

**TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
New York, 9-10 February 2012

**INPUT OF MIGRANTS RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL AND THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR
IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEE RIGHTS TO THE
TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION¹**

Migrants Rights International (MRI)
The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)

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

Migrants Rights International and the National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights

Migrants Rights International (MRI) is a global, non-governmental alliance of migrant associations, human rights, labor, religious, academic and other organizations which operate at the local, national, regional or international level. MRI was founded in 1994 at the UN Development and Population Conference in Cairo to advocate for the respect, protection and fulfillment of the full range of human rights of migrants around the world and to foster unity and the inclusion of migrant voices at all levels of policy-making. Its founders include international representatives of church, human rights, migrant and trade unions, inter-governmental agencies, national and grassroots civil society organizations who came together to establish the “International Migrants Rights Watch Committee,” which was later renamed Migrants Rights International (MRI) in 2000. MRI actively holds ECOSOC-NGO status.

The *National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)* is a U.S. organization composed of local coalitions and immigrant, refugee, community, religious, civil rights and labor organizations and activists. It serves as a forum to share information and analysis, to educate communities and the general public, and to develop and coordinate plans of action on important immigrant and refugee issues. NNIRR works to promote a just immigration and refugee policy in the U.S. and to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status. NNIRR is a founding member and current Steering Committee member of MRI.

Contributions to the High Level Dialogue and Global Forum on Migration and Development

In the last decade, MRI and NNIRR participated actively in the regional hearings of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) in 2004-2005, including being invited to present at a number of round-tables. We also participated in the *Informal Interactive Civil Society Hearings* leading up to the 2006 *UN High Level Dialogue (HLD) on Migration and Development*, and were one of the eight invited NGO representatives invited to participate in the HLD roundtables. Also in response to the HLD and its limited civil society engagement, MRI and NNIRR co-organized a parallel international civil society event called the 2006 *Global Community Dialogue on Migration, Development and Human Rights*, as a way to generate greater understanding among global civil society about the HLD, and to heighten civil society voices and substantive contributions to the HLD in return.

Since the launch of the *Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)* process, MRI and NNIRR have been consistently active at all levels, particularly in the corresponding *Civil Society Days (CSD)*. MRI has had at least one, if not more, representatives each year in the CSD’s *International Advisory Committee (IAC)* and last year’s Core Group. We have chaired numerous roundtable sessions and presented on dozens of plenaries, and we have been co-drafters of most of the CSD’s statements and reports. We have had at least one representative in each of the two “Common Space” sessions in Puerto Vallarta and Geneva respectively. And for last year’s 2011 GFMD, MRI’s President William Gois, was the Chair of the CSD.

In addition, we have also co-organized an annual parallel civil society event to the GFMD, now commonly referred to as the *People’s Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights (PGA)*. The PGA itself has spun-off a number of coalitions and networks including the Global Coalition on Migration (GCM), the *Pan-African Network in Defense of Migrants Rights (PANiDMR)*, the *European Working Group (EWG)*, the *Women and Global Migration Network* and others.

Leading up to last year’s 2011 GFMD, MRI and NNIRR also actively participated in the Global Migration Group (GMG) Symposium organized by UNICEF, and the *UN Informal*

Thematic Debate on International Migration and Development organized by the office of the President of the General Assembly. Related to that, we co-hosted a side event on *Migration, Development and Human Rights: A Civil Society Perspective and View to 2013* as well as a debrief for New York immigrant communities.

Contributions to the Global Forum on Migration and Development 2012

Towards the 2012 GFMD, MRI and NNIRR have already been actively engaged with ICMC and the Mauritian Chair-in-office. MRI Secretary and NNIRR Program Director, Colin Rajah, recently participated in the Brainstorm Meeting for the 2012 GFMD held in Mauritius this past January. Following that, we are supporting the efforts by the Pan-African Network in Defense of Migrants Rights to organize a regional preparatory process, beginning with a convening in Accra, Ghana in coming months. Similarly, MRI members in every region will organize respective regional preparatory processes as in previous years, including in the U.S. where NNIRR will co-organize a series of national civil society briefing sessions with U.S. government representatives from the U.S. State Department.

