



# Facilitating Preparations for the Second UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development

*IOM, UNESCWA, and the League of Arab States convene a Regional Consultative Meeting for the Arab Region*

**June 4-5, The Arab League Headquarters, Cairo** – A Regional Consultative Meeting on International Migration and Development in the Arab Region was convened by IOM's Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, the UN Economic & Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA), and the League of Arab States.

The event, attended by over 70 participants, including representatives from 15 countries in the Arab region, was held in preparation for the UN General Assembly's second High Level Dialogue (HLD) on Migration and Development, due to take place in October 2013.

The meeting engaged Arab state representatives to work towards a common understanding on current and future migration and development challenges and opportunities for the region, as well as the actions required at the national, regional and global levels to maximize the benefits and minimize the potential negative impacts of migration. Other participants, including civil society actors, academics, and international organizations, contributed to the discussions, presented on key issues and provided expert support.

The two days were structured around a series of focused roundtable sessions reflecting the themes of the HLD; a number of important issues relating to migration and development in the region were discussed. Participants recognized the uniqueness of the region in comprising some of the largest destination countries for foreign labour as well as some of the most important countries of origin and noted the role of foreign workers in contributing to regional development as well as the role of Arab communities abroad contributing to develop-

ment through financial, socio-cultural and ideational remittances. At the same time, the potential for greater intra-regional labour mobility to enhance productivity and address regional labour market challenges, such as youth unemployment, was acknowledged.

Participants note that, while in the majority of cases the migrant experience is a positive one, some migrants originating from the region, transiting through the region, or working within the Arab region are faced with hardships and injustices ranging from sub-standard working conditions, to non-payment of wages, to illegal recruitment fees to, in the worst of cases, human trafficking. These issues are set against the backdrop of the great political transformations taking place in the region which are creating new opportunities and challenges for migration management and development.

The final session was dedicated to agreeing upon key findings and areas of future action. It re-affirmed a continued commitment on the part of Arab states to work together on challenges and opportunities relating to migration and development in the region through the drafting of a joint statement to be delivered to the second HLD in October.

Amongst the outcomes of this final session was the expression of a desire on the part of Arab states to establish a non-binding, regional consultative process to serve as a forum for continued information exchange, dia-



logue and collaboration on issues related to migration and development, within the framework of the League of Arab States and supported by IOM and UNESCWA.

As the global lead agency on migration, IOM has been requested by its Member States and by the UN General Assembly to participate in and contribute to the HLD, together with its UN partners. IOM views the second HLD in October 2013 as an important opportunity to improve the governance of migration, as well as the migration-development nexus in particular, at local, national, regional and global levels, while keeping the rights and well-being of migrants at the centre of the debate.

Specifically, IOM would welcome: Recognition of the contribution of migrants and migration to all three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental); a renewed commitment to protection of the human rights of all migrants; a systematic inclusion of migration issues in the post-2015 UN development agenda; a strengthened Global Migration Group, including greater IOM leadership; and, due recognition of IOM's role as the global lead agency on migration.

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