



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

**INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON
INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON
MIGRATION**

IC/2008/3

Original: English
Geneva, 14 April 2008

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2008

29 April 2008

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1. This Discussion Note provides an update on International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) activities in 2008 since the last Informal Consultations on 26 February 2007, and proposes two possible overarching themes to guide the IDM in 2009, for consideration by the membership.

2. In addition, in response to the request of the membership, this Discussion Note also provides a brief summary of an event organized in February 2008 under the auspices of the Greek Chairmanship of the Human Security Network in cooperation with IOM.

Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration: Addressing Vulnerabilities and Harnessing Opportunities

3. A conference on “Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration: Addressing Vulnerabilities and Harnessing Opportunities” was held on February 19 in Geneva, co-hosted by the Government of Greece, in its capacity as Chair of the Human Security Network, and IOM. The idea of a partnership between the Greek HSN Chairmanship and IOM to organize a conference on this topic emerged following the IDM panel discussion on “Migration and the Environment” that took place at the 94th IOM Council Session in November 2007.

4. The half-day conference brought together 180 participants from 67 countries and 33 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of academia, for an open and informal exchange of views on key issues.

5. The overall objective of the conference was to increase political and public awareness of the challenges that climate change, environmental degradation and migration may pose to human security, and of the implications of these challenges for research-based policy. The objectives of the conference were pursued through high-level keynote presentations and two interactive panel discussions.

6. Participants discussed the following ideas and action points to move the agenda forward:

- Strengthen interstate and multi-stakeholder cooperation at all levels to address the interlinkages between climate change, environmental degradation and migration.
- Strengthen cooperation across the different policy domains between environmental and humanitarian communities. Migration issues should be an integral part of all climate change related discussions and policies. Environmental and climate change considerations should in turn be factored into migration management policies and programmes as well as humanitarian, recovery and preparedness planning.
- Develop a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to research in order to improve the understanding of:
 - the links between climate change, environmental degradation and migration and the impacts of these phenomena on human security and sustainable development;

- the patterns of climate change induced migration to enable early policy planning for organized movement, diverse migration strategies and pre-departure preparation and assistance upon arrival, and
 - migratory flows, their socio-economic and cultural dimensions and impact on the economies of a region, including methods for disaggregating the push factors of migration.
- Address in a concerted manner the definitional issues.¹
 - Devise comprehensive policy approaches in addressing the human security challenges linked to climate change, environmental degradation and migration.
 - Provide targeted support to the most vulnerable countries through capacity-building and partnerships aimed at improving their ability to cope with threats and challenges posed by climate change.
 - Devise incentives to channel migrants' financial and non-financial resources to make local livelihoods more sustainable and to reduce environmental degradation caused by human activity.

7. The conference materials, including the Agenda, the background paper and the biographies and presentations of the panellists, are available on the IOM website.² A comprehensive report of the conference, summarizing discussions and including recommendations, will also soon be available on the IOM website.

IDM 2008: *Return Migration: Challenges and Opportunities*

8. “Return Migration: Challenges and Opportunities” is the overarching IDM theme for 2008 which was selected based on informal consultations with the membership held in 2007.

9. The topic of this year's first IDM intersessional workshop to be held on 21-22 April concerns “**Managing Return Migration**”. In keeping with the membership’s preferences, the workshop incorporates elements from two topics offered by the Administration during the informal consultations on 18 October 2007: (a) “Return as a critical element of comprehensive migration management systems” and (b) “Managing return when entry or stay is not authorized”. An oral briefing on the results of the workshop will be provided at the 29 April informal consultations.

10. The second intersessional workshop will address the other topic selected by the membership, namely “**Enhancing the Role of Return Migration in Fostering Development**” and, at the request of the membership, will also incorporate elements of a

¹ IOM’s working definition refers to “environmental migrants” as “persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad”.

² To access the seminar materials, please use the following direct link: <http://www.iom.int/hsnconference>

fourth topic offered by the Administration, i.e. “Managing return: making temporary and circular labour migration schemes feasible”.

11. This workshop is scheduled for 7-8 July and is currently being prepared by the Administration. Home countries can and do benefit from the considerable human, financial and other resources of returning migrants at all skill levels. In the case of temporary migrant workers, innovative means exist to enhance the development potential of their return and its sustainability can be fostered by creating conditions for migrants and remittance-receiving households to save and invest a higher percentage of foreign earnings. This workshop will explore potential visa, travel, tax and investment incentives and policies that can stimulate such mobility, while looking at the implications of dual nationality, multiple entry/work/residence systems and social security portability. Furthermore, the workshop will explore the role of public-private and interstate partnerships as well as diaspora mapping and engagement in enhancing potential contributions of nationals living abroad.

12. The discussions at the two IDM intersessional workshops will serve to inform policy and programming by governments and facilitate intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation. They will also provide guidance for IOM’s research, policy and programmatic work in these return-related areas, thereby contributing to implementation of Point 10 of the IOM Strategy³ (MC/INF/287).

IDM 2009

13. In line with the membership’s request, the Administration wishes to propose two possible overarching themes to guide the IDM in the coming year, for selection by the membership. In proposing these themes, the Administration has taken into consideration the IOM Strategy adopted by the IOM Council.