Next month, alongside the *United Methodist Women*, we will co-sponsor an NGO side event at the *United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)* entitled “*Why Must Women Leave Home?*” We will follow this up by co-convening a workshop on Gender & Migration at the Association for *Women’s Rights in Development (AWID)* Forum in Istanbul, and with active participation in the Rio+20 summit with our partners in Latin America.

As stated in our input to the survey on the draft concept paper organized by the Mauritian Chair-in-office, as well as at the Brainstorm Meeting, the following are our recommendations towards the 2012 GFMD:

- We welcome recent statements by many States (including the U.S.) favoring closer working relations with, and a greater role for Civil Society. Recognizing that while the GFMD is a stateled process, we still urge Governments to respond positively to engagement of Civil Society in the GFMD, including through the points raised at last year’s GFMD session on Non-State Actors. In particular, we highlight the need to include grassroots migrant civil society at all levels of engagement at the GFMD. In that regard, we welcome a joint working group to consider arrangements to strengthen the GFMD’s relationship with civil society. We urge the full substantive participation of civil society in the GFMD as equal stake-holders and welcome the opportunity to participate.
- We urge a more substantive engagement between governments and civil society than the Common Space currently allows. While the Common Space was an enormous and critical step forward to increase dialogue between civil society and government participants, it is widely held that it can now be better structured to facilitate real dialogue leading to specific solutions.
- We encourage National Governments participating in the GFMD to engage with civil society (including migrant organizations) in their countries prior to the year-end forum, to exchange perspectives and build working relationships. Examples of these are already beginning to take place, including with the U.S. government.
- Regarding the *Draft Concept Paper for GFMD 2012* (draft 2, 6 January 2012) by the government of Mauritius, while we welcome the focus on human rights in the proposed roundtable on Gender, Human Rights and Migration, we urge that human rights be a central focus of ALL roundtable discussions. The *UN Secretary General’s Report to the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly on agenda item 54 (c): International Migration and Development (2006)* emphasizes the need to protect the human rights of migrants and

references the UN international human rights instruments and Conventions of the International Labour Organization as “constituting the core of the international normative framework on international migration” (para. 283). Without an approach based on the principles of human rights protection, promotion and fulfillment, the proposed roundtables on *Circulating Labour for Inclusive Development; Factoring Migration into Development Planning; and Managing migration and perceptions of migration for development outcomes* risk overemphasizing labour needs and remittances and underemphasizing migrant rights.

- We are pleased to see a proposed roundtable on *Gender, Human Rights and Migration*, which should also address race as a central concern. Similarly, we are encouraged by the inclusion of a session on protections of migrant domestic workers. We are eager to contribute experiences and perspectives to these conversations, building on ones we have engaged in at previous *Human Rights Council sessions and the International Labour Conference (ILC)*.
- We strongly affirm the focus on protection of migrants, including domestic workers, all migrant workers, migrant women, undocumented migrants and other vulnerable migrants. Exploration of specific ways to advance migrants’ social protection and improve access “to basic rights, including legal protection, healthcare, social security and other entitlements” is a very valuable element in the proposed discussions. We also welcome proposed roundtables on *Addressing South-South Migration and Development Policies*, and *Shaping Public Perceptions of Migrants and Migration*. The focus on *perceptions of migration* continues the very pertinent dialogue begun in Puerto Vallarta and addresses concerns regarding xenophobia addressed by the World Conference Against Racism in Durban.

Contributions to the 2013 United Nations General Assembly High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development

Aside from our participation in the 10th Coordination Meeting on International Migration, we are also coorganizing various side events for civil society briefing and strategizing to begin the process for civil society to actively engaged in the 2013 High Level Dialogue (HLD) on Migration and Development.

