



THE SECRETARIAT

REGIONAL HEARING FOR THE AMERICAS

Mexico City, 16-17 May 2005

Summary Report

Introduction

On 16-17 May 2005, the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) organized a Hearing for the Americas in Mexico City, Mexico. The Mexico City Hearing was the fifth and last in a series of consultations that the Commission has held in all parts of the world in the course of 2004 and 2005. The Regional Hearings provide the Commission with an important opportunity to hear the views of a wide range of stakeholders and to gain insight into those migration issues which are of specific relevance to each region. The evidence collected during the Hearings will assist the Global Commission's to prepare its final report, which will be presented to the UN Secretary-General, states and other stakeholders in October 2005.

GCIM Co-chairs Mr. Jan Karlsson and Dr. Mamphela Ramphele presided over the event. The opening and closing sessions of the Hearing were addressed by the Hon. Luis Ernesto Derbez, Mexico's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Armando Salinas Torre, Vice-Minister for Migration, the Hon. Patricia Olamendi, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Commission members Prof. Francisco Alba, Dr. Mary Garcia Castro, Rev. Nicholas DiMarzio and the Hon. Sergio Marchi. The Executive Director of the Global Commission, Dr. Rolf K. Jenny, provided a summary of the Hearing's proceedings during the closing plenary session.

Some 150 people attended the Hearing in total, including officials from 18 countries, as well as eight of the Core Group of States which follows and supports the work of the Global Commission. A variety of international organizations, representatives of NGOs and human rights organizations, the private sector, the media, as well as research and policy institutes, were also present at the Hearing.

The Hearing took place both in plenary and in working panels that involved three different stakeholder groups: (1) governments; (2) regional bodies, international organizations and experts; and (3) civil society, including NGOs, the private sector and the media.

The agenda of the Hearing covered four principal topics:

- I. The economic dimensions of international migration
- II. Irregular migration;
- III. Migrants in society and the human rights of migrants; and,
- IV. The governance of international migration.

This summary report reflects the general content of the discussion in both working panels and plenary. No statements in the report are attributed to individual participants or delegations.

International migration in the Americas

In the course of the Hearing, participants pointed out that migration has played a central role in the development of the Americas. Historically, the continent was largely populated by the arrival of soldiers, settlers and slaves from other parts of the world, displacing a large proportion of the indigenous population in the process. In more recent times, the hemisphere has continued to witness the arrival of migrants and refugees from other parts of the world, as well as large-scale movements of people within and from the region. As a result of this migratory history, many countries in the region are ethnically and culturally diverse and are connected to other parts of the world by means of transnational social networks.

At present, the most important migratory movement in the Americas is to be found in the migration of low-skilled workers from Latin America (i.e. Mexico, Central and South America) to the United States. A growing proportion of these people are women and the majority - an estimated eight to twelve million in total - are in an irregular situation. By way of contrast, those people migrating from the Caribbean to North America tend to be better educated and more highly skilled. In addition, both the United States and Canada continue to admit significant numbers of people from Africa, Asia and other parts of the world through their immigration and refugee resettlement programmes.

In recent years, a growing number of migrants and asylum seekers have arrived in Latin America from other parts of the world, many of them hoping to make their way to the USA and Canada. At the same time, people have been leaving South America and migrating to Europe, either to find work, to seek asylum or to reclaim the nationality of their parents and grandparents. The complexity of migration in the region is such that many states in the Americas act simultaneously as countries of origin, destination and transit.

Significantly, no large-scale refugee camps are to be found in the Americas, a major change since the 1980s and early 1990s, when armed conflict forced many thousands of people to seek refuge in Mexico and the states of Central America. Following the peace agreements that enabled those conflicts to be resolved, the majority of refugees repatriated to their country of origin, while a smaller number, most notably in Mexico, integrated in their country of asylum. Most of the people displaced by the current conflict in Colombia have remained within their own country, but growing numbers are now making their way across the border to countries such as Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela.

I. Economic dimensions of international migration

There was a general consensus amongst Hearing participants that the pattern of international migration in the Americas has been strongly affected by globalization, a process that is characterized by the growing integration and interdependence of societies and economies in different parts of the world, including increased inter-state flows of capital, goods and people. Participants observed that the impact of the globalization process in the Americas had hitherto been uneven, and that the movement of people from the southern towards the northern part of the region was largely explicable in terms of economic disparities and differential opportunities.