(a) Human Rights and Migration: *Working together for safe, dignified and secure migration*

14. Migration is potentially life-altering for the migrant and has significant repercussions on the people and places the migrant leaves behind and passes through, as well as his or her destinations. Migration is linked to complex issues such as poverty, human rights, identity, social cohesion, perceptions and discrimination, public health and more. While past IDM discussions have looked at migration from a variety of viewpoints, IDM 2009 would focus on the perspectives of those affected by migration law and policies, namely migrants and communities of origin, transit and destination. In response to requests by several Member States, this proposed theme for IDM 2009 would explore the “human dimension” of migration and ways to incorporate considerations of human rights, well-being, safety, dignity and security of individuals and communities into migration policies, legislation and programming.

15. Possible issues which could be explored within the proposed overarching theme include the following:

³ Point 10 of the IOM Strategy states: ‘To undertake programmes which facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of refugees, displaced persons, migrants and other individuals in need of international migration services, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, as appropriate, and taking into account the needs and concern of local communities’.

- In what ways can protection of the human rights of migrants be best incorporated into migration policy, legislation and programming? For instance, what are the most effective means of ensuring the protection of migrant workers? How to best address the special needs of vulnerable migrants such as refugees, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, migrants stranded in transit or at destination?
- How can a State exercise its sovereign right to determine who enters and remains in its territory (and under what conditions), while at the same time (a) facilitating legitimate and needed movement which benefits individuals and societies and (b) ensuring respect for the human rights of non-nationals?
- What types of enhanced interstate cooperation could improve protection of the human rights of migrants?
- What are the impacts of migration on social and economic community structures in countries of origin and destination?
- What are the main migrant health and public health issues related to human mobility and how might the right to access to health services and other key issues be addressed?
- What are the gender-specific challenges and opportunities related to migration and how can they be given adequate consideration?
- What are the implications for migration policy, legislation and programming of migration which is induced by social, economic, environmental and other factors that affect the stability of individual livelihoods?
- How to best counter human trafficking and smuggling, including trafficking and smuggling driven by labour market demand in countries of destination, and the lack of opportunities for migration through legal channels?
- What is the role of migrant integration in helping to ensure the human rights, well-being, safety, dignity and security of individuals and communities?
- Which programmes and activities exemplify “good practices” in protecting the human rights of migrants? How can confidence be built and cooperation mechanisms established between all relevant players, including migrants, home and host communities, governments and other stakeholders at national, regional and international levels?

(b) South-South Migration

16. Today there are approximately as many migrants from developing countries in other developing countries as there are migrants from developing countries in the developed world. According to World Bank estimates, south-south remittances may constitute up to 30 per cent of developing countries’ remittance receipts. Yet the principal focus of the international policy debate and research on migration has focused on south-north flows.

The patterns, challenges and opportunities of south-south migration, including internal migration, deserve dedicated focus and attention.

17. Within the framework of the proposed theme, the IDM in 2009 would explore the complex challenges that developing countries face not only as countries of origin, but also as countries of destination and transit. The IDM would discuss the current trends and characteristics of south-south migration as well as key challenges related to its management.

18. Possible issues which could be explored within the proposed overarching theme include the following:

- What are the main factors driving south-south migration, be it internal or international migration? What roles do family and social networks play in shaping south-south migration patterns? How do employment conditions and prospects as well as broader economic, social and other disparities within a region or sub-region impact on migration trends and patterns?
- What are the differences, if any, between the social and economic characteristics of migrants who opt for south-south versus south-north migration? Do these differences imply that south-south migration generally impacts countries of origin and destination differently than south-north migration?
- What is the relationship between internal and international migration in a south-south context? And what is the relationship between south-south and south-north migration, if any?
- How can the human rights and well-being of migrants and members of host and transit communities best be ensured in the context of south-south migration?
- What are the key migrant health and public health challenges in the context of south-south migration? How do they differ from the key challenges in the context of south-north migration? How can strengthening of health systems be addressed, also bearing in mind notable south-south health worker migration trends?
- What are the major economic and social challenges faced by countries of origin, transit and destination as a result of south-south migration? What are the particular challenges faced by new countries of transit and destination, especially in the context of large-scale migration? What are the main implications of south-south “replacement” migration, i.e. migration to fill gaps left by others who migrated elsewhere?
- What are the particular migration management challenges faced by countries of origin, transit and destination in the context of south-south migration? What are the key ways of addressing them? What is the role of sub-regional, regional and interregional cooperation in this context?

- What are the links between south-south migration, the role of diaspora, poverty reduction and development, and how can the positive links be strengthened while minimizing the potentially negative links?
- What are the primary means for remittance transfers in the context of south-south migration, and what effective policy approaches can be identified?
- How best can south-south migration and remittances data collection systems, as well as monitoring tools, be put in place? To what extent can they form a basis for sound policy-oriented research on south-south migration?

19. Once an overarching theme has been identified, workshop topics relating to that theme will be proposed to the membership for selection. As with all IDM activities, partners would be sought in organizing relevant workshops, and a broad range of stakeholders encouraged to participate, depending on the specific intersessional workshop themes that the membership selects.