

**SIXTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division

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**INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION (ICMC)
ACTIVITIES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION
AND DEVELOPMENT***

International Catholic Migration Commission

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

International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Activities on International Migration and Development

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I. Background

A note on ICMC

An organisation of 172 members in nearly every country of the world, and with its own operations and staff on the ground in some 40 countries, ICMC serves and protects refugees, migrants of all kinds (especially vulnerable migrant workers, victims of trafficking, fragile families and unaccompanied minors) and internally displaced persons, regardless of their faith, race, ethnicity or national origin.

Active both in operations and advocacy, ICMC works directly as well as through its members in concrete programming and policy-building related to migration, often as it intersects with development. This report however offers highlights strictly of activities that ICMC performs and manages directly, while noting, but not presenting, the variety and quality of work done worldwide by ICMC members themselves.

ICMC Engagement on International Migration and Development

At the *policy* level, ICMC signaled its commitment to the current migration and development debate when it served as an advisor to the Global Commission on International Migration. In July 2006, the members of ICMC membership approved a new Strategic Plan explicitly targeting migration and development as one of ICMC's top priorities for the coming years.

ICMC participated in the UN High Level Dialogue on migration and development, first as a member of the Steering Committee for the civil society component, as one of the speakers at the interactive hearings that July, and later as one of only five NGOs invited to speak at the High Level Dialogue itself, contributing at the roundtable on "*Measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants, and to prevent and combat smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.*" Invited again to participate in the first Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2007, ICMC was one of only twelve organizations selected to prepare and present the report of civil society at the first States session of the Global Forum. In addition, ICMC actively participated in the on-line consultation, in the editing of the background papers prepared for the Civil Society Day with a principal role on the paper entitled "*The migration - development nexus: migration out of choice vs. migration out of necessity,*" and as rapporteur for the final and forward planning session "*Looking ahead: strategies and partnerships for the future.*"

With respect to *operations*, a number of ICMC programs throughout the world address important aspects of the intersection between migration and development, including:

- Peace building, community building and voluntary return programs for displaced minorities, small villages, individuals and families in both post-conflict and post-disaster situations
- counter-trafficking, rescue, legal services and return of victims of human trafficking and exploited domestic workers
- counseling, livelihoods training and micro-credit programming
- refugee processing for resettlement in third countries, including pre-departure cultural orientation for integration purposes

By design, most of these programs involve capacity building of local community or government institutions. Taken together with other partners and ICMC members, this activity represents a front-line network of migration and development.

II. Follow-up activities to the High Level Dialogue and first Global Forum

Parallel event at the Global Forum in Brussels

In tandem with the formal Global Forum process in 2007, ICMC, together with three other NGOs from Asia, Europe and North America, co-organized the parallel *Global Community Forum on Migration, Development and Human Rights*, which was held in Brussels on the two days parallel to the State sessions of the Global Forum. Despite the fact that the parallel event was organized with minimal funding and without benefit of the names and contact information for participants in the official Civil Society day, as many people (200) and NGOs attended the parallel event as the official Global Forum Civil Society Day. Participants included a number of NGO, faith-based and labour groups that had *not* been selected to be part of the official Civil Society Day, not only from Brussels and Europe but from other regions of the world as well.

With the express goal of generating concrete proposals and programming, ICMC ran a two-part workshop featuring officials from three offices of the European Commission. With 47 NGO and labour participants attending, the workshop was the most popular of the ten offered at the parallel event and gave funding officials the opportunity to discuss genuine funding streams with NGOs. Similarly, NGOs were given the chance to discuss with the EC officials actual programming already underway in the area of migration and development. Among the major development actors participating were Cordaid and Oxfam.

ICMC was invited as one of two panellists asked to report on both the Civil Society Day and the informal parallel event, to speak at a roundtable organized by the Transatlantic Institute, the Brussels affiliate of the American Jewish Committee.

Creation of a civil society *International Platform for Migration, Development and Human Rights*.

