

**THIRTEENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
United Nations Secretariat
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**CONTRIBUTION
TO THE THIRTEENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION¹**

League of Arab States

¹The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

QUESTION 1.

Please describe in general terms the initiatives and activities your entity has undertaken during 2014 as well as those it is planning to undertake in 2015 that respond to the objectives of the 2015 coordination meeting. (Note that specific activities and initiatives can be listed as part of question 2 and 3 below.)

INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment, the League of Arab states (LAS) has been focusing on the issue of international migration and Arab Expatriates, in an effort to: develop more effective policies for utilizing migration in favor of Arab regional development, integration and international cooperation, and to communicate with its expatriates, build bridges of dialogue and cooperation with them for the benefit of both parties. This has been reflected in issuing many resolutions at both the summit level and the ministerial level in this regard since 1955, when the Arab League's council at the ministerial level issued its decision concerning teaching the children of Arab expatriates, followed by the Arab Economic Council Resolution No. 77 (March 1965) on the freedom of movement, residence, and labor as stipulated in the Agreement on Arab Economic Unity.

With the increasing interest in international migration, the work of LAS in this field has been based on an array of resolutions, declarations, and recommendations. The 10th Arab Summit, held in Tunis in 1979, was the first at this level to adopt a resolution concerning strengthening the relationship with Arab expatriates. In the past decade, the Arab summits' declarations always included some paragraphs concerning international migration and Arab Expatriates, among them: the declaration issued by Tunis summit in 2004 on the process of development and modernization in the Arab world, Brasilia declaration issued by the Summit of Arab States and the countries of South America in 2005, Khartoum declaration in 2006 and Doha declaration issued by the second Summit of Arab States and the countries of South America in 2009. Moreover, The Declaration of the Arab Economic Summit 2009, asserted securing migrants' rights, paying attention to skilled Arab migrants outside the Arab region, strengthening their connection with their homeland, working on providing proper environment to utilizing their skills in economic and social development in the Arab countries.

The First and the Second Meetings of the Arab Ministers in charge of Migration Affairs and Arab Expatriates, convened in Cairo at LAS headquarters in February 2008 and November 2009, recommended strengthening the role of Arab expatriates in Arab development, supporting the rights of Arab expatriates, and encouraging coordination among Arab countries on migration. In line with this, the Declaration of the First Arab Expatriates Conference, held in Cairo at LAS headquarters in December 2010, reconfirmed the interrelationships between migration and development in the Arab region and called for strengthening the role of Arab expatriates' NGOs, utilizing expatriates' skills and experience through specific programs to attract and invite them to contribute to the development efforts in the Arab world and linking them to institutions and Arab scientific entities that operate in the same areas of specialization. As a result this declaration has been considered as a milestone towards utilizing migration for development.

Population Policies, Expatriates and Migration Department (PPEMD) is the concerned department in LAS General Secretariat. The department works continuously to coordinate between Arab member states, cooperate with international organizations working in the field of migration, and communicate with Arab expatriates abroad and engage them in the development process in the Arab region. It also produces reports and studies, organizes capacity building programmes for its member states' officials and organizes seminars in collaboration with academic institutions and concerned international organizations. The department is concerned with collecting data on migration and is seeking to establish an information system on migration.

IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES IN THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 2014 TILL JANUARY 2015

1. The "Arab Expatriate" non-periodic newsletter (Winter 2015)

The Fourth issue of LAS non-periodic newsletter, winter 2015 issue, was published. It includes the latest events and activities it has organized in the field of migration and Arab expatriates, as well as the activities it participated in and were organized by other entities, its initiatives in the field of migration, news on Arab communities living abroad, information on Engineer Zaha Hadid as the Arab expatriate character of the edition, in addition to some information about Arab communities in China.

2. The Arab Expatriate's Day 2014

In the occasion of celebrating "The Arab Expatriate's Day" on 4th of December, LAS organized two ceremonies in its missions in the capital cities of India and the United States of America, as an acknowledgement of the important role played by Arab expatriates in support of their scientific and practical efforts and achievements and the keenness on establishing channels of communication with them. Prominent Arab Expatriate characters were honored during these ceremonies.

LAS VIEW ON THE PROPOSED TARGETS FOR THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AS THEY RELATE TO INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS, MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Migration and development are highly interdependent processes. International migration in the development context relates both to people who have chosen to move of their own accord, and forced migrants who can ultimately end up contributing to both their country of destination and possibly their country of origin when they return.

Development, meanwhile, is a dynamic process implying growth, advancement, empowerment and progress, with the goal of increasing human capabilities, enlarging the scope of human choices, and creating a safe and secure environment where citizens can live with dignity and equality. In the development process, it is important that people's productivity, creativity and choices are broadened, and that opportunities are created. At the same time, risks to human development are also present where migration is a reaction to threats and denial of choice, and where regular opportunities for movement are constrained. That's why there is a need to maximize the positive relationship between migration and development especially in this era of unprecedented mobility for different reasons and push factors.

