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**HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE FOLLOW-UP AND
ACTIVITIES RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL
MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

International Organization for Migration (IOM)



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
IOM Internationale Organisatie voor Migratie

Contribution of IOM to Fifth Coordination Meeting on International Migration (20-21 November 2006)

High-Level Dialogue Follow-up and Activities relating to International Migration and Development

Migration is one of the defining phenomena of our time. The very convening of the High-Level Dialogue (HLD) made a major contribution to concentrating political attention world-wide specifically on the link between international migration and development.

The importance of properly preparing for the HLD was widely recognized and generated a host of activities at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. Throughout 2006, IOM worked with a broad range of partners at each of these levels – including national authorities, regional consultative processes on migration, other regional and sub-regional groups and intergovernmental organizations, in particular constituent bodies of the United Nations – to promote awareness of and stimulate debate on the themes of the HLD. IOM committed early to actively supporting preparations for the HLD in order to help ensure its success and made an unprecedented organization-wide effort with that objective in mind.

The HLD succeeded in attracting broad and high level participation. Statements reflected a solid understanding of the issues, round table discussions often went beyond speeches to thoughtfully address the core issues, and the overall tone of the discourse was constructive. Many of the themes which emerged at the HLD paralleled and validated the key messages which IOM had identified and strongly advocated in favor of throughout the lead-up period. IOM now looks forward to contributing to making the follow-up a success.

A. HLD FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Given that little time has passed since the HLD, IOM is still in the process of consulting and considering government preferences regarding potential areas for follow-up, and evaluating the Organization's strengths and capacities to respond in each of these areas as they take shape. Based on preliminary planning, IOM expects that its follow-up activities will focus on three broad priority categories:

1. Stepped-up practical measures to make migration work for development

A number of delegations at the HLD addressed this matter with genuine interest. Among the many suggestions for implementing concrete measures which can make migration work for development, two are most prominent:

- First, mainstreaming migration into development planning agendas of developing countries and donors, as well as international-level development planning agendas; and
- Second, building capacities to deal more effectively with the global labour market in order to maximize the positive development potential of labour migration.

IOM has begun pursuing the first approach in a few pilot countries by specifically assisting governments to reflect migration issues in their national development strategies. The process involves working with countries as they craft policies and actions to better link migration and development; providing technical assistance to support the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) process and other development

planning processes with respect to migration linkages; and helping governments establish and measure the indicators of success. IOM is currently working to develop partnerships with other development cooperation partners to integrate migration issues in poverty reduction strategies.

With regard to the second approach, building capacity in the area of international labour mobility, IOM first presented a proposal for an “International Migration and Development Initiative” (IMDI) to the Global Migration Group (GMG)¹ in July 2006 and subsequently introduced it to delegations to the HLD at a side-event in New York. IMDI is intended to be a mechanism to build capacity for safe, legal and orderly participation in the global labour market, drawing on interagency, governmental and private sector collaboration. IOM is working with the World Bank, UNHCR (both in its individual capacity and as current Chair of the GMG), ILO and UNCTAD to define this concept further, a process in which UNDP and UNFPA also are participating as observers. IMDI will be further discussed with IOM’s Members and Observers at the IOM Council session at the end of November.

IOM is also exploring ways it can partner with others in the international community to fill information gaps on the complex relationship between migration and development. For instance, IOM has developed a proposal for a global migration and development research initiative, which would engage existing research networks, government ministries, NGOs and international organizations to collaborate on migration and development research and build capacities in developing countries to conduct and manage policy-relevant research and evaluation on migration and development issues. All GMG agencies have been invited to participate, and IOM is currently working with ILO to further refine the concept.

Meanwhile, IOM’s longstanding research efforts in the area of migration and development (see the attached publications brochure) will continue. The Organization’s migration policy and research programme of work for 2007 will be focused, in broad terms, on how migration – and labour migration in particular – can be a positive force for development in both countries of origin and destination. The decision to concentrate on this theme was largely a consequence of the high level of interest generated in this subject by the HLD.

Of particular note is an upcoming IOM publication entitled *Engaging Diasporas as Development Partners for Home and Destination Countries: Challenges for Policy Makers*, which will be available at the end of November. This publication surveys existing practices aimed at engaging diasporas as active partners for development, and provides a guide for policy formulation in this field. Recognizing that most available studies focus on remittances and remittance policies, this publication places particular emphasis on ways to enhance non-financial contributions by diasporas.