One of the outcomes of the parallel event was the unanimous approval of an ICMC proposal to establish a *permanent, global* civil society platform on migration and development to ensure better collaboration, clarity and consistency of engagement of civil society in this global debate, particularly among the NGO and labour movements. It was agreed that the first task of the new platform would be to create communications capacities so that like-minded NGOs, labour and other groups could communicate regularly. The second task would be to develop a funding strategy. Key work would include supporting regional and national strategies on migration and development, both within and outside the process of the Global Forum.

Creation of a new civil society Website on migration and development

Acting on the conviction that the migration and development debate cannot be held without the active participation of civil society, and especially without those organisations that have already set important trends in the field of migration and of development activities, ICMC has taken steps to create a new Website on migration and development.

Although the Global Forum and IOM websites host considerable libraries of official documentation and quality research and material on migration and development, the new Website will provide added value by approaching the issue from a civil society perspective—one centred upon the human being in the context of migration and development and the need to highlight practical, rights-based solutions that already exist as well as possibilities for the future. Complementing existing Websites, the new site will:

- search for, identify and make accessible quality writing and other materials on migration and development that are not adequately presented on other websites or in other fora, giving particular priority to those of NGOs, faith-based and labour organisations
- actively promote the sharing of concrete research and data, including experience, evaluations, lessons learned and best practices, with an emphasis on programming that serves poor and vulnerable people in the area of migration and development
- increase awareness and preparation regarding international processes such as the Global Forum and other migration and development events and processes at bilateral, regional and international levels

Asia Conference on migration and development

As the Global Forum on Migration and Development moves to the Philippines in 2008, there is an opportunity, indeed an urgency, to contribute a voice, values and perspectives that are distinctly Asian. Working directly with the National Catholic Commission for Migration of Thailand, ICMC is organizing a two-day regional conference in mid 2008, in Bangkok, to facilitate such a contribution both within the process of the Global Forum and in other international and regional discussions of migration and development. This conference will leverage the broad network, special role and experience of Catholic organizations long engaged throughout the region either in migration or development or both.

The Asia Conference will bring significant added value to the current global discussion of migration and development, to wit:

- convene at the Conference of major operational stakeholders engaged in migration and development in the Asia region, including civil society organizations, government officials, and representatives of leading regional and international institutions
- promote a regional approach to problems, perspectives and solutions, with analyses and recommendations that will be brought to the Global Forum in the Philippines
- encourage a focus on human dignity and well-being
- initiate a process of national consultations leading up to the Conference

In intentionally convening leading Asian stakeholders, particularly in civil society, this conference will offer an important complement to regional processes that have focused on migration and development thinking at the *inter-governmental* level, such as the ongoing and influential Colombo regional process coordinated by IOM. Moreover, the conference's focus on human dignity and well-

being will provide some balance to what has been to date in the global debate an almost exclusive focus on the strictly economic aspects of migration and development.

Publications and conferences related to migration and development

As a contribution to the migration and development debate and to broader activities relating to migrants, ICMC published in 2006 a book entitled Strengthening the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families with International Human Rights Treaties. A do-it-yourself toolkit, it examines *all seven* of the core international human rights treaties—that is, widely ratified conventions—for the rights they elaborate for migrants, whether or not they are workers. This one-stop source for all of the rights of migrants under UN treaties responds to two needs often expressed by States, international organizations and civil society in the migration and development debate: the need to consider migrant rights in core UN treaties *beyond* the Migrant Workers Convention, which is the newest and least ratified of the seven, and the need to give more attention to those rights in the migration and development debate. The toolkit also offers for consideration a closer look at the Convention on Migrant Workers, which though, widely misunderstood and even misrepresented, itself gathers in one place all of the universal rights that apply specifically to migrant workers and members of their families.

