

Non paper
Global Forum on Migration and Development

I. Context

The High Level Dialogue of 14 and 15 September 2006 made explicit the common interest of many States in addressing the relationship between migration and development policies and their wish to pursue the process of dialogue through a global, informal and voluntary Forum.

This Global Forum should address the multi-sectoral issues related to Migration and Development in a manner which creates added value for States and other actors, goes beyond mere analysis, and offers a platform to effectively address the implications, challenges and opportunities for greater coherence between migration and development policies. The Forum would identify best practices, exchange experiences, identify obstacles to be removed, explore and adopt innovative approaches, and enhance cooperation between countries in a process that involves governments and possibly other stakeholders as appropriate.

The Forum should bring together existing knowledge from all regions and ensure that this global expertise is shared among States and across regions in a coherent, concrete, transparent, operational and action-oriented manner. The policy expertise of specialised organisations should be tapped by creating an interface with the inter-agency Global Migration Group, and the experiences gained through cooperation at the regional levels should be built upon.

The Forum can make a significant new contribution in seeking answers to some of the more complex migration issues of today. It can work towards confidence and capacity-building within and across regions. It can consolidate national, regional and global migration expertise, contribute to better migration policies in and amongst States in all regions, work towards common approaches that are in the interest of all and seek to achieve more effective international cooperation on the principal migration and developmental challenges of today and tomorrow. The Forum can then raise awareness on the link between migration and development through the mainstreaming of migration in development policies, better integrate migration in the development policies of developing countries; enhance the preparedness of the international donor community to respond to requests of the developing countries, and improve overall policy coherence and cooperation on migration and development through better policy coordination at the national, regional and international levels.

Based on the analysis of the discussions held in New York during the High Level Dialogue, the main issues and challenges relating to Migration and Development today appear to be:

- How migration policies can be concretely linked with development policies.
- Migration as tool for economic and social development by means of maximizing the use of remittances, facilitating circular and temporary migration, promoting cooperation and co-development initiatives to assist in return and reintegration, and by addressing the feminisation of migration.

- Migration as an obstacle to economic and social development, for instance in the context of brain drain, possible negative social consequences of migration, the issue of integration, etc.
- The global demand and supply of labour: structural problems of labour supply, migrant rights and working conditions, the role of the informal market, the situation of migrants in the informal market, etc.
- The role of States and civil society, including Diasporas; the role of the private sector and trade unions.
- Migration, Development and Security, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling, protection of children and women, human security and public security and the needs in terms of technical and financial capacity of countries of origin and transit in matters of migration policies.

Subject to further consultations and input by governments and other actors, the Forum may decide to address these broadly defined issues in the context of a three-year work programme (see below).

II. Belgium

The Government of Belgium has offered to host the first meeting of the Forum in June/July 2007, for the following reasons:

- The government considers the need for greater policy coherence between migration and development as a priority. It has already contributed to raising awareness in this area by organising the Conference on Migration and Development in March 2006. It has also acquired concrete experience at the national level by promoting greater coherence between migration and development and is an active advocate of this approach.
- It is Belgium's conviction that a cooperative and multilateral approach is required to address the global impact and implications of migration and development.

Belgium is committed to a transparent and inclusive Forum process which should ensure win-win situations for all and translate in concrete and action-oriented outcomes. As host and organiser of the first Forum, it is prepared to lead the preparatory process with these objectives in mind, in close consultation with the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General and all interested governments.

III. Proposed Modus operandi

Role of the host country

Belgium is prepared to assume overall leadership and responsibility for the first Forum, as well as for the preparation of the event, in conjunction with support provided by other governments, the Global Migration Group and the Special Representative. It will also assume responsibility for all logistical, financial and protocol aspects.

Targeted Participants

- UN Member States: Policy-makers at the highest possible government level (ministers, senior officials) with specific responsibility, knowledge and expertise in the fields addressed by the Forum
- International organisations
- As appropriate: Civil society actors, including the private sector, NGOs, universities, academics, think tanks and diasporas

Proposed Meeting Format

- The Forum meets for two days, in both Plenary and Round tables sessions. Round table discussions should foster concrete discussions. These two days are organised by the Belgian Government for *government participants*. If deemed appropriate, and depending on agenda items, international organisations and civil society may also participate. For logistics reasons, the delegations will be limited to 3 participants.
- Prior to the proper Forum, a one-day meeting could be organised for the *Diasporas* and civil society actors, with the presence of interested government policymakers. Discussions are under way with the King Baudouin Foundation of Belgium to consider the possibility of organising such a meeting, of which a report would be made to governments the next day. This approach is proposed as a compromise between those who consider that the Forum should be exclusively reserved for governments and those who believe that civil society, including the migrant community itself, has also to be heard. Governments may indeed benefit from input from civil society on some of the issues to be addressed. For logistics reasons, the delegations will be limited to 3 participants.
- In parallel with the Forum, Belgium would further be prepared to organise a venue where concrete demands and offers for cooperation and assistance can be discussed amongst interested governments. This would maximise the practical outcomes of the Forum. Such consultations would be prepared by a small taskforce which, through a virtual network, would identify “demands” and “offers” for concrete assistance. For instance, if a given country requires a blueprint for a micro-credit mechanism, another country or an organisation could offer the required assistance. Such a “*market*” would allow new partners in the area of migration and development to meet during the Forum and to set up partnerships and projects of cooperation. This venue would only be organised if there is sufficient interest and if support for the taskforce in charge can be obtained (from member states, from international organisations)

Consultative Process and the “Friends of the Forum”

Belgium will establish a transparent consultation process. For this purpose, a joint letter of the Belgian government and the Secretary-General’s Special Representative will in the near future be sent to all the UN Member States, asking for:

- the nomination of a government focal point who will be responsible for ensuring that the right persons attend the Forum and that all relevant information on the

Forum will circulate properly within all concerned government circles (including the Ministries of Development, of Economy, of Finance, of Foreign Affairs, of Interior, etc.)

- the thematic priorities of the different countries and the way these should be addressed. For the first Forum it is suggested to have a limited number of thematic priorities to avoid the creation of false expectations. This input will be analysed in the course of December 2006 and January 2007.

Consultations would subsequently be held with an open-ended and voluntary group of States willing to support and to engage in the initiative, the "Friends of the Forum". They will be invited to discuss these thematic priorities, review them, and subsequently adopt the agenda for the first Forum and, as possible, a longer-term thematic work programme.

The "Friends of the Forum" could meet once or twice in between the meetings of the full Forum and act as an informal "sounding board" to keep interested governments and other stakeholders abreast of developments. A first meeting will possibly be held in Brussels in January.

Furthermore, international meetings such as the IOM Council, EU/African Ministerial meeting, the UN coordination meeting on migration and other relevant *fora* would be used to provide information and give progress reports on the Forum.

IV. Agenda for the First Forum

It is considered that concrete outcomes will only be possible if the first meeting of the Forum is limited to the in-depth examination of a maximum of two themes. These themes should be of interest to both developing and developed countries and have the potential to lead to concrete win-win situations.

I may then be useful to define a further two to three-year work programme on other key points and priorities identified.

V. Funding

Belgium is making the necessary budgetary provisions for funding the preparation and implementation of the first Forum, and is creating a special day to day management team that will be the focal point for the concrete organisation of the Forum (for instance liaison with member states, with GMG, UN and its specialised agencies, creation and management of a website, media relations, logistics, etc...).

Any offers for support (such as secondment of experts for the management team and in kind or financial contributions) are welcome, including for the special taskforce mentioned above for the organisation of the "request and offer venue".