LAS, like all the international and regional organizations working in the field of migration, is eager to the inclusion of migration in the post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, as a central component of current population dynamics and as a key enabler for development at the global level. In this framework the Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab States held in Cairo in June 2013, as the closing event to the review process of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo 1994, adopted the "Cairo Declaration 2013", to commit to key actions and priorities to expeditiously achieve the goals and objectives of the ICPD beyond 2014 as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) and the global development agenda post-2015. LAS member states committed to Cairo declaration in their statements delivered in the 47th round of the CPD April 2014.

Both, the proposed targets in the post UN agenda and the recommendations in the Cairo declaration relating to migration are generally compatible. The Cairo declaration of the region has paragraphs on migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and forced migrants, in a way that reflects regional priorities and in line with the needs and the reality of the Arab region, and it provides applicable ways to translate the goals and targets into concrete actions.

Migrants were included in Cairo declaration in many paragraphs, some of these paragraphs were wholly dedicated to migration related issues like the part on displacement and international migration which includes sections on Internal Migration & displacement and international migration, while other paragraphs referred to migration among other issues like the part on dignity and equality which includes a section on migrants and displaced persons, as well as the part on International cooperation and partnership.

The Arab Group statement delivered by Yemen in the first intergovernmental negotiations 19 January 2015, reflected the position of the Arab group on the goals of post UN agenda. The statement drew the attention to the long-term negative impacts of the masses of forced migrants resulting from wars, conflicts, Israeli occupation and terrorism on the development in the Arab countries.

The post-2015 agenda should take into account the important global trends, challenges and opportunities caused by migration, in order to guarantee its positive outcomes for development, which requires effective cooperation and coherence at the international, regional and national levels. It also should be ambitious and flexible for adjustments to regional and national contexts, as well as to multi-stakeholder implementation partnerships, in order to make the inclusion of migration related commitments more effective. This was reflected to a great extent in the OWG proposal for the SDGs.

QUESTION 2.

Where relevant, please provide a schematic overview of your entity's initiatives and activities in respect to the Secretary-General's eight-point agenda for action presented at the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

1. Protect the human rights of all migrants

Capacity-Building Programmes:

LAS organized two training workshops in its headquarters in Cairo for government officials of the Member States in areas of international migration, refugees, and human displacement. The first round was held December 2013, while the second was held in June 2014. The two workshops were organized in collaboration with IOM and UNHCR with the aim to build the capacity of LAS Member States in the promotion of the rights of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people. The participants in the workshops represented ministries of migration and Arab expatriates, ministries of interior and human rights national institutions.

2. Reduce the costs of labour migration

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3. Eliminate migrant exploitation, including human trafficking

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4. Address the plight of stranded migrants

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5. Improve public perceptions of migrants

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6. Integrate migration into the development agenda

a. Capacity-Building Workshop on International Migration and Development

- LAS, UN-ESCWA and IOM carried out a capacity-building workshop for selected Member States in September 2014, using tools based on the handbook prepared by GMG for policymakers and practitioners titled "Integrating International Migration into Development Strategies" and the training manual prepared by IOM on "International Migration and Development". These modules were translated into Arabic in order to increase its accessibility to policymakers and practitioners in the Arab region. The workshop aimed to better assess the impact of migration on development, and undertake the necessary measures to develop policies that maximize the positive impacts of migration for development and minimize its negative effects. The workshop was organized in the framework of implementing 2014-2015 work plan of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, with the participation of member organizations in its sessions.

b. Third Report on Arab Migration: "International Migration and Development" 2014

- The third report on Arab Migration was issued in 2014 under the title: "International Migration and Development". A group of experts in the field of migration participated in preparing and reviewing the report. The report covered the following topics: international migration and development, migration streams, remittances and its impact on development, Arab communities abroad and development, and return migration and development. The report was distributed in a launch event at the general secretariat headquarters in August 2014 and was sent to all LAS member States and LAS permanent missions abroad and an electronic copy is available on the department's website (www.poplas.org).

c. 2015 Situation Report on International Migration in the Arab Regi

- In the framework of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, a regular report on international migration in the Arab region will be produced. The report will provide detailed information on current migration trends in the Arab region as well as thematic discussion on important migration-related topics, with the aim to address the knowledge deficit on international migration in the Arab region by providing a multi-disciplinary and comprehensive overview of relevant contemporary migration trends and their economic and social consequences in the Arab region for policymakers, researchers and practitioners, drawing on the expertise and mandates of the member agencies of the Working Group. It will highlight the need for coordinated and holistic responses to international migration challenges.