In addition, IOM partnered with the World Bank to produce a study aimed at increasing understanding of how migration policies affect development. Provisionally-entitled *Migration Policies and their Development Relevance: A Study of Policies and Practices in Selected Countries of Origin and Destination*, the study examines and reviews data on current migration policies (immigration and emigration) relevant to development and poverty reduction. Its objective is to better inform efforts to ensure that migration policies are development-friendly and incorporate a stronger development perspective.

2. Enhanced Inter-agency Coordination

While IOM may be the sole inter-governmental organization with an across-the-board migration mandate, IOM is the first to recognize that partnership is needed among many agencies and entities involved in various aspects of migration, according to their areas of expertise. With this objective in mind, IOM was among the co-founders of the Geneva Migration Group in 2003, which included six agencies with an

¹ The Global Migration Group is discussed in more detail in the next section of this paper.

interest in migration issues. In early 2006, with the encouragement of the UN Secretary General, the Group was expanded to ten agencies – ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UN-DESA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC and the World Bank – and renamed the Global Migration Group (GMG).

IOM views the GMG as an excellent framework for facilitating enhanced inter-agency coordination. As mentioned above, IOM has presented two of its proposals for HLD follow-up activities to its GMG partners – IMDI and the global migration and development research initiative – and consultations with interested agencies to further develop these proposals are ongoing. The GMG also provides a framework for gathering information on the migration-related activities of its members. For instance, in its role as current GMG chair, UNHCR recently compiled an information note describing the activities of GMG members in the fields of migration- and development-related policy research, data-collection and publications. It is anticipated that further compilation of migration and development-related information will be undertaken later this year.

In addition, as before the HLD, IOM continues to engage with agencies both within and outside the GMG which have complementary and shared objectives and areas of work relating to migration issues. The Action Programme on “The International Migration of Health Service Workers: The Supply Side”, for example, launched by ILO together with IOM and the WHO, seeks to develop and disseminate strategies and good practices for the management of the movement of health service providers from the perspective of the country of origin. Another example is the Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination, jointly elaborated and published by the OSCE, IOM and ILO, which is currently moving into a phase of capacity building workshops.

3. *Enhanced Inter-governmental Cooperation*

The debate around the HLD has underlined the need for strengthening cooperation among governments at all levels. Regional organizations and consultative processes were recognized as very useful in forming building blocks for sustained dialogue on migration. As before the HLD, IOM will continue to actively promote, support and participate in regional consultative processes on migration (RCPs) around the globe. IOM is currently reviewing the schedules and agendas of their future meetings in order to help facilitate discussion on migration and development and promote HLD follow-up, where desired by the participating States. The first such opportunity will occur in late November in Xiamen, where IOM has been invited to address the annual plenary meeting of the Inter-governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations (APC) on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants on the topic of the HLD. IOM is also developing a section of its website dedicated to RCPs with the goal of, among other things, encouraging synergies and cross-fertilization among them.

The *International Dialogue on Migration (IDM)*, created in the IOM Council in 2001, was acknowledged by many at the HLD as a valuable venue for dialogue on migration matters. The IDM brings together governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector for informal and non-binding consultations on migration with a view to sharing experiences and identifying effective practices and practical solutions. The IDM is grounded in IOM’s Constitutional mandate “to provide a forum to States as well as international and other organizations for the exchange of views and experiences, and the promotion of co-operation and co-ordination of efforts on international migration issues, including studies on such issues to develop practical solutions.” IOM has invited its GMG partners for a special interactive discussion with the IOM membership during the IDM at the November IOM Council session,² Other IDM sessions will include “Partnerships in Migration: Engaging Business and Civil Society”; the IMDI proposal; and the “Year in Review” (during which, for example, the Government of Belgium will present its plans for the first meeting of the Global Forum on International Migration and Development). IOM’s

² Intersessional workshops on the topics of “Migration and Human Resources for Health” and “Migrants and the Host Society” took place earlier this year.

Members and Observers have selected as an overarching theme for the IDM in 2007 “Migration Management in the Evolving Global Economy” and the following three topics for intersessional workshops to be held during the course of 2007 (pending funding): “Making Global Labour Mobility a Catalyst for Development”; “Free Movement of Persons in Regional Integration Processes”; and “The Environment and Migration”.

