

**TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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**MAXIMIZING THE VALUE OF MIGRATION TO DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:  
PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS<sup>1</sup>**

*International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)*

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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) Migration and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and its 187 member National Societies have a long history of providing assistance to migrants throughout the world. This work is guided by our seven Fundamental Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. At a practical level, the IFRC and its member National Societies provide assistance to vulnerable people on the move, including labour migrants, stateless migrants, migrants deemed irregular by public authorities, migrants displaced within their own country and refugees and asylum-seekers. In carrying out our work, we ensure, first and foremost, that the individual needs of migrants are recognized and addressed, without discrimination and irrespective of their legal status.

In their unique auxiliary relationship with government, a number of our member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies carry out the following types of activities in order to help address the vulnerabilities of migrants:

- **Humanitarian assistance:** providing food, shelter, clothing, health care, first aid, psychosocial support etc;
- **Protection:** restoring family links, legal and administrative advice, acting against exploitation and deception, providing information on the risks of irregular migration and visiting migrants in detention to help improve their detention conditions and their treatment when necessary;
- **Advocacy:** providing the humanitarian perspective to policy decisions, combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination and promoting international norms in that respect; and
- **Integration and reintegration:** reception services, fostering social participation and solidarity and promoting respect for human dignity.

At the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent held in 2007, the Declaration *Together for Humanity* was adopted which reaffirmed “the role of National Societies, based on the principles of humanity and impartiality, and in consultation with the public authorities, in providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable migrants irrespective of their legal status.” The International Conference is convened every four years and brings together the States Parties of the Geneva Conventions and the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Taking these efforts another step forward the IFRC adopted its global [Policy on Migration](#) in 2009, guiding National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in their direct assistance to migrants, improving the consistency of our response worldwide and our cooperation with States, non-governmental and international organizations.

At the 31<sup>st</sup> International Conference held in November 2011, a resolution entitled [Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social Inclusion](#) was adopted. The resolution encourages cooperation between public authorities and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to pursue the following practical actions:

- **Access to all migrants:** ensuring that relevant laws and regulations are in place to enable effective and safe access to all migrants, irrespective of their legal status;
- **Better border procedures:** improved border procedures including adequate safeguards for the safety, well-being and dignity of migrants, and their access to international protection;
- **Fighting xenophobia:** enhanced cooperation between governments and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in undertaking practical actions to promote diversity, non-violence and social inclusion; and
- **Enhanced partnerships:** strengthened collaboration between relevant actors to fortify humanitarian assistance and the protection provided to vulnerable migrants.

## **B) The IFRC's focus on social inclusion**

As outlined above, one of the key areas of work for the IFRC and its member National Societies in relation to migration is fighting xenophobia. This includes taking practical actions to promote diversity, non-violence and social inclusion. Social exclusion is a phenomenon that affects all societies and which often affects migrants. It is the breaking of social and familial ties which result in persons living in the margins of society. Social inclusion, on the other hand, is about strengthening connections between groups of people and enabling individuals to fully participate, contribute and benefit from a society. Focusing on the social inclusion of migrants and promoting the benefits of diversity is appropriate in a world where there are now more than 214 million migrants<sup>i</sup>.

The IFRC Policy on Migration<sup>ii</sup> further identifies the importance of supporting the aspirations of migrants and recognising that their skills, experiences, and resilience can often be a valuable contribution to their host communities. Migrants have a legitimate claim to opportunities to achieve their potential and initiatives must seek to address migrants' own needs and interests, support their social inclusion, integration, and aspirations.

Working in partnership, we can do much more to get the message right about migration. At the 2011 informal debate on International Migration and Development<sup>iii</sup> civil society called upon States to strengthen and promote the integration of migrants. The *World Migration Report 2011*<sup>iv</sup>, with its focus on improving the accuracy of public debates about migration, has called for a shift in the way we communicate about migration. As a further development, it is welcome to see the Draft *Concept Paper: Enhancing the contribution of Migration to the development of migrants, communities and states* released on 26 January 2012 in the lead-up to Global Forum on Migration and Development 2012 and in particular, the proposal to focus the thematic work program in part on "Managing migration and perceptions of migration for development outcomes".

The process of integrating migrants into a host country is often described as a two way process - a mutual commitment from newcomers and the citizens of their host nation. The value of properly integrating migrants into society should not be underestimated and is indeed being globally promoted through various international and regional platforms. For example, UNAOC<sup>v</sup> IBIS maps innovative integration practices globally whilst the MIPEX<sup>vi</sup> initiative provides statistical data on current integration policies around seven thematic areas. Furthermore, the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Stockholm Programme both recognise the potential of migration for building a competitive and sustainable economy and set out, as a clear political objective, the effective integration of migrants, underpinned by the respect and promotion of human rights<sup>vii</sup>. As outlined in the *World Migration Report 2011*, enhanced understanding of the positive aspects of migration - and the facts about migration more generally - will help to address widespread negative public opinions about migrants. Helping migrants, by promoting social inclusion and changing attitudes in our society, is an integral part of the work of the IFRC and its member National Societies.

## **C) Red Cross Red Crescent initiatives relating to the social inclusion of migrants**

The IFRC response to these issues finds its roots in our belief that respectful dialogue - as well as innovative communication and education tools - can be powerful factors in tackling negative attitudes about migrants. By providing accurate, impartial information and facilitating dialogue between local communities and migrants, IFRC seeks to counter misconceptions and address social exclusion. As such, many National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies deliver innovative programmes and public awareness campaigns to combat xenophobia. Examples of this work include:

### ***Don't Judge a Book by its Cover - Armenia***

The Armenian Red Cross's innovative program *Don't Judge by the Cover* aims to raise awareness about the benefits of diversity and challenge negative public perceptions about migrants. Other

National Societies running similar campaigns to improve dialogue on migration include Cape Verde, Mauritania, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Egypt.

