme of “Societies and identities: the multifaceted impact of migration”, will be held in Geneva on 19 and 20 July 2010.² While the first IDM workshop of 2010 focused primarily on the experience of the individual in a transnational context, this workshop will focus on the societal implications of migration and social change. It will consider such issues as integration, social remittances, xenophobia and diversity through the perspectives of societies of origin and destination. Notwithstanding the importance of the economic dimension, social facets will be the primary focus of this workshop, in keeping with the overarching theme of “Migration and social change”. Planning for this workshop has started and, as always, the Administration would welcome suggestions concerning case studies and speakers or other input by the membership.

IDM 2011: Proposed themes

8. The Administration takes this opportunity to request the membership to select an overarching theme for IDM 2011 from the suggestions below, or to make alternative suggestions. The two proposals given below were both designed to build on the discussions that have taken place in the IDM to date, and to deepen consideration of aspects of migration that have been identified as a priority, but which have not yet received thorough attention.

First proposal: The future of migration: Building capacities for change

9. Managing migration in a humane, coherent and effective way is already a complex undertaking today. In the coming decades, however, international migration is likely to change in ways that will create new challenges for migration management. Long-term demographic, social, environmental, political and economic trends will have a considerable impact on the scale and patterns of migration. For example, worldwide, migration from rural to urban areas is expected to increase. Likewise, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation are already causing migration and displacement, internally or across international borders. Environmental factors are predicted to have a significant bearing on migration in the future, challenging existing frameworks and institutional responses. These are just two examples of many possible transformations whose precise impact and interrelationship are difficult to predict. Nevertheless, migration policymakers and practitioners could be confronted with a substantially different set of migration challenges in the future.

10. Building and developing the capacities of States to prepare for and respond to changing migration trends is a major task ahead. In seeking to promote internal coherence and maximize opportunities for cross-fertilization between different activities pursued by the Organization, this theme proposed for the IDM next year is in line with the topic of the forthcoming IOM flagship publication, *World Migration Report 2010 – The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change*. Drawing from the Report’s findings and analysis, the IDM in 2011 would present an opportunity for policymakers and other stakeholders to discuss some of the possible future scenarios and the ways to address them. While the Dialogue would focus on migration management at the national level, this would not be complete without due consideration of cooperation on and facilitation of migration at the international level, including the role of international organizations and other actors. It is, of course, recognized that there is no “one-size-fits-all” model for capacity-building. Instead, countries differ in terms of their existing capacities and their needs for further development. Under this overarching theme, the IDM would look at the administrative structures, cooperation arrangements, legal frameworks, resources, data and

² For further details on the second intersessional workshop, please refer to document IC/2010/1 (paras 19–20).

expertise required to implement effective and coherent migration policies in response to specific challenges, especially where new migration trends are arising. Using a case-study approach, the IDM would offer the possibility to analyse issues on the horizon such as environmental migration or the impact of demographic change or ongoing challenges such as irregular migration. In each case, emphasis would be placed on the different types of capacities needed to respond to such challenges and improve the outcomes of migration for migrants and societies, at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Second proposal: Migration and human security

11. One of the key challenges being faced by migration policymakers is how to integrate the wide variety of perspectives and approaches relevant to migration management into comprehensive, coherent and effective policies. The concept of human security brings together elements of security, development, humanitarian and human rights perspectives. It can therefore provide a useful unifying framework for addressing a cross-cutting subject such as migration and put the spotlight on the linkages between migration and related policy matters. The human security framework places individuals at the centre of analysis. This is important in the migration discourse, as migration is first and foremost about people – those who move, but also those affected by migration in countries of origin, transit and destination. Furthermore, however, the notion of human security recognizes that personal security and other levels of security (namely, of communities, individual States and the international community) are, of course, closely interdependent.

12. This possible theme proposed to guide IDM in 2011 would seek to place migration within the human security framework. It would build on earlier overarching topics which focused on the “human dimension” of migration by exploring security in its different aspects and at a variety of levels, as well as its connection with migration, in particular forced, irregular and mixed flows. This would involve looking at the ways in which different vulnerabilities can affect and shape migration flows. For example, the following questions could be addressed: Is migration an expression of the vulnerability of individuals and communities, and, if so, what type of migration? How do factors such as gender, age, health, livelihoods and environmental circumstances play into this? How can such factors be considered in migration policies? Does greater human security reduce or increase migration flows?

13. In addition, human security challenges during the migration process would deserve consideration, as would the potential implications of migration for human security. For instance, questions such as the following could be considered: What impact does migration have on the human security of migrants, their families and their countries of origin, transit and destination? Does migration reduce or increase individual and/or community vulnerabilities? What are the specific human security challenges related to irregular migration, smuggling and human trafficking? What is the relationship between the national and the international level in migration management from the vantage point of human security? What are the implications for migration policymakers and practitioners? This theme would also enable reflection on the links between the security of migrants and that of the communities and States with which they come into contact.

14. Once an overarching theme has been selected, more specific workshop topics relating to that theme will be proposed to the membership for selection at the next IDM consultations (in autumn 2010). As with all IDM activities, partners will be sought for the organization of relevant workshops, and a broad range of stakeholders will be encouraged to participate, in the light of the specific intersessional workshop themes that the membership selects.