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**INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2006**

***Theme: Partnerships in Migration - Engaging Business and Civil Society***



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### *Theme: Partnerships in Migration - Engaging Business and Civil Society*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The theme for the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) in 2006 is “*Partnerships in Migration: Engaging Business and Civil Society*”, as was agreed by IOM Members and observers during the informal consultations in October 2005. This discussion paper highlights the need for and potential benefits of engaging in partnerships with business and civil society stakeholders in managing migration. It also includes wherever possible references to events and policy developments in 2006 to illustrate its points.

2. The IDM theme for 2006 is a fitting continuation of last year’s focus, “*Towards Policy Coherence on Migration*”. The 2005 discussions concentrated on the need for intra- and intergovernmental collaboration and touched upon the need to involve non-governmental stakeholders in the migration policy dialogue. This year’s theme also resonates with the IDM theme of 2004 “*Valuing Migration*”, as the inclusion of stakeholders in addition to government representatives can provide new perspectives on the advantages to be derived from international migration.

3. Much of the international discourse on migration today is focused on the link between international mobility and development, culminating this year with the United Nations **High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development** (HLD), held in New York on 14-15 September 2006. Non-governmental actors have significant and varied roles to play in realizing the positive potential of migration and minimizing its costs, as was acknowledged by the UN General Assembly by inviting civil society and private sector representatives to participate in the HLD preparations and proceedings. Similarly, at the regional level, for example, it was recommended at the IOM/African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) workshop on **Migration, Development and Poverty Reduction**, convened in Dakar in August 2006, that governments consult with their diaspora members in preparing for the HLD and, where possible, include them in their delegations, consistent with the Migration Policy Framework for Africa adopted by the heads of state and government of the member countries of the African Union during the Banjul Summit in July 2006.

#### II. ENGAGING NON-GOVERNMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS

4. While the management of cross-border population flows is an intrinsic feature of state sovereignty, it is undeniable that many aspects of migration are also of concern to stakeholders in addition to governments. Governments may consider forging partnerships with non-state actors to jointly devise ways to effectively manage the multiple aspects of migration. In addition, broad-based partnerships can be envisaged within and between private sector and civil society actors. Governments have a key role to play in creating an environment conducive to the success of these partnerships.

### *Partnerships with Business*

5. There are numerous migration issues of direct relevance to the private sector. For instance, labour migration is a key mechanism to accomplishing a range of business objectives, such as addressing skills and labour needs and knowledge transfer within companies. In a climate where multinational linkages are not simply an asset but a prerequisite for doing business, the multiple affiliations of migrants can provide promising economic opportunities. Partnerships between the private sector and governments are instrumental in identifying challenges and solutions in the economic and labour dimensions of migration.

6. At its second meeting, held in Cairo in March 2006, the IOM Director General's Business Advisory Board (BAB) acknowledged the private sector's role, responsibility and interest in well-managed migration, and identified key areas of focus, such as labour migration, circular migration and links with countries of origin, remittances, integration, migration-related technology applications and humanitarian emergencies. The BAB also highlighted the need to strengthen the link between migration and development by better matching labour supply and demand and making greater investments in human resource development, striving for more transparency in migration regulatory frameworks and building capacity to effectively manage migration.

### *Partnerships with Civil Society*

7. The value of involving civil society in various components of migration management is well recognized. For instance, the Asunción Declaration – adopted on 5 May 2006 and offered as a contribution by the **Sixth South American Conference on Migration** to the HLD – highlighted the need to invite civil society representatives to contribute to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes relating to migration, in order to achieve good migration governance.

8. Civil society in general and NGOs, diaspora organizations and religious communities in particular, exist at local, national and global levels and often serve as the principal interface between migrants and societies of origin and destination. One of civil society's strengths is its experience with the day-to-day realities migrants face and as such it is well placed to advocate for the protection of the human rights of migrants and to help migrants in their adaptation process. Civil society also has a role in ensuring that migrants and potential migrants have reliable information and realistic expectations about the migration experience. Partnerships between civil society and government can provide governments with first-hand information on migration realities as well as a network for interacting with migrants. For instance, the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the **Brussels Declaration on Asylum, Migration and Mobility**, adopted by the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States in charge of Asylum, Migration and Mobility in April 2006, recognizes the need to engage NGOs, including in the exchange and sharing of information.

9. For its part, IOM has worked to broaden and deepen its collaboration with civil society. Examples include the **Annual IOM-NGO Consultation**, held in Geneva in April 2006, which focused on major developments in migration, transit migration issues and assistance to rejected asylum seekers. Another example is the **Global Migration and Development Network** recently proposed by IOM, which would bring together interested agencies of the Global

Migration Group with members of civil society, such as academic research networks and NGOs, in addition to governments, to systematically enhance knowledge, expertise and primary data on migration policy.

