

**NINTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Secretariat

New York, 17-18 February 2011

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN THE ARAB REGION¹

League of Arab States (LAS)

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



International Migration in the Arab Region

League of Arab States

December 2010

**Population Policies and Migration Department, League of Arab States
22 A Taha Hussain, Zamalek, Cairo
Tel: +202 7354306 Fax: +202 7351422**

Introduction:

- The Arab Observatory for International Migration (AOIM) was launched since 2004 by (PPMD/ LAS), and during this period of time it has carried out too many important activities within the framework of the following objective: Filling the gap in Arab migration data, and working on developing the migration policies in the Arab countries.
 - Sustaining the technical capabilities of the meant bodies in the Arab countries.
 - Contribute in transfer and extension of knowledge in the international migration field.
 - Finding mechanisms to maximize the benefits from migration and expatriates' experiences to benefit the development and the Arab-Regional integration.

Following, the Arab League significant decisions and resolutions related to the International Migration:

- The league of Arab States convened **the Exceptional Arab African Summit** held in Sert-Libya 10/10/2010, The summit developed the following recommendations: “We stress the importance of activating the joint mechanisms on human rights and democracy in the two regions as well as activating the partnership in addressing issues of common interest in combating the crime of human trafficking and illegal migration as well as all conventions concerning the rights of the people in two regions in freedom of movement and migration”.



- **The Doha declaration on Population and development 2009** developed the following recommendations related to” international migration”:
 - A) Develop and Support systems and mechanisms providing quantitative and qualitative data on the various international migration issues to help fill the information gap, develop regional and national policies, identify monitoring and evaluation indicators to observe and document emerging issues in migration trends.
 - B) Revitalize the role of institutions in the Arab world working in the area of international migration research and studies, especially those focusing on maximization of the benefits and reducing negative impact of the migration in order to strengthen its role in integration of Arab labor markets.
 - C) Enhance national multi-sectoral policies and partnership with all concerned government bodies and national expatriates provide technical support to institutions concerned with policy development and coordination of implementation, enact national and regional policies aiming at maximizing migration returns and investment of revenues and increase migrants' competitive skills in Arab and international labor markets.
 - D) Intensify dialogue and partnership, facilitate labor mobility in accordance with the needs of both sending and receiving countries, to limit illegal migration and human trafficking

networks and maximize the benefits of labor migration in light of the emerging economic and demographic transformations.

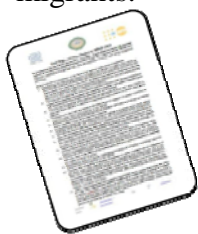
E) Develop appropriate policies and strategies to strengthen linkages among Arab migrants and with their home countries which will benefit all and increase the contribution of technical knowledge and investments in the Arab countries.

F) Call on the League of Arab States (LAS) to coordinate efforts and form an experts and decision – making task force representing international and regional organizations to develop labor migration policies to be adopted by LAS to enhance the developmental dimension of migration at national and regional level.

G) Work on structural imbalances of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) population through enhancement of development of national human resources through education, Training and rehabilitation, increasing woman participation in labor force, lift restrictions of inter –GCC labor migration, and give priority to Arab Labor force.

H) Develop policies and strategies to limit internal migration from rural to urban areas, especially among young people.

I) Urge Arab Countries, international and regional organizations to deal with and resolve problems emerging from forced migration, and provide protection and services to forced migrants.



- **Arab Regional Contribution To GFMD 2010:** In the framework of preparation for the Global Forum for Migration and Development held in Mexico 2010, the League of Arab States – Social Sector – Population Policy and Migration Department in cooperation with International Organization for Migration and supported by UNFPA, the Arab group (22 member states of League of Arab states) through series of preparatory meeting with IOM and Arab governmental Experts, prepared the Arab regional Contribution to GFMD 2010. The document included set of recommendations related to the main themes of the GFMD as a regional contribution to highlight the Arab governments’ views in light of the migration priorities in the Arab region. The Regional Contribution has been published on the GFMD official website on the following link: <http://www.gfmd.org/mexico-2010/> (copy annexed)

II Meetings and Publications:

