



Engaging Expatriates in Setting the Development Agenda

IOM Morocco and UNDP Organize a Special Session as Part of National Consultations on the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda

Morocco – On 13th March, as part of the national consultations on the UN post-2015 development agenda (www.worldwewant2015.org), IOM and UNDP Morocco organized a special session which allowed Moroccan expatriates to contribute to the process.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in 2000 were brief, to the point and have served the purpose of galvanizing unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest. As was the case for other issues addressed in the Millennium Declaration, migration did not become a part of this architecture, even though it indirectly affects fulfillment of several MDGs, such as poverty eradication through migrant remittances and, given the number and circumstances of female migrants, issues of gender parity.

After several years of MDG implementation, through work done by UNDP on MDG bottlenecks in particular, but also in general through a series of UN and intergovernmental processes, it has been demonstrated that Migration and Human mobility is an important developmental factor in its own right and has now been identified as a mega-trend of the 21st century. For the first time in modern history one in seven on the planet is an internal or an international migrant.

An online discussion took place ahead of the meeting on www.maghribcom.gov.ma, a web platform launched in 2013 by the Ministry of Moroccans Residing Abroad, to encourage the broadest possible participation by Moroccan expatriates.

The expatriate discussion produced an interesting set of issues, not only for the Kingdom of Morocco, but other countries of emigration. These included the need to improve consular services and the services for migrants who return home to their country of origin, particularly also the



need to develop online services; facilitate the process of public service and minimize bureaucracy, waiting time and intermediaries; establish an education system open to the outside world; and, improve policies on good governance.

The consultations reflected on these points in addition to many more fundamental issues. Participants were invited to "dream" and think outside the box. Some highlighted the need not to limit the discussion on migration and development to economic development, but also to include political, democratic and cultural development. Participants also felt there was a strong need for more freedom of mobility; that everyone should have the right to leave his/her country of origin and to return at a time of their choosing.

When it came to return, the challenge of retirees and the need for the portability of social security and pension was seen as a major requirement for the post 2015 agenda. The participants also felt that moving towards a better and more humane perception of migrants was a 'dream' objective and that media should convey a more accurate and positive image of migrants and their contribution to the development of their country of residence.

The role of the migrant who returns to their country of origin should be highly valued. With accumulated education and experience abroad, migrants can play a significant leverage by sharing know-how, their knowledge and financial means for the development of the country.

For Morocco this discussion was particularly pertinent, as the approximately five million Moroccans residing outside the Kingdom play an important role in the development of the country, not least in terms of the remittances that they send home. In 2011, Moroccans abroad sent home over USD 6.5 billion – the equivalent of USD 220 for each of Morocco's 30 million-strong population. Morocco ranked third in Africa in terms of remittance receipts per capita.

Although migration and human mobility does not easily translate into a development goal it is clear that progress on a global partnership on Migration and Development between sending and receiving states would be an important step towards creating the much sought after "international enabling environment" for human development in the coming decades.

For more information, please contact AnkeStrauss Email: astrauss@iom.int

IOM MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: Flash Report

Tel: +20 2 273 651 40/1 • Fax: +20 2 273 651 39 • rocairo@iom.int • <http://www.iom.int>

