Human Development, Human Security and Migration

Side event to the NGO Informal Interactive Hearings on the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD)

“IOM’s Role in Promoting a Human-Centered Approach to Migration and Development”

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Introduction

- Please allow me to start off by thanking all the panellists for their interventions, thanking you all for coming and to the Center for Migration Studies for jointly convening this side event on human development, human security and migration as we look towards the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD).
- From discussions we have had in the course of this morning and the remarks of the panel, it is clear that humane, safe and orderly migration allows for the best possible human development outcomes.
- As the global lead agency on migration, IOM knows from first-hand operational experience – working with migrants, communities on the ground in countries of origin and destination, governments, the private sector and civil society organizations – the importance of a human centred approach to migration that puts the individual men, women and children who migrate and are affected by migration at the heart of migration and development policy.
- This perspective promotes the safeguarding of the human rights and well-being of migrants, and ensures that migration translates into secure, productive experiences that contribute positively and sustainably to human development.
- In giving effect to this approach we need to make a collective conscious effort to look beyond the rhetoric on the benefits and challenges associated with migration, to the human beings with dreams, goals and aspirations for themselves, their families and the communities they are part of be it in countries of origin, destination or in the process of their transit.
- IOM – as an inter-governmental organization (IGO) with 151 member states, more than 440 field locations across 175 countries and over 60 years of operational experience – is of the firm belief that humane, safe and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.
- In keeping with this, IOM is committed to the pursuit of human security throughout IOM programming in the various service areas including humanitarian responses to migrants in crisis, labour migration, migrant health, capacity building initiatives, counter-trafficking, diaspora engagement and more broadly IOM’s overall support to global processes including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the HLD; and regional processes – specifically the regional consultative processes on migration (RCPs).
The Work of IOM including through the UN Trust Fund on Human Security

- The IOM Constitution explicitly recognizes the crucial link between migration and economic, social and cultural development, as well as the right to freedom of movement.
- IOM’s experience with the UN Trust Fund on Human Security has highlighted the added value of the human security approach that is based not only on individual personal security but also on addressing community security as a whole.
- The focus is above all on putting people at the centre, and not on simply providing assistance for immediate needs or imposing solutions on people as beneficiaries. It is on empowering the people, and looking at improving the human condition. Its comprehensiveness encourages a deeper and broader analysis of the root causes and consequences of threats in people’s everyday lives. Besides encouraging partnerships within the UN system, it encourages cooperation with local authorities, civil society, different community actors and media, leading to a more sustainable, comprehensive and integrated approach to helping vulnerable groups.
- IOM has implemented 10 UN Trust Fund projects with a total value of USD 8.5 million in Costa Rica, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Moldova, Nicaragua, Panama, and Thailand in recent years. And in doing so, we have learned a great deal and influenced the way we approach people and issues.
- In Mexico IOM is leading a project involving 8 UN agencies, government and civil society stakeholders to improve the human security for up to 300,000 vulnerable migrants in transit, including irregular migrants, refugees, victims of trafficking or kidnapping, women, elderly people and unaccompanied children. Irregular migration through Mexico is an increasingly complicated, costly and risky endeavour due to high smuggling costs and the involvement of organized criminal groups. While the Government of Mexico and others are taking actions to address these concerns, the magnitude of the problem requires a comprehensive and people-centered response in order to coordinate solutions and strengthen the capacities of relevant institutions while including as well as empowering the people and communities involved. The project focuses on the shelters located on the migrants’ routes in southern Mexico, on strengthening government institutions and civil society capacities, and on promoting peaceful co-existence between migrants and local communities. The added value of the human security approach is that it provides a comprehensive framework to address the multiple issues and threats raised by the mixed flows.
- IOM has been working with the Government of Moldova, civil society actors, UNDP, UNFPA and OSCE to protect and empower victims of human trafficking and domestic violence through a two-pronged approach: from the bottom-up in partnership with relevant community-level governmental officials, civil society actors, and media to empower communities and individuals, and from the top-down in partnership with appropriate governmental institutions to strengthen the protection system. This holistic human security approach has resulted in the expansion of available services to vulnerable groups - victims or potential victims of trafficking and domestic violence.
- In Kenya, IOM is working with UNDP, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, ILO, OCHA and other partners, including CSOs to help vulnerable pastoralist groups under threat by climate change. The project is empowering local communities and building on local capacities to preserve human dignity, reduce inter-communal, cross-border tensions and promote social and economic development, with a particular focus on youth. Activities to promote peace building sensitization for co-existence and environmental stewardship among the youth include sports for peace - such as bicycle peace runs and matches - and tree planting exercises. IOM is also raising awareness and building the capacity of local and provincial authorities, immigration officers and partners on risk
factors of irregular migration, how to promote safe migration, and how to use safe migration as an adaptation strategy.

Concluding Remarks

- In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that IOM’s approach to migration governance promotes humane, safe and orderly migration that is cognizant of national sovereignty on population movements as well as States’ expectations that migrants will respect host country culture and laws; whilst simultaneously recognizing people’s age-old desire to migrate to improve their lives as well as the expectation that their rights will be respected.
- In rationalizing these aspects IOM strongly believes in promoting multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue, cooperation and partnerships that promote human security, human development and benefits migrants and societies, encompassing countries of origin, transit and destination – without losing sight of the human beings at the centre of this equation.
- IOM believes that the 2013 HLD represents an important opportunity to advance dialogue and cooperation on these areas at local, national, regional and global levels, again emphasizing that we keep the rights and well-being of migrants at the centre of the debate. We have to this end developed six policy recommendations for the HLD which you will find amongst the documents that have been distributed to you, namely the need to:
  - Improve public perceptions of migrants;
  - Factor migration into development planning;
  - Protect the human rights of all migrants;
  - Manage migration in crisis situations;
  - Enhance evidence building and knowledge based policymaking on migration; and
  - Promote policymaking and institutional coherence.
- The time is ripe for a more human narrative of migrants and migration to come to the fore and in the formulation as well as implementation of policies that safeguard the human rights and well-being of migrants, and ensures that migration translates into sustainable human development.
- Thank you once again for coming to this event and looking forward to fruitful discussions with you in the course of this event and throughout the afternoon.