

---

16 November 2006

---

Population Division  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations Secretariat  
New York, 20-21 November 2006

*International Organization for Migration (IOM)*



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

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)<sup>1</sup> 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

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 in

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

- Addressing root causes of irregular migration and trafficking (p. 10).
- Providing direct assistance to trafficking victims and vulnerable migrants (pp. 10-11).
  
- 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).
  
- Taking innovative measures to improve remittance transfer services (pp. 14-15).
- Working to enhance the development impact of remittances (pp. 15-16).