10. In order to provide a dynamic and interactive platform for the diaspora community to re-engage and connect with their countries of origin, IOM launched the **24-Hour Dialogue Initiative** in March 2006. The two-way dialogue, organized in several cities – London, Geneva and Brussels, to be followed by Paris and Washington in 2007 - opened channels of communication between the diaspora and a wide range of national stakeholders in home countries. It allowed the two sides to explore opportunities to support development through diverse partnership arrangement with governments, academic institutions and the private sector. Mobilizing contributions of African health professionals and resources for capacity building in Africa, and channelling remittances for development in collaboration with postal services from both developing and developed countries, were among the themes for the Dialogue in 2006.

### III. PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

11. The global scope and the multidimensional nature of international migration highlights the need to address it through coherent and collaborative approaches involving all stakeholders, including international organizations, civil society and the private sector, in countries of origin, transit and destination. Illustrated below is a selection, but by no means an exhaustive list, of cross-cutting areas to which non-governmental stakeholders, particularly the private sector and civil society, can provide valuable inputs. These areas are highlighted because they are especially relevant to the theme of “migration and development”, which has received growing prominence in migration discussions over the past year:

#### *The Global Economy and Human Resource Development*

12. Partnerships between governments and the business community can help to identify shortages and surpluses in labour markets that may then be addressed through a balance between appropriate migration and retention strategies in order to better plan and match labour supply and demand. In addition, to satisfy the needs of existing and future labour markets, governments and the private sector could pool resources for increased investments in human resource development in priority fields. The incentives for both sides are substantial, as businesses depend on and profit from coherent education and labour migration policies, while governments can benefit from the insights and resources offered by the private sector.

13. To help realize the potential of public-private partnerships in maximizing the benefits of international labour migration and minimizing its negative impacts, IOM has recently put forward an **International Migration and Development Initiative** (IMDI). IMDI proposes a collaborative effort by relevant international organizations to work with interested governments and the private sector as well as other stakeholders, to facilitate the matching of labour supply and demand in a safe, legal, humane and orderly manner that maximizes the societal and human development potential of global labour mobility. With the assistance of the World Bank, IOM organized an IMDI side event on the margins of the HLD, at which the initiative was received with considerable interest by both government and private sector representatives.

14. The importance of public-private partnership was also noted in the Action Plan of the **Ministerial Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development**, held in Rabat in July 2006, and the **African common position on migration and development**, adopted at the 7<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit held in Banjul in June-July 2006, which underlined the need to arrive at a better match between the labour market, education systems and the private sector in order to better manage migration flows between Africa and Europe.

15. The IDM's first inter-sessional workshop of 2006 on the theme of **Migration and Human Resources for Health: from Awareness to Action**, held in Geneva in March, recognized that, as many countries have opted to at least partially privatize their healthcare sector, public-private partnerships are now particularly relevant. These partnerships can be established in areas such as ethical recruitment practices, strategic private investments and cost-sharing mechanisms for the development of human resources for health. This workshop also highlighted the scope for greater engagement of governments and businesses with migrant workers themselves to address the challenge of brain drain and promote brain circulation. The role of diasporas in mobilizing human resources was also addressed at the Africa Recruit Conference **Mobilising the African Diaspora Healthcare Professionals and Resources for Capacity-building in Africa**, held in London in March 2006. Civil society organizations, such as unions of healthcare workers and migrant associations, can help improve the training and working conditions for healthcare staff, both in their own country and across borders, thus making better use of existing human resources. Provided favourable legislative frameworks and appropriate incentive structures are in place, such organizations can promote permanent, temporary or virtual return of migrant workers to ensure skill circulation.

#### ***Remittances and Other Financial Resources***

16. There are numerous possibilities for the private sector to contribute to the facilitation of remittance flows, including the creation of transparent, low-cost channels and appropriate financial instruments for the transfer of small private funds. Furthermore, there is potential for the private sector to be involved in the expansion of diaspora banks, microfinance institutions, post office networks and credit unions, in particular in rural areas. As was proposed during the **Migration and Development Conference**, organized by the Government of Belgium, IOM and the World Bank in close cooperation with the European Commission, held in Brussels in March 2006, these efforts should be complemented by suitable regulatory frameworks and favourable exchange rates. At the fifteenth **Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State**, held in Salamanca, Spain, in October 2005, the **Ibero-American Encounter on Migration and Development** held in Madrid in July 2006, and the **VI South American Conference on Migration**, held in Asunción, Paraguay, in May 2006, it was noted that regional development banks and financial institutions are uniquely positioned to promote regional public-private partnerships to increase the development impact of remittances by tapping their potential for lending to micro-enterprises and small businesses, long-term financing for housing, and investments in education, health and social security. It was also emphasized that governments and the private sector should continue their efforts to ensure that the transfer of remittances can take place through secure and low-cost channels.

