



IOM • OIM

International Organization for Migration

the migration agency

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IOM is an intergovernmental organization established in 1951.

IOM is:

- 125 Members and 94 observers including 18 States and 76 global and regional IGOs and NGOs;
- More than 440 field locations;
- Over 6,600 staff working on more than 2,000 projects;
- US\$ 1 billion expenditures in 2008.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

As an intergovernmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to:

- Assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration;
- Advance understanding of migration issues;
- Encourage social and economic development through migration;
- Uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.



H.E. Minister of Manpower and Migration Aisha Abdel-Hady and IOM Officials during a technical meeting in Cairo in November 2008 © IOM Cairo

Labour Migration from Egypt

Background

Egypt is a main source country of labour migrants, both for countries in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Europe and North America. According to official statistics, 3.9 million Egyptian nationals live abroad, representing approximately 5 percent of total population. Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Libya are the top three destinations for Egyptian migrants. In addition, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) approximately 340,000 Egyptians are living in OECD countries. Indeed, labour migration from Egypt is a complex phenomenon that has evolved over the past decades. Today, migration from Egypt can be permanent, temporary, seasonal and/or circular in nature. The skills composition of Egyptians abroad is also varied as labour migrants are both highly skilled and low skilled. Academic studies estimate that 4 percent of Egyptians who hold a university degree eventually migrate.

IOM Activities

IOM's Regional Office for the Middle East in Egypt continues to implement activities to assist the Government and other key stakeholders to facilitate regular labour migration, to the mutual benefit of Egypt and countries of destination as well as individual migrants. IOM continues to focus on a variety of issues in this field through research, dialogue with stakeholders, as well as activities to facilitate migration of Egyptians for work abroad.

Research Projects

IOM Cairo has been furthering understanding of labour migration and mobility dynamics in Egypt, as well as in the region. Under an ongoing initiative for 'Cooperation between IOM and Selected Countries of the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) on Human & Labour Mobility Management in the Arab Region', IOM is preparing a policy-oriented study on Labour Mobility Dynamics in the Arab World, aimed at generating policy reform and new initiatives for enhanced labour mobility management in the Arab region.

Dialogue Among Stakeholders

Over the course of 2008 and 2009, IOM Cairo has implemented a number of projects aimed at fostering dialogue between sending, transit and receiving countries on the opportunities offered by regular migration and contractual labour systems. Following up on the successful cooperation with the League of Arab States in 2008, IOM will organize a second "Arab Regional Expert Group Meeting" to discuss modalities of integrating human mobility issues into development policies in the Arab region and to present a unified Arab position during the Athens Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2009.



Under the aforementioned project on ‘Cooperation between IOM and Selected Countries of the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) on Human & Labour Mobility Management in the Arab Region’, IOM will enhance understanding of the dynamics of labour mobility in the Arab world and contribute to intra-regional efforts to better manage labour mobility by training 50 relevant government officials from the region on labour mobility management.

Building on the success of roundtables conducted in 2006 and 2007, IOM will work together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Institute for Diplomatic Studies to raise awareness among young Egyptian diplomats, academics and staff from relevant Egyptian Ministries on international migration issues. The focus in 2009 will be ‘The Challenges and Potentials of Skilled Migration’, including discussions on migration of skilled workers, brain-drain, maintaining links with the Diaspora and the impact of the global economic crisis on migration in Egypt. Moreover, the project “Promoting Dialogue and Information Sharing on Labour Migration between Indonesia and Malaysia, Singapore and the Middle East” aims to support the Government of Indonesia to better address its current and future labour migration challenges. A study tour of Indonesian authorities to Bahrain and Kuwait will enable direct interaction between relevant counterparts and enhance information sharing between these sending and receiving countries.

Facilitating Migration

Under the **Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS) Project**, first implemented in February 2001 and now in its second phase, IOM Cairo continues to support the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (MME), and particularly the Emigration and Egyptians Abroad Sector, to effectively manage regular migration flows from Egypt, as well as address the needs and safeguard the rights of departing Egyptian migrants and Egyptians abroad. Specifically, under this project, IOM has assisted the Government of Egypt to develop the IMIS database accessible via website to facilitate access to appropriate positions in the Italian labour market and other countries for Egyptian jobseekers and, simultaneously, to enhance the capacity of prospective employers in countries of destination to identify suitably qualified Egyptians to fill vacancies. The database currently holds approximately 15,000 CVs that have been validated by the MME and that are ready to be shared with potential foreign employers of Egyptian workers. Furthermore through the IMIS Project, IOM has engaged in the provision of technical assistance to enhance the capacity of the MME with regard to language, information technology, management and research. The project’s second phase will also aim to strengthen ties between Egyptians abroad and their homeland.

In addition, in 2008 officials from MME attended Steering Committee meetings for the project “**Sharing learning for a better migrating life (AENEAS)**”. Under this initiative, workshops were also held in Morocco, Italy and Egypt and covered Italian migration law and information systems, exploring prospects for stronger links with Egypt through the internet in order match market demands with available skills.

Finally, IOM is currently liaising with donor and MME to provide pre-departure orientation (PDO) to Europe-bound Egyptian migrant workers. The provision of pre-departure orientation will reduce anxiety on the part of the migrants by painting a more realistic picture of what awaits them. It will equip them with the skills and knowledge to deal with the unfamiliar, and help them shape attitudes towards life in their new society. In parallel, PDO will also provide an opportunity for the Ministry to establish links between the country of origin and the country of destination, as well as an opportunity for the receiving institutions to learn more about the culture and profile of these new members of their society.

For more information about IOM’s programs in labour migration in Egypt, please contact
Mr. Luigi Carta
lcarta@iom.int

RELEVANT LINKS
IOM Cairo www.egypt.iom.int
IMIS Project www.emigration.gov.eg/AboutUs/AboutIMISProject.aspx
IOM and Labour Migration
www.iom.int/jahia/page706.html