

**TWELFTH COORDINATION MEETING ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
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**INPUT OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL  
ORGANIZATION TO THE TWELFTH COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL  
MIGRATION<sup>1</sup>**

*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*

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

## A. BACKGROUND

UNESCO contributed to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (October 2013) in its capacity of member of the Global Migration Group (GMG). The Organization highlighted issues related to its mandate in the joint documents prepared by the GMG on the occasion of the High-level Dialogue, namely the joint statement and position paper on Integrating migration in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. In particular, UNESCO underscored the right of migrants to quality education, the recognition of qualifications as an enabler to migrants' integration and development and the need to eradicate through formal and non-formal education initiatives prejudices and negative stereotypes against migrants. UNESCO also fully supported the call of the GMG to mainstream migration in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda based on the values and principles of human rights.

Further to this input, UNESCO had provided a chapter presenting its work in the field of migration since the 2006 High-level Dialogue within the publication *International Migration and Development: Contributions and Recommendations of the International System* of the United Nations Chief Executives Board.<sup>1</sup>

## B. CURRENT AND FUTURE THREADS

The actions of the Organization in the aftermath of the High-level Dialogue fall under the following four areas of the Secretary-General's eight-point agenda for action:

### *1. Reduce the costs of labour migration*

At a time of growing worldwide mobility, credential portability and educational quality assurance are key drivers for sustainable development, both nationally and internationally, as they help avoid loss of education and professional experience in the course of migration. For migrants, the recognition of qualifications and skills is a stepping stone to a better future as it opens the door to further training and/or to improved chances for a successful integration in the labour market.

The assessment and recognition of foreign credentials is a complex matter, its complexity conditioned by the changing and multiple patterns of skill migration on the one hand and the variability in education, as well as in accreditation and governance systems across countries and fields, on the other.

The Organization's action for the recognition of credentials has acquired renewed impetus since the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education where the issue occupied a central place. Current initiatives are built around the promotion and the implementation of the six Regional Conventions on the Recognition of Qualifications (Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Europe and the Mediterranean).<sup>2</sup> Their focus is placed on elaborating appropriate responses to the complex challenges associated with this issue. To that end, an Expert Group Meeting on quality assurance and mutual recognition of qualifications will be convened tentatively in mid-2014. Also, with the view to generating greater investment and interest in qualifications recognition, UNESCO will work to define good practice strategies to advocate to government, academic, regulatory body and commercial sectors the need for improved understanding of migration processes, qualifications recognition, and global professional standards.

## *2. Strengthen the migration evidence base*

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), together with its partners Eurostat and OECD, is a key actor in data gathering on education and the mobility of international students. Based on these data, it can track trends in magnitude and in directions of tertiary students. Moreover, this dataset provides information about student migrants' destination and origin countries, and the kind of tertiary programmes that the students pursue outside their home country. It also allows to see how likely students are to pursue their tertiary education abroad (outbound mobility ratio) and which destination countries are attractive to mobile students (inbound mobility rate).

In another programme with the same partners, UIS tracks the mobility of doctoral degree holders. This dataset provides information about international doctorates' destination countries and some information about their country of origin, while it covers both mobility for study reasons and for other (professional) reasons.

The UIS has also developed the Mobility Dispersion Index, which reflects the extent to which mobile students from a given country are either concentrated in a few destination countries or scattered among a larger group.

In addition, the educational attainment of migrants is among the issues monitored under the umbrella of the Education for All programme (see for instance the recently published *2013 Education for All Global Monitoring Report*).<sup>3</sup> Based on data collections maintained by the OECD (e.g., International Migration Outlook) and by the World Bank (e.g., emigration rate of tertiary educated population), the UIS can further examine the emerging patterns in the educational attainment of migrants.

## *3. Improve public perceptions of migrants and protect the human rights of all migrants*

At a time of increasing global challenges and threats, such as inequality, exclusion, violence and sectarianism worsened by local tensions and conflicts, creating the conditions for living together in dignity and shared prosperity becomes more topical than ever before. Living together in peace is the outcome of a daily learning process that teaches individuals to appreciate diversity as well as to manage differences in accordance with the values of human rights, pluralism and mutual understanding. At the same living together in peace requires the eradication of long-standing and new prejudices and negative stereotypes targeting those who are different.

Promoting tolerance based on the principle of equal dignity of all human beings and advancing the recognition of cultural diversity as an invaluable asset for development are central components of several ongoing UNESCO programmes and UNESCO-led collaborative initiatives, which, albeit not focusing exclusively on migrants, address the challenges faced by various groups in situations of vulnerability. For example, the programme on a culture of peace and non-violence,<sup>4</sup> *inter alia*, develops formal and non-formal education initiatives with the aim of achieving intercultural skills such as empathy, spontaneous solidarity and hospitality reflecting the diversity of contemporary societies in an active, honest and lasting dialogue; fosters social cohesion and inclusion, pluralist and democratic participation and human rights, notably through the empowerment of women and youth; and harnesses the media and ICTs to promote peace, non-violence, tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

The peaceful integration of migrants in the urban setting is among the underlying considerations of UNESCO's International Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination initiative. Its programmes, following a ten-point plan of action adapted to regional specificities, address such issues as awareness-raising for inclusion and respect for cultural diversity at the municipal level.

The creation of a policy environment conducive to social inclusion with emphasis on groups that are too often exposed to discriminatory attitudes and marginalization is the aim of an initiative launched within the framework of the Programme on Management of Social Transformations (MOST). By encouraging policy-oriented research and promoting dialogue between researchers and policy-makers, MOST promotes the evidence base for a sound policy formulation.

Addressing the importance of values in the education system is a component of the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), a five-year campaign launched in 2012 by the United Nations Secretary-General with UNESCO hosting its secretariat and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova serving as Executive Secretary of the High-level Steering Committee. Under the GEFI's third priority on fostering global citizenship,<sup>5</sup> efforts are being deployed to embody the values of peace, human rights, respect, cultural diversity and justice in the ethos of schools. Such efforts concentrate on transforming schools into a space where social inequalities and social pathologies are removed rather than replicated.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/CEB\\_GMG\\_web.pdf#page=273](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/CEB_GMG_web.pdf#page=273)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/higher-education/conventions-and-recommendations/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/bureau-of-strategic-planning/themes/culture-of-peace-and-non-violence/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/global-education-first-initiative-gefi/>