



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

CLOSING REMARKS

William Lacy Swing
Director General, International Organization for Migration

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INTRODUCTION

It has been a productive and insightful last couple of days. I am very pleased with the outcomes of the six sessions as well as the side events we have had the pleasure of taking part in. I am also glad of the positive reception of every one of the 2015 World Migration Report. I hope you will all return to your cities and get back to your constituencies with all the good practices you have learned from this two-day conference. I also urge you to maintain your contacts and remain in touch as you seek more ways in which to maximize the ways in which migration can benefit your respective cities, and embrace migrants as they assimilate in your communities.

Before we formally close this conference, allow me to share with you the key takeaways from the last two days.

1. The Context and the Challenges
2. Turning Challenges into Opportunities
3. Coherence in policy responses at all levels

I. Revisiting the CONTEXT and challenges

This conference has reiterated the fact that the world's population is and will continue to become increasingly urban throughout this century, as it is driven by both internal and international migration. Local authorities will need to be prepared to face challenges that come with it.

Almost all the growth in the world's population over the next few decades -- another 2.7 billion -- is expected to take place in urban centres. It is at the local level the effects of this movement will be felt and realised. Local authorities will need to play a central role in the policy making process for policy responses to reflect the situation on the ground. Global action, therefore, has to consider the local dimension.

As the implementers of policy and service delivery, local authorities are acutely well-placed to play a central role in the planning and provision of policies on migration and urbanization. They have valuable knowledge and experience that can be fed into the policy cycle to enhance the efficacy of policy.

II. Turning CHALLENGES into opportunities

Given this reality, we can be certain that increasing urbanisation presents both opportunities and challenges for human mobility management. Human mobility has the potential to be a significant driver of prosperity within cities. Mobility connects cities and transnational communities and it creates unique social and economic opportunities. With effective urban planning and integration policies, the ‘triple win’ scenario of benefits to the migrant, country of destination and country of origin can be realised.

A. Infrastructure and Integration

The challenges of urbanization amongst others will include the effective integration of migrants, and the development of adequate infrastructure and services. Effective urban migration management is only possible if migrants and their needs are included in the urban planning. As the majority of urban growth will occur in middle and less developed countries, the infrastructure and urban design will need to feature as a priority on the development agenda to ensure that emerging global cities have the adequate infrastructure to respond to population growth. The quality of infrastructure in cities can aid or hinder productivity. Building infrastructure to ensure cities are accessible to all residents will effectively support the social and economic activities of the city’s newest residents.

B. Resilience to Disaster

Significant inflows triggered by conflicts, disasters and other shocks can challenge local authorities’ management capacities to provide migrants adequate access to services such as health, housing and education. In order to make their cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG goal 11) local authorities need to strengthen their capacity to prevent, prepare for, manage and recover from urban crises while building on migrants’ capacity to reduce risk and build resilience.

C. Rural to Urban Migration

The impact of urbanisation on rural areas should not be overlooked as both an area of challenge and opportunity; the shrinking of the rural population can have a significant social and economic impact on the those left-behind, particularly as it is often those with the greatest needs- such as the young and elderly – that remain. Rural areas can be positively affected by smart, responsive planning that promotes economic diversification and competitiveness and ensures sufficient levels of investment to meet the needs of those left behind.

III. COHERENCE between local, national and international policy responses

Policy responses to increasing human mobility in cities should be adapted to accommodate not control it. Policies that aim to restrict population movements to cities have often proved to be ineffective; a better approach would be to manage the spatial distribution of the population and “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.” (SDG 10.7) for “inclusive, safe, resilient, sustainable cities and human settlement (SDG 11)

The integration of migrants - planned in collaboration by central and local authorities - needs to feature in all aspects of public policy. The extent to which migrants are integrated in policy planning will determine how well human mobility can positively affect cities. Migrants are absorbed into society at the local level and the integration outcomes of migrants are dependent on the conditions of the locality. As such, migration policy disseminated from central authorities should consider the needs and capacities of local authorities.

As a multi-dimensional policy area, ministries outside of the designated migration authorities should be involved in designing and implementing policies that effect migrants and migration itself. Accordingly, the governance of urbanization and migration should adopt a whole-of-government approach which brings a range of ministries into the migration governance process.

Unplanned or inadequately managed urbanisation can lead to increased inequality and inequity particularly if newcomers struggle to gain sufficient access to services; planning for the social, economic and political integration of newcomers can ensure the benefits of urbanisation to the individual and society are reached.

Good urban governance requires partnerships between local and central authorities’ and the inclusion of all relevant actors, including civil society organization and the private sector. Local and central authority partnerships ensure that national policy aligns with the needs and capacities of local authorities at the heart of implementation.

Local authorities have the advantage of being at the forefront of the daily management of migration. As major actors in cities and with first-hand experience with migrants, local authorities can contribute significantly to changing the narrative and improving the national public perception of migration.

Migrants and Diaspora can act as bridge-builders and promoters of development and humanitarian support between cities of destination and origin. They can support local authorities in efficiently managing migration and the challenges of inclusion and diversity it implies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, allow me also to highlight the role of international organizations. **The participation of IOs, like IOM, is key in fostering partnerships both at local, national and international levels.** IOM is actively involved in various types of partnerships and programmes aiming at enabling migrants to achieve many of the targets set by the SDGs. IOM'S Migration Governance Framework under development also highlights the relevance of partnership in the management of migration.

Meaningful dialogue at all levels of government on the way urbanisation and migration is planned for, managed and governed is paramount. Good urban migration governance requires cohesion and collaboration at all levels to maximize the positive outcomes of migration and human mobility.