- **RAGUSA DECLARATION: Euro Arab Declaration on Youth, Migration and Development:** the Euro-Arab conference on Youth, Migration and development co-organized by the League of Arab States, the Italian Youth Forum, and the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum, in Tunisia and Ragusa (Italy) from 22 to 30 July 2010. The meeting was attended by 150 young people who represented youth governmental and nongovernmental organizations in both European and Arab regions. One of the main goals of the meeting was: to elaborate and develop a document on migration policies by the workshops outcomes. Ragusa declaration highlighted the migration issues where :” Young

people are in the front line of migration and are among the groups most vulnerable to its risks, as students, as migrant workers, as forced migrants, asylum seekers or refugees or as children of migrants often growing up separated from their parents. Young people are also directly concerned as children of migrants in host societies, often exposed to greater levels of discrimination, exclusion and abuse. Young people, in particular young women and minors, are often in more vulnerable positions related to trafficking in human beings, resulting in exposure to forced labour and modern forms of slavery. Their human rights are often denied and violated and their legal situation makes the exercise of their rights. This concerns and affects migrants in European countries as much as in Arab countries, whether they are perceived as hosting or transit countries. Young people and youth organizations are key actors in promoting migration and integration policies embedding active citizenship and human rights, notably through non-formal education, human rights education and global education”.

The declaration listed a set of measures and actions that should be taken while addressing the issue of youth and migration such as: 1) The positive aspects brought by migration and the role of migrants need to be made visible and further acknowledged, in particular for development and for fostering intercultural learning by challenging stereotypical and prejudiced views.2) The contributions of skilled migrants to the development of hosting societies must be highlighted and recognized, as well as their contribution to the development of their country of origin (“brain drain is also brain gain”).3) National contact and support points for youth and children forced to migrate should be created in each country.4) The principles of *ius soli* (instead of *ius sanguis*) should be applied in all countries for children of migrants. Access to education and health services must be guaranteed for all children of migrant parents regardless of their formal legal status.5) Migration should remain high on the agenda of Euro-Arab co-operation, including intra-regional migration and favoring regional inclusion of migrants. 6) Youth organizations must stand and react against scapegoating of migrants and all forms of racism, xenophobia and intolerance in the political arena. They should also support the political participation of immigrants and refugees. 7) Non-formal education programmes and activities, based on human rights education, conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue, must be increased in order to reduce tensions and conflicts in local communities. Awareness about the situation of migrants in their country of origin should be part of these programmes 8) An international day of social inclusion should be established. A Euro-Arab youth campaign for social inclusion of migrants should be implemented. 9) The representation of young migrants within existing national youth councils and organizations should be supported 10) European and Arab countries should ratify the Convention on Migrant Workers of the United Nations. National youth councils should raise awareness in their respective countries for this purpose. (copy annexed)

- **The Arab Expatriates and Migration Ministers meeting** Cairo on 14-15 November 2009
Held by the League of Arab States. The meeting was attended by Arab Ministers of Migration and Expatriates. The meeting aims to:
 - 1- Follow on the recommendations developed on the first ministers meeting that held in Cairo February 2008.
 - 2- Follow on the declaration and the work plan generated of the Economic Social and Development Summit held in Kuwait January 2009.

- 3- Develop a set of recommendations that focuses on: 1) Strengthening the coordination between the Arab governments and the Arab expatriates and communities in the diaspora and exchanging experiences, 2) Supporting the rights of the immigrants and the Arab communities abroad, 3) Working on correcting misconceptions about Arabs abroad and to defend their issues, 4) Benefit from the potential Arab competencies in abroad to support sustainable development programmes.



