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PARTNERSHIPS FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

Our NGO Committee on Migration, in agreement with the Statement of the Civil Society Days at the recent Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, welcomes the progress made in both process and content, particularly on: first, the importance of more engagement between Civil Society and Governments in discussion of issues, input into policies and practices, and joint partnerships; and second, more emphasis on development, especially on the human dimension.

As we move forward toward the informal thematic debate on migration and development in the United Nations General Assembly on 19 May 2011, and to the 2011 GFMD under the Presidency of Switzerland, we look forward to a strong focus on people-centered development and a recognition that migration, despite its contributions to countries of origin and destination, is not and cannot be used as a substitute for development.

People-Centered Development in the Context of Migration

All too often, human development has been defined purely in terms of economic growth, without regard to the dignity and human rights of individual persons. We, however, concur wholeheartedly with the view expressed in the *GMG Handbook on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning**, which focuses the definition of human development on improved quality of life and expansion of the range of opportunities open to individuals. Pursuing human development means “pursuing all avenues to improve a person’s opportunities and freedoms”, including those which improve a person’s life, preserve his/her political, social, and economic human rights, and enhance the opportunity for an individual to provide for family needs and family cohesion. Such avenues would include availability of jobs, expanded social services, reduced vulnerability to risk, and political participation.

*See: Global Migration Group (GMG) Handbook entitled *Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning: A handbook for policy makers and practitioners* (IOM: 2010), p. 10

Strategies to ensure human development must be people-centered, an approach which, for example, ensures the migrant access to education, basic health services, portable certifications, portable social security, and gender equality. Such initiatives encourage both professional and human growth. Furthermore, people-centered development must ensure that migrants have *choice* to migrate or not to migrate.

To further this enterprise, in the following sections we:

- Summarize our Committee’s position, in concurrence with that of Civil Society at the 2010 GFMD, on the most important tasks to promote people-centered development;
- Give examples of partnership projects that our Committee has solicited from our member networks, that have focused on the human development of migrants, and that have helped ensure that migration is voluntary;
- List some strategies, such as those which have been discussed by the Global Migration Group, to promote human development.

Partnerships for Human Mobility and Human Development

- NGOs with Local communities and Local Governments

Strategies to Promote People-Centered Development

As the Preface of the GMG Handbook states ****, mainstreaming migration is different from mainstreaming other issues. Fundamentally, this is because migration is about human beings. It is vital, therefore, that migrants' human rights be placed at the center of any migration mainstreaming exercise.

Policy recommendations promoting human development include:

- Labor policies grounded in human and labor rights and targeted labor market policies, such as vocational and skills training, educational programmes, and job search assistance (p. 61);

****See especially Part 3: Compilation of programme experiences on migration and development.

- Gender sensitive social protection policies;
- The conclusion of social security agreements that ensure the portability of social security entitlements (pp. 74-75);
- Access to health services, including access to maternal health services; migrant inclusive health policies (p.80);
- Interventions that build up the educational infrastructure and provide migrants with access to education, especially children (86-87); Tertiary education policies that promote skills accumulation and facilitate knowledge transfer (90-91);
- Trade policies and agreements that incorporate respect for migrants' rights (109); the promotion of trade that guarantees a fair percentage of profits returning to producers and workers in the Global South (such as Fair Trade mechanisms) sufficient to support people-centered development; and the ending of economic policies such as agricultural and other subsidies in industrialized nations that undercut the viability of development initiatives in the Global South and tend to exacerbate the root causes of migration;
- Agreements that address the issue of migrants' rights (109);
- Environmental policies that minimize forced displacement and promote long-term sustainable development (110).

In the course of four meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, 2007-2010, it has been widely recognized that migration can be a very positive phenomenon, making important contributions to development in sending and receiving countries, as well as countries of transit. The nature of this development, however, must be carefully defined, and mechanisms must be put into place to ensure that it be understood not only in economic terms, in which human beings are seen merely as the engines of economic enrichment, but as a complex human phenomenon involving the personal dignity and human rights of individual migrants and their families. Such mechanisms must include opportunities for education, decent employment, health, personal and subsistence security, and full understanding and participation in the political processes that affect their existence.

We therefore respectfully urge Member States to devise and put into place people-centered development policies and practices that will protect and promote the well being of migrants, their families, and the societies worldwide to which they contribute the richness of their work.