Labour supply and demand

The Hearing was informed by several participants that the economies of Latin America have performed reasonably well in recent years and have generated a considerable degree of new wealth. But that wealth has been concentrated amongst a relatively small proportion of the population and has not generated the jobs and other livelihoods required by the majority of the population.

According to some speakers, the economic reforms which underpinned the region's successful economic performance have also led to job losses, reduced wages and lower standards of social protection for workers. At the same time, many small farmers are finding it increasingly difficult to compete on a global market and to make a living from the land. As a result, many are making their way to urban centres and subsequently moving north in their effort to find work. In this respect, it was pointed out, the distinction usually made between internal and international migration is a somewhat artificial one: both are part of a single migratory process.

Looking specifically at migration from Mexico, one expert pointed out that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was intended to create additional jobs in the country and thereby limit the need for people to move to the United States. In fact, the expert pointed out, the scale of migration from Mexico has actually increased, and additional research is required to identify the reasons for this trend. Such research, it was suggested, could have important implications for an understanding of the relationship between trade and migration in other parts of the world.

Other participants reminded the Hearing that the movement of people from the south to north of the Americas is not just a question of labour supply, but also of labour demand. Despite its current downturn, the economy of the United States is able to absorb large numbers of migrant workers who are willing to provide employers with the cheap and flexible labour they need. According to some speakers, certain sectors of the US economy, most notably agriculture, would find it very difficult to function without such labour. Looking to the future, it was suggested that the growing need for domestic workers and care-givers in the USA would create an additional demand for migrant labour, especially migrant women.

Participants also drew attention to the continued migration of highly skilled migrants from the Caribbean to North America, pointing out that the health and education services of several island states have been left critically short of doctors, nurses and teachers.

Many participants in the Hearing expressed the opinion that south-to-north migration in the Americas would continue to take place on a substantial scale until there was a significant equalization of job opportunities and incomes in the two parts of the region. In the words of one speaker, "people without jobs will move to the places where jobs are available." At the same time, experts present at the Hearing observed that in the short term at least, economic growth might enable larger numbers of people to leave their own country and to look for opportunities elsewhere.

Migrant remittances

One participant in the Hearing summarized the economic dimension of international migration in the Americas by observing that "people move north by millions and money flows back south by billions." Those "billions" take the form of US (and to a lesser extent Canadian) dollars, sent home by migrants to support the households and communities they have left behind.

Exactly how many billions of dollars are remitted by migrants in the Americas remains a subject of some speculation. According to one speaker, remittances are "the least known aspect of globalization." While many efforts have been made to improve the quality of data available, sample surveys are constrained by the fact that migrants, especially those who are in an irregular situation, are reluctant to answer questionnaires and to reveal information about the money they send home. As a result, only a limited amount of information is available in relation to who sends remittances, how those remittances are transferred, who receives them and how they are spent.

Even so, it is clear that remittances play a very important part in the economy of many states in the region. According to one estimate, some \$16 billion were remitted to Mexico alone in 2004, while Latin America is thought to receive some \$50 billion in total each year, a sum far greater than the combined total of Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment.

In an extensive discussion about remittances and economic development in countries of origin, the Hearing reached a number of general conclusions. First, remittances are and should remain a private form of money. They should not be appropriated by states.

Second, while remittances are certainly used to meet the immediate consumption needs of recipient households, they are also used for longer-term purposes. A particularly interesting phenomenon in the United States has been the establishment of 'home town associations' that allows migrant workers to support the construction of schools, health centers and infrastructural assets in their place of origin.

Third, the Hearing concluded that migrant remittances *per se* cannot act as a basis for sustainable development. To maximize the impact of remittances, both migrants and the households that migrants have left behind need better information and advice on how to reduce the cost of transferring remittances, how to open a bank account and how to establish a small business.

At the same time, national and local governments in countries of origin have a responsibility to create a climate that is conducive to economic growth and investment. According to some participants, there is also a need to ensure that communities which receive significant sums in migrant remittances do not become dependent upon them.

Fourth, the impact of migration on development is not limited to remittances. As a number of participants pointed out, migrants who have lived and worked abroad often gain skills and experiences which can be put to good use when they return to their country of origin. According to several speakers, seasonal and temporary migration programmes, which allow migrant workers to move on a regular basis between their country of origin and a destination country, are particularly advantageous in this respect.