- The first report is to be published in Spring 2015 and its thematic focus is to be on "Forced Migration, Displacement and Development in a Changing Arab region". It provides an understanding of the nature and effects of the different kinds of forced migration in the Arab region, and to provide insights into the appropriate responses to these phenomena from a developmental perspective, focusing on responses which can mitigate negative development impacts, promote peace building and reconstruction, encourage good governance, and respect the rights of forced migrants and host communities. This report will help policymakers to integrate migration related issues into development policies in the Arab countries and to mitigate its negative impacts.

7. Strengthen the migration evidence base

a. MED-HIMS Programme

- LAS is participating in the implementation of the programme of regionally coordinated Household International Migration Surveys in the Mediterranean Countries (MED-HIMS Programme), in cooperation with the European Union (EU), World Bank, UNFPA and UNHCR. The programme aims to collect data in the Mediterranean countries on out-migration, return migration, forced migration, intention to migrate, circular migration, migration of highly-skilled persons, irregular migration, type and use of remittances, behaviors, attitudes, perceptions and cultural values of people with regard to international migration, as well as relevant information on individuals and households, and the local communities involved.

- The 7th MED-HIMS Regional Workshop held in Athens on 3-5 December 2014 was organised by ADETEF-France with the collaboration of LAS, EUROSTAT and the MED-HIMS Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

b. Developing an Arab Information System on Migration

- LAS is seeking to develop an Arab Information System on Migration which includes the establishment of databases that cover migration statistics in the Arab region, migration legislations, experts' database, and migration institutions database. This system will make migration data at the regional level available for researchers and planners in the region and elsewhere.

8. Enhance migration partnerships and cooperation

a. Establishing Arab Regional Working Group on International Migration (RWG)

- An Arab Regional Working Group on International Migration was established and is co-chaired by LAS, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and with membership of 12 other specialized agencies, in order to promote coordinated normative and technical work on international migration in the region prevent duplication of efforts and ensure a consistent, system-wide message and strategy for migration. The working group is opened for UN agencies, relevant international and intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs.

- The RWG is currently implementing its first work plan for 2014-2015 which includes: organizing a capacity-building workshop on "Migration and Development" (organized in September 2014) and producing a situation report on international migration in the Arab region (to be launched in May 2015).

b. Africa-Arab Technical and Coordination Committee on Migration (TCCM)

- According to the resolution adopted by the Africa Arab Summit held in Kuwait in November 2013, a Technical and Coordination Committee on Migration (TCCM) co-chaired by the African Union (AU) and LAS was established in order to help to strengthen their cooperation in migration management, and to promote and protect migrants rights, especially in the provision of sound advice to Member States on issues related to migration in both regions, in conformity with regional and international instruments.

- The TCCM will build on existing initiatives to deliver specific outputs that will support the overall implementation of the provisions of the Africa-Arab Partnership Strategy and Joint Action Plan 2011-2016 as well as migration instruments and programs of AU and LAS.

c. Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP)

- Being aware of the importance of the Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) in circulating information, best practices and lessons learned on migration, and given that they have proved their value in promoting collective responses and experience sharing to confront migration challenges, LAS" Council at the ministerial level issued a resolution during its regular session dated 7/9/2014 concerning the establishment of a Regional Consultative Process on Migration in the Arab region. The ARCP will work as a State-driven, non-binding, flexible and informal forum to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between LAS member States on migration issues of common concern.
- The ToR of the ARCP will be endorsed in its first meeting which is supposed to take place in April 2015.

d. Fifth Global Meeting for Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration

- LAS is hosting the Fifth Global Meeting for Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) on Migration at its headquarters in Cairo in October 2015. The meeting is organized with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and is to be held under the broad theme: Current Challenges of Migration Governance: Supporting follow-up to the outcomes of the 2013 High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

QUESTION 3.

Where relevant, please indicate the rationale, the strengths, weaknesses and the areas for improvement of the proposed targets for the post-2015 development agenda related to international migrants, migration and mobility

1. Safe, legal and orderly migration (10.7)

<i>a. Rationale</i>	<i>b. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement</i>
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2. Reducing remittance transfer costs (10.c)

<i>a. Rationale</i>	<i>b. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement</i>
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3. Rights of migrant workers (8.8)

<i>a. Rationale</i>	<i>b. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement</i>
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4. Eliminating trafficking of women and children (5.2 and 16.2)

<i>a. Rationale</i>	<i>b. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement</i>
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5. Addressing the “brain drain” through retention and training of health workers (3.c)

<i>a. Rationale</i>	<i>b. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement</i>
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6. Scholarships for developing countries to enrol in higher education in other countries (4b)

<i>a. Rationale</i>	<i>b. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement</i>
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7.

<i>a. Rationale</i>	<i>b. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement</i>
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8.

<i>a. Rationale</i>	<i>b. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement</i>
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