At the HLD, the Secretary-General made an important proposal to create a consultative, non-binding Global Forum on International Migration and Development, which attracted significant interest from governments around the world. The Government of Belgium has offered to host the first meeting of the Forum and is currently refining its own thinking on the subject in collaboration with a range of partners. As several Member States acknowledged at the HLD, it would appear sensible to associate the GMG agencies collectively and individually to this global endeavor. In this context, IOM has already contacted the Belgian Government and offered its support in making the Forum a success. As the planning for the first meeting of the Forum moves forward, including the selection of topics, it will become more apparent what shape that support may take.

B. IOM’S ACTIVITIES WHICH IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OR ADDRESS KEY ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The link between migration and development was already underlined in IOM’s 1951 founding document. IOM’s activities relating to migration and development are described in the document entitled “International Migration and Development: Perspectives and Experiences of the International Organization for Migration”,³ which was prepared by IOM as a contribution to HLD preparations and is attached hereto. Because of the range of IOM activities relating to migration and development, they cannot each be described in detail. The attached document does, however, provide illustrative examples of IOM activities in the following areas:

- **Improving the Understanding of Migration’s Impact on Development**
 - Undertaking pilot projects on the topic of mainstreaming migration into development agendas, to better understand the linkages between migration and development (p. 5).
 - Conducting and supporting research designed to guide and inform migration policy and practice, often in partnership with other stakeholders (p. 6; see also attached brochure on IOM’s Migration and Development Publications).
- **Filling Gaps in the Knowledge and Implementation of International Migration Law, Including the Human Rights of Migrants**
 - Taking measures to enhance the dissemination, understanding and implementation of the body of international instruments and norms relevant to migration, including training, capacity building, and technical assistance for developing national migration legislation (pp. 7-8).
 - Disseminating objective information to migrants on their rights and duties, both before departure and during the migration process (pp. 8, 14).
- **Preventing and Combating Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons, and Providing Assistance to Victims of Trafficking and Vulnerable Migrants**
 - Building the capacity of States to prevent trafficking and smuggling and to apprehend and prosecute perpetrators (pp. 9-10).
 - Developing and maintaining the most comprehensive counter-trafficking database with first-hand data on trafficking victims (p. 10).
 - Providing information to potential migrants and trafficking victims in countries of origin on the dangers of irregular migration and trafficking (pp. 10, 14).

³ This document is also available on the internet at <http://www.un.int/iom/IOM%20Perspectives%20and%20Experiences.pdf>.

- Addressing root causes of irregular migration and trafficking (p. 10).
- Providing direct assistance to trafficking victims and vulnerable migrants (pp. 10-11).
- **Facilitating Labour Migration**
 - Assisting governments seeking to promote the foreign employment of their nationals to develop effective mechanisms for managing labour migration and skills utilization – taking into consideration the needs of national and foreign labour markets, safeguards to protect migrant workers, and complementary strategies to alleviate the risk of brain drain (p. 11).
 - Supporting countries of destination with the selection of workers needed in particular sectors, and with their pre-departure orientation and passage (p. 11).
- **Increasing the Potential of Remittances**
 - Taking innovative measures to improve remittance transfer services (pp. 14-15).
 - Working to enhance the development impact of remittances (pp. 15-16).
- **Encouraging Skill and Knowledge Retention and Circulation**
 - Promoting skill and knowledge retention, addressing both pull and push factors (pp. 16-17).
 - Facilitating temporary, permanent and virtual return of migrants (p. 17).
- **Engaging Migrants and Diasporas for the Development of Countries of Origin**
 - Helping governments build relationships with diasporas and provide incentives and opportunities for diasporas to contribute to development (pp. 18-19).
- **Improving Economic and Social Conditions in Areas of High Migration Pressure**
 - Working to improve local conditions in developing regions with high levels of employment and outbound migration (p. 19).
- **Capacity Building**
 - Assisting governments to develop their capacity to manage the multifaceted aspects of migration (a substantial part of IOM's USD 1.1 billion operational budget in 2005 was devoted to capacity building programmes) (p. 20).
- **Facilitating Inter-State Consultation and Cooperation**
 - At the regional level, actively promoting, supporting and participating in several regional consultative processes on migration (RCPs), and supporting cross-fertilization among RCPs (pp. 12, 20-21).
 - At the global level, supporting inter-state dialogue on migration (p. 22).
- **Developing Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Migration Issues**
 - Bringing together States, international organizations, civil society and the private sector for informal and non-binding consultations on migration through the *International Dialogue on Migration (IDM)* (pp. 22-23).
- **Enhancing Inter-agency Consultation and Cooperation**
 - Actively engaging with other agencies on migration issues at the regional and global levels, including through the Global Migration Group (pp. 22-23).