- **Arab Conference of Expatriates “a Bridge of Communication”**
December 2010: The League of Arab States held the first Conference of Arab Expatriates at headquarter of the League of Arab States - Cairo. The conference was attended by 18 of Ministers of Migration and Expatriates in the Arab countries, 296 participants. The participants were representatives of partner organizations, Expatriates of each Arab country, Arab civil society organizations abroad, Arab Expatriates youth, invitees by LAS's Secretary General from Active Arabs abroad, representatives of Arab, regional, and international organizations, Ambassadors of countries having the largest Arab communities in addition to the Head of Delegation of European Union to Egypt and President of the Permanent Delegation of the African Union to the League of Arab States. The meeting discussed:
1) The role of the Civil Society Organizations in the advancement of the Arab Communities.
2) The role of the Arab Expatriates in the development and strengthening of the dialogue of civilizations, cultures and religions. 3) Towards Establishing an Organizational and Information Framework for Arab Expatriates. The first conference of Arab expatriates, called for a set of recommendations focuses on: 1) mobilize all the potential of Arab expatriates to support national issues, especially the national rights of the Palestinian people and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their home land and the establishment of a Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem. 2) Create rights bodies for the defense of Arab expatriates and Arab issues in the countries of the Diaspora and establish a Foundation for Arab media, utilizing the expertise of Arab Media abroad. 3) Urging Arab expatriates to participate in political activities and to engage in political parties in the countries of the Diaspora to support the formation of strong Arab lobby that can defend on the Arab issues internationally, also to communicate with politicians of Arab origin in the countries of reception. 4) Calling for the establishment of an Arab house in Western capitals, in cooperation with the Governments concerned from the countries of origin to link Arab migrants with each other regardless of their affiliations also demanded the establishment of Arab cultural centers in Diaspora. 5) Calling for the development of Arabic language teaching programs to new generations of students abroad also to enter the Arabic language into the educational curriculum in areas of large Arab communities. 6) Calling for Arab governments to urge the Arab expatriates abroad to integrate culturally, socially and engage in political organizations and parties in their new communities. 7) Affirming on the importance of the role played by Arab civil society organizations in the Diaspora to promote cultural, social, political, economic situation of the Arab community and to activate the

communication with the poor and marginalized groups of Arab expatriates and student. 8) Support the role of the private sector and Arab civil society organizations in the Arab world to participate along with the Arab governments to communicate with the Arab communities in diaspora. 9) Calling for taking benefits of the Skilled Arab migrants in the Diaspora through specific programs to attract and invite them to contribute to the development efforts in the Arab world and linking them to Arab scientific institutions and entities that work in the same fields of their specialization.

- **Scientific Forum “Toward a Comprehensive Arab strategy to combat human trafficking”** 20-22 November 2010. Held by League of Arab States - Department of Legal Affairs in cooperation with the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences held this forum. Arab officials and experts in Human Trafficking issues besides delegates from the United States of America and the European Union and representatives of some European embassies also took part in the meeting; a representative of Interpol participated in this forum. The meeting was devoted to discussing efforts of Arab countries and their experiences in the fighting against human trafficking regionally and internationally, to design the Comprehensive Arab Strategy To combat Human Trafficking. The meeting success in drawing the main features of a comprehensive Arab Strategy in light of the experiences and the issues discussed throughout the meeting The meeting called for: The PPMD was appointed as one of the departments concerned to follow up the implementation of this strategy in addition to the Department of Legal Affairs and Human Rights department in the League of Arab State, also the meeting called for establishing new department concerned with Human Trafficking in the League of Arab States to work on this specific issue, and to follow up on the strategy designed.



- **Idafat Magazine (special issue on skilled migration)October 2010:** Within the framework of activities of the Population Policies and Migration department – Social Sector- League of Arab States, the PPMD and the Arab sociology Association prepared and published a special issue of Idafat magazine on migration , that included various of studies concerned with international and regional migration, focuses on Arab skilled migration, including an editorial by Mr. Khalid Louhichi Director of population policies and migration department at the League of Arab States. The issue contained a file titled Arab brain drain, representing six researches: - knowledge networks in the diaspora for William Turner, Jean - Baptiste Meyer, Paul de Gatsteiner and the Asmaa Aziz. - Migration in one direction. Facts and factors (migration of skilled workers from the Maghreb to the Scandinavian countries) for Mohamd Alsabour, and Idris Habity. - Contribution of Arabs researchers abroad in the fields of social science for Abdelkader Al Atrach. - The return of the Algerian competencies to their native country for Hussein Aelaidallaoui. - The evolution of financial remittances of the Tunisian migration and its role in the genesis of the contractor's capitalist by Jacob al-Shehhi. - Try to understand the expatriates on its own initiative: by Akram AlArees and