In addition to the processes of the High Level Dialogue and first Global Forum, ICMC participated as a presenter in a number of conferences in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America—including several involving representatives of States and the European Union—discussing perspectives on current international migration, demographics and other drivers of a new paradigm, and emerging issues and gaps in labour migration, global governance and development. Among the papers published this past year by ICMC (and available at www.icmc.net):

- To Leave or Not to Leave: the Right to *Not Migrate and what the Church is doing to help people to stay at home*
- Getting Practical in Migration and Development: *Integration and NGOs as Keys in Practical Programming and Policy Making*
- Bringing Experience and Practice to the Migration and Development Table: *Observations and Questions for Reflection*
- Meeting Needs, Filling Gaps in International Migration: *How the Church and Other International Institutions Respond to Migrants in the Age of Mobility*
- Mobile, Global and Hard at Work: *Revaluing Migrant Options, Risks and Dignity in the Age of Globalization*
- Rights, Migration and Development: *Bridging the Gap*

III. Other activities that address key aspects of migration-development nexus

Consistent with what has already been described, particularly in Section I, ICMC programs continue to operate at the nexus of some of the most important migration and development phenomena of our time. The Global Forum resounds with States, international organisations and civil society agreeing that “*migration should be a choice and not a necessity*,” a growing convergence that evokes ICMC’s core programming to ameliorate and reduce forced migration. Two activities in particular come to mind, each offering value to migration and development thinking and action:

- To reduce human trafficking—one of the worst forms of migration—and its effects, ICMC worked successfully over several years with the government of Indonesia on a new anti-trafficking law that was enacted in 2007

- To bring order to necessary migration, ICMC and its members have long worked with a number of governments providing cultural orientation and security processing pre-departure and reception, employment and integration programming post-arrival to refugees and other migrants moving to new countries. Such models—tested, refined and proven effective over the years in helping hundreds of thousands of people to move legally all over the world—are immediately available for a broader organizing of labour migration.

Services and Standards for Migrants Injured or Traumatized Crossing Borders

In the course of regular consulting with bishops conferences and other members in Africa, Australia, Europe, Mexico and the US, ICMC was urged to *broaden* the ongoing debate on mixed migration flows to address the suffering of all migrants injured in such flows—that is, not just the refugees or asylum seekers, but migrants regardless of status. ICMC believes that these migrants have long and wrongly been dismissed simply as “economic migrants” unworthy of international protection or attention of any kind. In June 2006, ICMC prepared and presented to the UNHCR Standing Committee a statement in the name of all NGOs calling for (1) better humanitarian services that respond to all victims of violence and trauma crossing borders, e.g., physical and psychosocial care, and best interest determinations for children, and (2) the development of international standards in that regard. Such services and standards would (a) expressly include identification and processing for victims of violence and trauma, trafficked persons, and children—especially unaccompanied minors; (b) go beyond rescue at sea to post-rescue obligations for care; (c) apply not only on sea borders, but on land borders as well, and (d) offer responses that are obligatory and resourced, rather than ad hoc and voluntary, as is presently the case.

Recent meetings with OHCHR High Commissioner Arbour, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner Feller, representatives of Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent and others suggest that the debate is indeed moving to a more comprehensive and humanitarian approach, with UNHCR High Commissioner Guterres including the issue in the high-level *High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges* to which he is inviting States, international organisations and civil society over two days in December 2007.

IV. Role of surveys in providing evidence to formulate effective policies and programmes to support these activities

ICMC is currently conducting three surveys to support its development of policies and programming:

- a survey of ICMC members worldwide on activities regarding human trafficking
- a survey of ICMC members in Africa on current migration experience and activities
- a survey of the world’s most dangerous borders, to inform the debate on standards and services for migrants who have been injured or traumatized crossing borders

V. Engagement of ICMC members

In all of these activities, it is important to recognize the involvement of ICMC’s members worldwide. While a number are operating partners in programming and advocacy, all are regularly consulted for their input on these issues and processes. Working in partnerships with States, international and civil society organizations around the world, the ICMC network is committed to better elaborations and collaborations on international migration and development.

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