



IOM and the Government of Morocco organize a conference on the development of a new migrant integration policy

10-11 March- IOM, in collaboration with the Ministry of Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs, organized an international conference in Rabat entitled “*The New Migration Policy: Which Integration Strategy for Morocco?*”. The two day conference, which brought together over 200 participants representing national institutions, Moroccan civil society and diplomatic corps accredited in Morocco, aimed to facilitate dialogue on and develop optimal policies for the integration of migrants in Morocco.

The conference, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, complimented the Moroccan government’s efforts to implement a new migration policy which includes, among other objectives, the regularization of several categories of migrants in Morocco. The Moroccan Government began to introduce this new policy in response to the National Human Rights Council’s thematic report on the situation of migrants and refugees in Morocco, which was published in September 2013, and King Mohammed VI’s strategic guidance to improve the situation of undocumented migrants in Morocco.

In her opening remarks, Anke Strauss, Chief of Mission of IOM Morocco, highlighted that “successful integration is a two-way process involving mutual adaption of the migrant and the host society.” The conference went on to address factors that have been identified as crucial to the safe and productive integration of migrants worldwide and are especially pertinent in Morocco.

International experts shared their experiences and engaged in meaningful dialogue with national stakeholders in three priority areas: (i) Access to basic services and human rights, specifically healthcare, decent work, and housing for all migrants; (ii) Recognition and acceptance of migrants’ cultural capital; and, (iii) The important roles that



civil society actors and governments in countries of origin perform in facilitating the integration process. Researchers and experts from Belgium, France, Italy, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Spain, the United States and IOM Headquarters participated in the conference.

The second day of the conference provided participants with a forum to discuss in more depth a variety of issues concerning the smooth integration of migrants in Morocco. These included (i) the need to involve local, national and regional actors in the development of a successful integration policy; (ii) the crucial role of civil societies; (iii) the need to assure synergies and collaboration between all relevant stakeholders; and, (iv) the need to avoid the creation of parallel migrant communities and social segregation in Morocco.

Participants underlined the importance of migrants learning and speaking the local language, having access to basic

services and education, developing programmes that facilitate cultural exchange between migrants and host communities, and the promotion of sustainable livelihood initiatives for migrants as important steps for the development of the Moroccan policy.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Anis Birou, Minister of Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs committed to ensuring a proper follow-up to all issues addressed in the conference. He also stated that a comprehensive report including recommendations derived from the conference will be widely disseminated to relevant counterparts. The minister stressed the need for continued dialogue and consultation between all partners for the successful development and implementation of migrant integration policies. He equally underlined that this progressive Moroccan integration policy is a long-term strategy that aims to have a meaningful impact on countless future generations of migrants living in Morocco.

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