II. Irregular migration

The Hearing concluded that every country in the Americas region was affected by the phenomenon of irregular migration, with people moving across international borders without official authorization in order to find work, to be reunited with members of their family or to seek asylum in another state.

A number of participants underlined the importance of terminology, pointing out that 'irregular migrant' and 'illegal migrant' are pejorative concepts which fail to take account of the fact that a human being cannot be 'irregular' or 'illegal'. They also observed that many people initially move from one country to another with the required authorization, but subsequently overstay in their country of destination.

Generalizations

According to some speakers, too many generalizations are made about irregular migration in the Americas. One expert pointed out that a significant degree of attention has been given to the reinforcement of the USA's border with Mexico, symbolized by the barrier that has been erected between the two countries in southern California. But once that border has been crossed, migrants in an irregular situation are treated with a considerable degree of tolerance and their contribution to the US economy is recognized. Pending US legislation, it was

suggested, will actually give more rights to people who have entered and remained in the country in an irregular manner.

Another expert challenged this interpretation, pointing to the overriding need of the US economy to retain its competitiveness by having access to a pool of cheap, flexible and unorganized migrant labour from Latin America.

The Hearing was also alerted to the need to avoid broad generalizations about human trafficking and smuggling in the Americas. Contrary to popular opinion, it was suggested, human trafficking does not only involve women and children and is not only undertaken for the purpose of sexual exploitation, while human smuggling is not always organized by large-scale criminal syndicates. Indeed, ‘mom and pop’ family networks play a significant role in enabling people to move to from one country to another without the necessary authorization.

Root causes

Participants also suggested that there was a need to understand why migrants chose to move in an irregular manner, citing the migration pressures that exist in many countries of origin, the absence of sufficient legal migration opportunities and the existence of a large social and commercial network that facilitates irregular migratory movements. Given the risks, dangers and costs involved, people would only choose to migrate in an irregular manner because they felt obliged to move away from particularly difficult circumstances.

While recognizing the root causes of the phenomenon, some participants in the Hearing pointed to the negative consequences of irregular migration. It made migrants themselves vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. It represented a challenge to state sovereignty and could also constitute a threat to state security and public order. Uncontrolled migration, it was pointed out, also undermined public confidence in official migration policies and could encourage the growth of xenophobic sentiments amongst host societies.

For these reasons, it was suggested, states should reinforce their borders, prosecute human smugglers and traffickers, strengthen their capacity to regulate migration and cooperate with each other more closely to prevent unauthorized cross-border movements of people and ensure the return of the migrants concerned.

In response to such statements, a number of other participants observed that irregular migration would not be eradicated by simply building barriers. The best approach was to address both the causes and consequences of the phenomenon simultaneously. According to one government, an integral part of such a comprehensive approach is the establishment of information programmes and media campaigns, designed to inform prospective migrants of the risks that they are taking by migrating in an irregular manner.

Regularization and return

As well as focusing on the issues of root causes and border control, the Hearing examined the role of regularization and return in addressing the issue of irregular migration. While little agreement was reached on the question of granting amnesties to migrants who are in an irregular situation, there was, as indicated earlier, broader consensus on the value of establishing temporary labour migration programmes as a means of balancing the supply of and demand for migrant labour.

Hearing participants were also in general agreement with regard to the return of migrants who have moved in an irregular manner, but differed with regard to the relative importance they placed on voluntary and involuntary return. While some speakers argued that compulsory removals were essential to uphold the rule of law and to demonstrate that states were able to regulate the movement of people across their borders, others pointed to the

damaging social and economic consequences associated with the arrival of migrants who had been removed from their country of destination.

Despite these differences of emphasis, the Hearing agreed on the need to ensure that removals and returns are carried out in a humane and dignified manner, and that steps are taken to ensure the full reintegration of the people concerned in their own country. In the absence of such measures, it was suggested, returning migrants could become a disruptive element in society and, feeling that they have nothing to lose, may well try to migrate in an irregular manner for a second time.

Finally, there was considerable support for the notion that irregular migration is a shared responsibility, involving countries of origin, transit and destination. In this context, there is a particular need to avert those situations in which one country dumps large numbers of migrants on the border of another state, without any effort to ensure that adequate facilities are available for their reception.

