Message from the Head of Mission

The reintroduction of SLM Addis Newsletter is aimed at providing information not only on the Mission activities but also to highlight some of the Migration challenges facing Ethiopia as well as the region.

The geo-political and socio-economic conditions dictate the migration dynamics of the country causing movements of people from, through and within Ethiopia. Many Ethiopians in pursuit of a better life end up stranded in transit and destination countries having been given false promises of lucrative jobs by their traffickers and smugglers.

Migrants and refugees enter Ethiopia fleeing violence and other economic hardships while transiting to far destinations.

Some of these, mostly refugees, are provided with temporary stay in the country as they await permanent resettlement or family reunification. The destination countries are mainly the USA, Canada, Australia, Scandinavia and the Netherlands.

For this category of migrants/refugees IOM provides assistance in logistics/document verification, health assessment and travel arrangements for refugees to final resettlement countries. Many Ethiopians return home under various modalities.

The two main ways are Diaspora coming home to take part in social and economic development processes and others under Assisted Voluntary Return provided by a number of host countries. Under Migration for Development Project, IOM taps on the high potential of Ethiopian Diaspora to plough back the knowledge and skills through short, medium and long term returns for training and job placement positions. Some examples are investment and business links as well as provision of medical services in an effort to enhance the social and economic progress in the country.

Stranded Ethiopian migrants in the Middle East, Libya and other countries are assisted at the request of the Ethiopian government to return with safety and dignity. SLM Addis provides logistics and transport services back home as well as limited reintegration support. In an effort to prevent the exodus of irregular migrants the Mission also undertakes information campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration and provides alternative livelihood opportunities targeting rural communities most prone to irregular migration. The expansion of the livelihood project initiatives in these communities is considered an effective means of building resilience in rural communities at times of economic hardships/shocks.

In collaboration with IOM Dar es Salem and the Ethiopian government, SLM Addis facilitated the voluntary return of close to 1000 stranded Ethiopian migrants from Tanzania since August 2009.

The returnees from Tanzania were provided with airport assistance and reception service upon their arrival in Ethiopia. The returnees stayed in the IOM Transit Centre for one night with food, accommodation and medical assistance provided upon arrival. Some returnees that needed immediate medical assistance received the required attention.

A relocation grant and brief orientation service was given to help them adjust to the life ahead of them in their places of origin.

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Stranded Migrants Returned from Tanzania

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Hassen (not his real name), a returnee from Tanzania says “I sold my property as well as my father’s and gave all I had to the mediator who promised me a lucrative job in the Republic of South Africa, Johannesburg. Looking back, after passing through so much ordeal, I think it is a miracle that I survived.”

A recent study conducted by IOM, In Pursuit of the Southern Dream, indicated 17,000-20,000 male irregular migrants are smuggled every year from the Horn of Africa and East Africa. Some never reach their final destination. Furthermore, the study revealed the smuggling of Ethiopians as well as Somalis to the Republic of South Africa (RSA) generates USD34 million to USD40 million to the criminal network which excluding additional fees being paid along the way. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs of Tanzania, the country had over 1,640 irregular migrants from the Horn of Africa (1,130 Ethiopians and 514 Somalis) in 2009. The migrants were intercepted while trying to cross border.

In addition to working with the Ethiopian government in addressing this challenges, SLM Addis also works with the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Areas of cooperation are on capacity building on aspects of migration services, including operationalizing migration policy strategies.

IOM’s effective response to these multifaceted migration dynamics is made possible through the close and mutual collaboration and support from the UN system in Ethiopia, local NGOs, the Donor Community in Addis Ababa and above all the Government of Ethiopia.

A Returnee gives a thumbs up upon being reunited with his brother

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Rural Ethiopia Villagers Debate Irregular Migration

A play on the pitfalls and dangers of irregular migration toured in the rural areas of the Amhara region of Oromia, which stretches in an arc from eastern to southwestern Ethiopia.

The play, entitled “Mutach”- “the last one” in Amharic- tells the story of a father’s predicament as he considers sending his youngest daughter to work abroad. His dilemma is based on the fact that he has been without news from one of his daughters who was smuggled out of Ethiopia a year earlier.

“The play is thought provoking and triggers open discussion among villagers and community leaders,” says Tagel Solomon, IOM’s counter trafficking coordinator in Ethiopia. “Issues surrounding irregular migration and trafficking are often taboo. But would-be migrants need to understand the risks involved in irregular migration which often leads to exploitation and human trafficking in transit and destination countries.” As part of this initiative, IOM also seeks to encourage community members to find local solutions to chronic unemployment in rural areas which pushes tens of thousand of young Ethiopians to seek employment opportunities abroad. The play is performed in close consultation with district officials to target vulnerable groups such as women and young people and to enlist the support of community and religious leaders. “Such events seek to empower those agents of change within vulnerable communities,” says Solomon. “IOM will continue to support local initiatives and small businesses to minimize the risks of irregular migration.”