While Civil Society played a significant role in the 2006 HLD, we were disappointed by the lack of better inclusion and engagement. This was reflected in our statements at both the 2006 Informal Interactive Hearings and during the HLD roundtables. As such, we look forward to a better process of inclusion and consultation with Civil Society for the 2013 HLD and the preparatory meetings leading up to it. As stated in our plenary remarks in the session on the Future of the Forum during the 2011 GFMD CSD, we believe both the GFMD and HLD processes need to begin by being directly linked to each other and the outcomes of each informing the other. In addition, we would like to see global migration policymaking and governance utilizing the UN normative framework, operating within UN protocols. Further work needs also to be done to incorporate the *Global Migration Group (GMG)* as a critical conduit to both processes, and better integration of the various *Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs)*.

Civil Society is already mobilizing for a major presence in New York for the High Level Dialogue. We hope to work with the United Nations system to enable broad participation of interested NGOs with special attention to grassroots migrant communities. This includes providing access to more than 3 delegates per organization, and opening access to new organizations that want to be part of the process through a “roster” accreditation process. We urge the Secretariat and the office of the President of the General Assembly to work with the

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service and with NGOs to develop these modalities.

We urge the Secretariat, the office of the President of the General Assembly and member states to construct an HLD that fully engages all stakeholders in interactive dialogue, enabling creative exchanges and bold outcomes. There are several models of interactive inter-governmental engagement that has also included stakeholders including UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector. These include the *Financing for Development Roundtable* model; the *IV United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries* model; and the *Commission on Sustainable Development* “stakeholder” model, among others. We invite the Secretariat and the office of the President of the General Assembly to explore these models and to adopt a creative, interactive approach to the 2013 HLD that seeks real dialogue and engagement. We suggest an outcome document with real implementable commitments, drawn from “Chairs’ Summaries” of interactive round-tables that fully include civil society.

Both MRI and NNIRR are committed to this process, and would be pleased to be part of ongoing preparations regarding both modalities and agenda for the 2013 HLD.

New Initiatives in the Area of International Migration

The United Nations is a critical institutional arena for addressing global migration. Migration is a crosscutting concern that links human rights, sustainable development and peacemaking concerns of the UN. Thus, we welcome the HLD as a key opportunity to explore the intersections of these concerns and to address not only the outcomes, but the root causes of migration.

MRI and NNIRR, as well as our members and other partners, have co-founded the Global Coalition on Migration (GCM), an international civil society alliance that brings together the largest regional, international and sectoral networks working around migration. The GCM and its members will actively collaborate to promote greater civil society engagement in all levels of global governance on migration.

1. We urge that discussions of “Development” in the Migration and Development nexus focus on **root causes of migration, communities’ right to development** and the fulfillment of global development commitments, going beyond current concerns on how migrants contribute to development. What policies must be implemented and commitments fulfilled so that migrants are not forced to leave their homes in the first place? How can governments shift policy focus away from how migrants can contribute to economic development (especially through remittances) to how governments can fulfill their national development obligations in order to prevent communities’ need to migrate for a more sustainable living.
2. The *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* continues to be the most comprehensive framework for global and national migration policy. As such, it should serve as a framework and guide deliberations at the HLD and future inter-governmental discussions. We suggest that an assessment of the **current status of the human rights of migrants** be a theme of the High Level Dialogue. This should include specific attention to migrant women, oppressed racial and ethnic groups and undocumented migrants.
3. The *Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families (CMW)* is a critical independent body of experts which monitors implementation of the Migrant Workers Convention. To this regard, the CMW is under-taking a General Comment on Undocumented Migrants, which should serve as an important and critical guide for states leading up to the 2013 HLD and beyond.

4. We urge the HLD to urgently address current violations of migration enforcement, including those in border enforcement, detention and deportation policies, from a human rights perspective.