Transit migrants and asylum seekers

Many migrants in the Americas who move in an irregular manner do so over long distances, passing through several countries on their way to their final destination. According to one Mexican expert, the number of migrants transiting through the country has increased by 25 per cent in the past five years.

Such migrants are confronted with particularly difficult circumstances. They may run out of money during their journey and find themselves left in limbo. They may be apprehended by the authorities and placed in detention. They may be preyed upon by human traffickers and smugglers. Those who come from other parts of the world are unlikely to speak Spanish and may be subject to more discrimination and xenophobia than migrants from the region. Those who wish to submit a claim to refugee status may not have access to an effective asylum procedure.

There was a general recognition of the need for capacity-building measures, supported by donor states and international organizations, to address the situation of transit migrants in the Americas region. Several participants in the Hearing also suggested that regional migration processes (examined in a later section of this report) have an important role to play in ensuring that transit migration, and irregular migration more generally, are the subject of more effective inter-state cooperation and coordination. Finally, some speakers expressed concern about the tendency to incorporate irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the same policy discussion, and proposed that the issues of forced migration and economic migration be kept quite distinct.

III. Migrants in society and the human rights of migrants

Participants in the Hearing pointed out that Spanish-speaking migrants who move within Central and South America are generally able to communicate with the people around them, while those who move to the United States are able to join a very large and increasingly dispersed Hispanic population. These linguistic affinities play a significant role in enabling migrants to adjust to their new society.

Speakers also pointed out that the situation of migrants in US society is greatly assisted by the deregulated nature of the economy and flexibility of the labour market. While they may be obliged to work for low wages, most migrants, including those in an irregular situation, are able to find jobs.

In contrast to the USA's 'laissez-faire' approach to migrants in society, participants observed that Canada maintains a wide range of integration programmes for migrants who are admitted to the country through its immigration and refugee resettlement programmes. Canada also places particular emphasis on access to speedy and affordable citizenship as a means of promoting migrant integration.

Migrants and countries of origin

Participants in the Hearing observed that international migration has important consequences for the migrant's relationship with her or his country of origin. Despite the growth of cheap transport and communications facilities, migrants can become alienated from their countries of origin after living abroad for several years. Adult migrants may lose the right or the interest required to vote in their country's election, while second generation migrants may not be able to speak the language of their parents.

In countries of origin, households and communities may benefit substantially from the remittances they receive, but may also have to cope with the long-term absence of working-age women and men. According to some participants, communities that are dominated by the elderly and the young are prone to experience particular social and psychological problems. According to this perspective, the money gained from migrant remittances comes at a very high human cost to countries of origin.

Protecting migrant rights

The Hearing considered at length the human rights dimensions of international migration, with civil society representatives playing a particularly active role in this discussion. There was a broad consensus that all migrants must be able to exercise their fundamental human rights and to be treated in accordance with the principle of human dignity, irrespective of their legal status. Speakers also pointed out that in some parts of the Americas region, even migrants with a legal status are vulnerable to human rights abuses.

The Hearing witnessed a clear division of opinion with respect to the value of the 1990 Migrant Workers Convention. While some governments and civil society organizations strongly supported the 1990 Convention and urged states to ratify it as quickly as possible, other governments told the Hearing that they did not intend to sign the 1990 Convention. Explaining their decision, these governments referred to the additional rights that the 1990 Convention appears to confer upon irregular migrants, as well as the 1990 Convention's emphasis on non-discrimination, which prevents states from giving different entitlements to permanent and temporary migrants.

A number of speakers suggested that in view of the current impasse on the 1990 Convention, complementary means of protecting migrant rights had to be used more effectively. Several participants commended the work of the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, and called on states to support that function more generously. Others suggested that the treaty bodies established to monitor the implementation of the UN's human rights conventions could be used to examine individual complaints and thereby challenge the culture of impunity often associated with the violation of migrant rights.

Country of origin responsibilities

The Hearing considered the role of countries of origin in protecting the rights of citizens who have moved abroad. There was widespread agreement that states have a responsibility to defend the welfare of their nationals, wherever they are to be found. But there was also recognition that smaller and poorer states may not have the resources required to fulfill this function effectively.