#### ***Harmony Awards - Australia***

Harmony Day is celebrated in Australia on 21 March each year. It celebrates the cultural diversity of a country where nearly a quarter of the current population was born overseas and more than two million Australians speak a language other than English at home. The Australian Red Cross plays an active role in marking the occasion by hosting the *Red Cross Harmony Awards*, a competition which encourages schools, youth organisations and community groups to enter projects with the aim of promoting tolerance and the message that everyone belongs.

#### ***First Contact Programme - Canada***

The Canadian Red Cross (CRC) has many services aimed at the integration of migrants into Canada. The *First Contact* programme of the CRC provides migrants with information on how to find affordable housing, process a refugee claim, secure employment, as well as how to apply for legal aid or social assistance. In addition, there are also a number of formal and non formal education and training opportunities for migrants.

#### ***Comic books - Democratic Republic of the Congo & Belgium***

The Belgium Red Cross and the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have joined forces with Congolese artists to produce comic books about the realities of migration to Europe. The “La-bas... Na poto” comic book illustrates the gap that often exists between the migrant dream and the realities of the migratory journey and life in a new country. The comics have been produced as educational resources for teachers and young people in both countries, with an aim of stimulating debate on migration and raising awareness and to ensure that young people in DRC are better informed when they make choices about migration. With the help of 10,000 volunteers, 125,000 copies have been distributed throughout the DRC since the project began in 2007.

#### ***Campaign “Act! Reject discrimination and celebrate diversity” - Ecuador***

The Ecuadorian Red Cross organized this activity in the provinces of Loja, Calvas, Catamayo and Paltas. Under the slogan “Diversity is our best option” the Ecuadorian Red Cross initiated this campaign to promote a culture of non-violence and respect for diversity. It is worth noting that migrant Red Cross volunteers from many different nationalities were proactively involved in this initiative.

#### ***Positive Images Campaign - EU***

*Positive Images* began in 2009 with the aim of reaching three million young people over three years. British Red Cross activities were implemented in Bristol, Glasgow, Nottingham and Thetford and through partner EU Red Cross National Societies in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Sweden. Key objectives were to:

- promote positive attitudes among young people in the European Union (EU), aged 12 to 25, towards vulnerable migrants;
- raise awareness of development issues; and
- enable exchange of learning across the EU.

*Positive Images* employs a diverse range of methods for engaging young people in issues with regard to migrants. These methods include youth-led activities and empathy-building activities such as role playing and creative activities. A key strength of the project is that at least half of the *Positive Images* volunteer teams are from migrant backgrounds. As a result, *Positive Images* enables young people to learn directly from migrants’ own experiences, whilst offering volunteers the chance to build their confidence, communication and youth social work skills. *Positive Images* has enabled the Red Cross to reach out to young people across the EU. At an event run by the Hellenic Red Cross in Athens, young people wrote over 3,000 welcome messages to migrants. During a hotline for young people in

Austria, young migrants were trained and active in the programme and provided telephone advice to other young migrants, receiving over 9,000 calls in 2009.

### ***Yes Project – Finland***

The Finnish Red Cross is taking an innovative approach to addressing the needs of rural migrants with its *YES project*. The project targets asylum seekers and people with residence permits living in a rural reception centre and waiting for residence. The rural environment, new to the phenomenon of immigrant diversity, can prove to be challenging for migrants. The project aims to develop a 4-step programme for better integration and increased employment in rural areas for migrants.

### ***1001 Strengths - Netherlands***

The *1001 Strengths* programme in the Netherlands pairs migrant women with elderly Dutch individuals to encourage social interaction and promote intercultural dialogue. Veronique Stevens, (Diversity Advisor, Netherlands Red Cross) explains: “We are happy with the results so far. To date, we have reached over 1,500 women and encouraged more than 600 women to get actively involved in Red Cross volunteer work with Migrant communities.”

### ***Ubuntu initiative - Southern Africa***

Ubuntu is a multidimensional concept which represents the core values of African culture: respect for all human beings, for human dignity and for human life, collectivity and sharing, humility, solidarity, caring, hospitality, and interdependence. The Red Cross’ *Ubuntu Initiative for southern Africa* is a five-year flagship programme which aims to address the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants and work with migrants and host communities towards respect for diversity and social inclusion. The initiative is being carried out by National Societies in Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe as well as the regional offices of the IFRC and the ICRC.

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### NOTES

<sup>i</sup> IOM (2011). World Migration Report 2011: Communicating Effectively about Migration, Geneva, p. 49.

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/89395/Migration%20Policy\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/89395/Migration%20Policy_EN.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, May 19, 2011.

<sup>iv</sup> IOM (2011). World Migration Report 2011 - Communicating Effectively about Migration.

<sup>v</sup> UN Alliance of Civilisations Integration: Building Inclusive Societies.

<sup>vi</sup> MIPEX Migrant Integration Policy Index.

<sup>vii</sup> The Annual Growth Survey 2011 has shown the need for urgent reforms to promote skills and to create incentives to work both for the national and migrant population, COM (2011) 11 final, Annex 2, Macroeconomic report.