17. Diasporas can be a powerful force for home country development. For example, they have an important function as remittance senders. The role of remittances as a catalyst for local development and the importance of financial intermediaries in facilitating the transfer of

remittances and lowering transfer costs was highlighted at the **Ministerial Conference of Least Developed Countries on Migrant Remittances**, organized by the Government of Benin, IOM and the UN Office for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in Cotonou in February 2006. Nevertheless, it was also pointed out that the personal contributions of migrants should not be expected to meet the development needs of entire countries, and that the private nature of remittances should be respected.

18. Remittances are not the only contributions that diasporas can make; for instance, at the **International Symposium on International Migration and Development**, organized by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations in collaboration with Fondazione Rosselli, and with the support of the Italian Government in Turin in June 2006, a Ghanaian who emigrated to Italy described how, aided by an IOM programme, he linked with other Ghanaian émigrés in the region to set up a dynamic interaction with their home country. Their “Ghanacoop” imports fruit from Ghana, acquires and manages farmland and sets up links between Italian and Ghanaian banks. Governments and the private sector can enhance the effects of remittances and other diaspora investments on socio-economic development by providing incentive structures and creating favourable environments for investment and local and regional entrepreneurship.

### ***Integration and Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants***

19. Respect for the human rights of all migrants is an essential component of good migration management. Civil society has a key role to play in bringing in the “human dimension” into the development of migration management policies and ensuring that the voice of migrants is heard. The private sector can also contribute to improving the protection of migrants’ human rights. As recognized by the BAB in its initial declaration, businesses have a responsibility to protect workers’ rights and to ensure that businesses are not either knowingly or unknowingly involved in the trafficking of human beings.

20. Successful integration of migrants can help to ensure that they are empowered to exercise their rights. Civil society is a key actor in the reception and integration of migrants: NGOs, religious organizations as well as community and diaspora groups are well situated to provide a first port-of-call for migrants, to act as bridges and mediators between migrants and host populations and to raise tolerance and awareness in host communities. The IDM’s second inter-sessional workshop **Migrants and the Host Society: Partnerships for Success**, held in Geneva in July 2006, underlined the need to involve civil society and the private sector at all stages of the integration process. Because many diasporas have well-established networks between home and host societies, possibilities exist for partnerships such as city-twinning strategies and “twinning of communities” as discussed at the **Regional Conference on Migration** annual meeting, held this year in San Salvador in May 2006.

21. It was noted at the **Expert Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and Migration: Challenges and Opportunities**, held by IOM and the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues at IOM Headquarters in Geneva in April 2006, that well-integrated migrants with a secure legal status are better placed to contribute to the development of communities of origin and destination alike. Moreover, these migrants are likely to be more productive in the workplace. Small and medium-sized enterprises are in a position to provide migrants a fair and equal chance in employment: in doing so, private businesses can help promote the economic and social

integration of migrants into local communities, while actively acknowledging the valuable contributions of migrants to the host society. The private sector is, moreover, increasingly interested in the specialized skills and backgrounds, not least of a cultural and linguistic kind, offered by migrants from diverse backgrounds and with diverse skills. The workshop of the Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC) on the **Implications of the GCIM Report on Asia and Pacific, and for the HLD**, held in Bangkok in April 2006, also recognized the importance of involving relevant stakeholders, including civil society, trade unions and the employment sector, in the process of designing appropriate migration policies in order to provide a comprehensive response to the situations of different migrant categories.

22. Religious communities and associations play a critical role, particularly in the integration process, and can serve to mediate between the two or more “worlds” that constitute the migrant reality, as was identified at the conference on **Migration and Religion in a Globalized World**, organized jointly by the Government of Morocco and IOM in Rabat in December 2005.

#### **IV. Key Questions for Consideration**

- ✓ How can mutual trust and the will to cooperate be fostered between governments, civil society and the private sector in a partnership approach on migration issues? How can all relevant stakeholders be engaged in the development of sound migration policies and their effective implementation?
- ✓ What are the migration-related areas where partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector need to be developed?
- ✓ What are the potential obstacles to developing such partnerships and how can they be overcome?