Some speakers pointed out that migrant protection should also be regarded as a *quid pro quo* for the remittances that migrants send back to their own country, and in this respect commended Mexico for the resources its commits to the task. Particular attention was drawn to the Mexican government's practice of issuing a 'consular matricula' to migrants living in the USA, a document which allows people in an irregular situation to open a bank account, to acquire a drivers license and to have proof of their identity and nationality.

Gender and migrant women

Many participants emphasized the need to approach the issue of migrant rights in a gender-sensitive manner, taking due account of the special needs of women in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Speakers pointed out that women often choose to migrate – and to migrate alone – because of the discrimination they experience in their own country. While in transit, migrant women are particularly vulnerable, and are often obliged to provide sexual services in order to meet their basic needs and to find a way round the border controls they encounter. As a result, such women are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

In destination countries, migrant women may be subject to psychological and physical violence from male members of the migrant community, especially in situations where gender roles are changing and men feel under threat from the empowerment that women can experience when they leave a patriarchal society. Participants also pointed out that the labour performed by migrant women is often menial and marginalized, limiting the extent to which they are empowered by the experience of migration. To address this situation, it was suggested, more emphasis should be placed on the provision of education and literacy training to migrant women.

Human trafficking

Human trafficking was identified as an important and troubling issue in the Americas region, although opinions differed with respect to the extent that the problem should be regarded and addressed as a migration issue or a human rights issue. There was, however, a broad consensus that a three-pronged approach to trafficking is required, involving the protection of victims, the prosecution of perpetrators and the elimination of the demand for the services provided by trafficked people, such as prostitution and forced labour.

With regard to the third of these prongs, participants suggested that judicial processes, information campaigns and the 'naming and shaming' of individuals and enterprises exploiting the victims of trafficking could all contribute to a reduction in the scale of the phenomenon. At the same time, several speakers pointed to the trauma and danger that victims of trafficking often experience when they are asked to testify in court, and underlined the importance of providing them with appropriate protection, support and counseling.

The problem of xenophobia

A number of speakers suggested that heightened concerns over state security and public order in the post-9.11 period had jeopardized the rights of migrants in the Americas, especially those in an irregular situation and those originating from parts of the world that are associated with international terrorism.

Civil society organizations participating in the Hearing warned that practices such as racial profiling and random checks on migrants using public transport had the effect of 'criminalizing' migrants. As well as encouraging migrants to go underground, such practices also reinforced xenophobic sentiments within host societies, thereby making the process of integration a more difficult one.

A number of specific proposals were made in relation to these problems. First, participants placed considerable emphasis on the need for capacity-building initiatives, enabling border guards, police officers and other representatives of the state to be properly trained in human rights and refugee protection principles, thereby setting an example to the rest of society.

Second, there was a broad acknowledgment of the important role that the media plays in influencing public perceptions of migrants. To encourage more objective and responsible reporting by the media, it was suggested that civil society institutions should develop a closer relationship with journalists, introducing them to individual migrants and accompanying them to countries of origin so that they could gain a better understanding of the reasons why people choose to migrate.

Third, participants emphasized the need to promote social interaction between migrants and other members of society at the local level, where the process of integration takes place. The physical segregation of migrants and other communities, it was suggested, is a recipe for social disharmony, especially in situations where ethnic differences are matched by significant disparities in standards of living.

IV. The governance of international migration

The notion of governance refers to the sum of the many ways in which individuals and institutions, both public and private, manage their common affairs and take cooperative action. In the field of migration, governance takes place at the national, regional and global levels.

The national level

Participants in the Hearing identified a number of weaknesses in the governance of international migration at the national level and made recommendations with respect to each of them.

First, the Hearing agreed on the need for states to formulate and implement coherent migration policies. At the moment, it was pointed out, most Central American states do not have such policies, although more progress has been made in this area in South America.

Second, participants concluded that there was a need for close coordination between the different ministries that have an interest and involvement in migration issues, including those responsible for development, trade, labour, health, social affairs and security. Migration, the Hearing concluded, is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, and cannot be effectively addressed by a single governmental body.

Third, the Hearing recognized that governments should engage in continuous dialogue with a wide range of civil society representatives, including NGOs, human rights organizations, chambers of commerce and trade unions, so as to ensure that their migration policies address the concerns of these different actors. NGO representatives at the meeting expressed particular concern with respect to the limited access they had to government, and informed the states present that “you have nothing to fear from us.”