Mustafa Oozbilgn. In the field of book reviews review on the regional report for the Arab Labor Migration: “brain drain, bleeding or opportunities” By Khaled Louhichi. For more information please follow this link: http://www.caus.org.lb/Home/electronic_magazine.php?emagID=204&screen=0



- **Launching the HDR 2009 “Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development” At Arab And regional level** Launching: The Population Policies and Migration Department/ Social Sector- League of Arab States in collaboration with UNDP organized a regional launching ceremony during the period of 14-15 March 2010 for the HDR 2009”. The meeting was attended by 12 Representatives of Arab member states and 35 representatives from European and foreign embassies in Egypt, 25 Representatives of International organizations: UNFPA, IOM, The World Bank, and UNHCR, besides 25 Arab Experts in field of Migration, Environment and Development. The meeting came as chance to crystallize the priorities to be focused on during the upcoming period in term of migration in the Arab Region. The Launching ceremony has been followed by a workshop to shed light on different aspects of the report. The workshop included 4 discussion sessions on: 1) Skilled migration (Brain drain to brain gain). 2) Migration economics: Remittances and social Transmissions. 3) Forced migration in conflict territories 4) Environmental refugees: forced migration and climate change. The meeting developed a detailed set of recommendations related to the main themes discussed throughout the meeting.

III-Upcoming Events:

- **The Conference on roles of health competencies abroad to strengthen the health sector in the Arab States:** the meeting is scheduled to be held in September 2011, according to the decision of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health 36 that assigned to the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health in coordination with the Department of Population Policy and Migration of the Arab League to prepare for the convening of this Conference at the headquarters of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States in 2011 and the formation of a preparatory committee for the scientific membership includes a number o Arab Doctors and qualified health and migrant organizations to invite the Arab. The Department of Population Policy and Migration Department and in the framework of preparation of this meeting assigned a session during the 13th Annual Meeting of the Presidents of National Population Councils and committees in the Arab Countries that held in Sharm Shikh 29 November -1 December 2010.
- **Arab Experts Group Meeting on Migration and Development:** the League of Arab states in cooperation with the IOM and supported by the UNFPA preparing to convene the Arab Experts group meeting on Migration and Development scheduled to be held on May 2011. The meeting will be attended by Governmental Experts from League member states, as well

as representatives of civil societies and participants from related departments from the League of Arab states, and representatives of partner organizations and some European Embassies. The meeting intending to follow up on the results and recommendations of the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) Mexico 2010, as well as to prepare for the Arab participation to the upcoming GFMD 2011 to be held in Switzerland in regard to the Migration priorities in the region.

- **Migration Newsletter 2011 (Idafat Sokanya on International Migration):** The population policy and migration department – Social Sector- league of Arab states, dedicated to the annual tradition of issuing newsletter on LAS/PPMD activities, is preparing to print its Migration Newsletter. The issue will include the latest activities of the League of Arab states in term of Migration issues regionally and internationally, also will shed the lights on some of the important publications and reports on international migration ,as well as introduce of some events and conference and some other articles related to the main theme of the newsletter. The newsletter will include a section dedicated to the GFMD 2007-2010 and the Document of Arab Contribution to the GFMD, Youth and Migration and the migration experts database.

IV-Participation in Regional and international events on Migration:

- ✓ **The launching ceremony of the report on the “labor Mobility in the Arab region,”** April 19, 2010. Organized by the Arab Labour Organization under the Patronage of His Excellency Mr / Amr Moussa , Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and in cooperation and coordination with the IOM.
- ✓ **Regional Conference "Working together to address the irregular migration,"** 1-3 June 2010 in Sharm El Sheikh. Organized by IOM in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior Affairs in Egypt.
- ✓ **Conference on Migration and Development:** 12 July 2010 held in Cairo, Orgnized by IOM.
- ✓ **International Conference "The Egyptians abroad - problems and solutions and the rights of migrants:** 3 November 2010. Organized by the National Council for Human Rights in Cairo - Diplomatic Club.