Finally, participants also placed considerable emphasis on the need for additional capacity-building at the national level, with the support of international organizations and the more prosperous countries of the region. The Hearing concluded that civil servants, border guards and police officers should be provided with additional training so that they have a better grasp of migration issues and are fully aware of their responsibilities under international, regional and national law.

The Hearing also agreed that additional resources were also required for the purposes of research, data collection, monitoring and evaluation. In too many cases, it was agreed, policymakers were working in the dark, lacking a solid body of evidence on important issues such as migrant numbers and characteristics, migration trends, the flow of remittances, the integration and impact of migrants in society, and the outcome of government interventions. Without such information, participants observed, the formulation and implementation of effective migration policies would always prove to be difficult.

The regional level

The states of the Americas are involved in a number of different Regional Consultative Migration Processes, and the value of these initiatives was widely acknowledged. The largest movements of people are currently taking place within, rather than to or from the region, and it was therefore appropriate for governance initiatives to take place at this level.

Regional Migration processes, it was agreed, provide a useful mechanism for the exchange of information, ideas and experiences. They help to build confidence between the officials and countries concerned, and thereby establish a basis for practical cooperation on the ground. The expertise that international organizations such as IOM and UNHCR brought to these processes was also highly valued.

At the same time, certain reservations were expressed in relation to these processes. A number of governments observed that participation in Regional Migration Processes can be time-consuming and costly, placing a strain on ministries and departments that are limited in their capacity. As far as the NGOs were concerned, the existing regional processes were not sufficiently inclusive and generally had very limited civil society participation. While agreeing that these processes had reinforced cooperation and coordination between states, the NGOs suggested that such cooperation and coordination was generally manifested in relation to border control and enforcement, rather than the protection of migrant rights.

The global level

While recognizing that the legal and normative framework of international migration is dispersed amongst a wide range of different conventions and protocols, there was a broad consensus amongst hearing participants that additional law was not required in this area. A more immediate priority, several speakers suggested, was to ensure that states understand, respect and implement those instruments which they have already ratified.

Hearing participants were unable to reach agreement on the broader issue of global approaches to international migration. According to some participants, a transnational policy issue such as migration had to be addressed at the global level, and on the basis of agreed standards. There was a particular need for developing countries such as those in Latin America to be able to engage in a structured dialogue with the industrialized states, and the longstanding proposal for the United Nations to organize an international conference on international migration and development would provide such a forum.

Other participants in the Hearing were unable to concur with this approach. While acknowledging the value of dialogue and cooperation between states, they felt that this should generally be restricted to bilateral and regional initiatives. Each region had its own peculiarities, it was pointed out, and the establishment of global principles, processes and structures did not promise to yield very useful results.

International institutions

Turning finally to the issue of institutions, the Hearing concluded that while there was certainly a need to ensure that there are no gaps in the mandates and activities of different

organizations, there is an even greater need to address the overlaps that currently exist. According to a number of participants, international organizations are somewhat competitive in nature, with the result that several different bodies have become involved in an issue such as human trafficking, which has a high profile and a good potential for fund-raising.

At the same time, participants recognized the difficulties involved in coordinating the activities of these organizations. As one speaker pointed out, coordination ultimately requires authority, and none of the existing organizations has the authority to coordinate the others.

A number of proposals were made with respect to the role of different institutions. Some participants called on the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to become more operational, as proposed in that body's recently published Plan of Action. They also suggested that there should be more coordination between the different treaty bodies and special rapporteurs dealing with human rights.

Other participants proposed that IOM should be recognized as the principal international institution in the field of migration, while a number of NGOs called for the establishment of a permanent UN forum where the voices of migrants could be heard and where national migration policies could be assessed.

One government suggested that a subsidiary body to ECOSOC should be created to coordinate the UN's activities in the area of international migration, while another suggested that a coordination mechanism should be established, playing a role similar to that assumed by OCHA in relation to humanitarian affairs. The UN's High level Dialogue on International Migration, scheduled to take place in 2006, was generally welcomed. While participants in the Hearing did not generally expect the Dialogue to make any major decisions, it would provide states with a valuable opportunity to discuss issues of common concern.