This initiative is part of a broader regional project implemented in Kenya, Somaliland, Punt land, Yemen and Ethiopia, which is funded through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD).

Livelihood Opportunities

IOM has launched a programme to mitigate the impact of recurring droughts, food shortages and irregular migration on vulnerable communities living in Ethiopia’s north-western Oromia zone of Amhara National Regional State.

This Japanese-funded programme will provide some 500 plus vulnerable families, including female-headed households, with goats, poultry, ships to help them supplement their diet and provide additional income.

As part of this initiative, IOM has also teamed up with a leading local NGO, the Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA) to provide young people with sustainable agricultural skills training and basic business management to help them set up self-employment schemes through establishing farms assisted with modern farming skills.

This support will be extended to other community members living in neighboring administrative units, or Kebesels, through the setting-up of revolving funds that will be managed and monitored by self-help groups, local authorities and community leaders.

“These initiatives are crucial to boost the resilience of families who live in vulnerable rural communities and who often have little choice but to engage in irregular migration because of adverse climatic conditions,” says Tagel Solomon, IOM’s Counter Trafficking officer in Ethiopia.

This programme builds on IOM’s weekly radio shows, drama and plays designed to encourage villagers to find sustainable alternatives to irregular migration and to inform communities of the dangers of human trafficking.

Every year, thousands of young people from drought affected areas engage in perilous journeys across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen and beyond, while others are smuggled to Tanzania via Kenya en route to South Africa, Europe and increasingly, to South and Central America. This area, bordering on the highlands, has experienced successive failures of the Belg (short rains ending in May) and Meher (long rains, which start in late July) in the past few years, resulting in low crop yields in some parts and near-crop failure in others.

This initiative is part of a broader regional project implemented in Kenya, Somaliland, Punt land, Yemen and Ethiopia, which is funded through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD).
US Senators Visit IOM Mission in Addis Ababa

On the 16th February 2010, SLM Addis had a visit from the United States congressional delegation of Senator Durbin (Illinois) and Senator Brown (Ohio). The visit comprised of a tour to IOM Clinic with a discussion on which tests were done to US bound refugees and migrants. The senators also dedicated ample time for interviewing refugees. The discussions revolved around the preference in the place of resettlement, expectations, dreams and hopes to be attained in the host country. The refugees expressed their gratitude as this will give them a new start to their life.

One of the refugees expressed his ambition of becoming a physician and his readiness to face all challenges ahead of him.

The senators visit demonstrates the interest of the partners in the resettlement assistance IOM provides to refugees and other services to migrants in general. The visit of the delegation in Ethiopia focused on health, water and refugee issues.

IOM, AU, ECOWAS UNODC Host Regional Work Shop on Human Trafficking

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) jointly organized a three day workshop on the Operationalization of the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children from 24 – 26 March 2010 in Abuja, Nigeria.

The workshop among other things aimed to sensitize the RECs and ECOWAS member states on the Action Plan and discuss the mechanisms for the way forward on its implementation.

The workshop expected to open ways to foster effective ways of networking, coordination and cooperation among the AU, Member States, RECS, CSOs and partners and to address trafficking in persons in Africa in a more strategic and programmatic manner.

The Plan of Action was endorsed by the AU Executive Council in January 2007 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where the Executive Council called upon the Chairperson of the AU Commission in collaboration with IOM and other partners to advocate for the implementation of the Action Plan.

The workshop is part of the “Stop Trafficking Campaign- Operationalizing the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children” project funded by the Bureau for Population, Refuge and Migration of the US State Department.

DOT Treatment for TB Patients

IOM started to provide full Daily Observer Treatment (DOT) treatment to all clients eligible for anti-TB treatment. The Medical Health Department obtained the license to provide DOT to IOM clients countrywide in December 2007. Previously, clients were referred for anti-Tuberculosis (TB) treatment to the government facilities.

The activity intends to reduce the burden of TB patients on Ethiopian health facilities and contribute to the global objective to reduce the risk of Multi Drug Resistant (MDR) TB by providing full DOT for migrants in Ethiopia.

Also, IOM became the only panel in Ethiopia for DOT TB patients migrating to the USA and the only site providing TST for US migrants in March 2009.

Why screen refugees and migrants for Tuberculosis in Ethiopia?

Among refugees and local population, TB is one of the major causes of morbidity and mortality in Ethiopia. According to the 2008 WHO TB report, Ethiopia ranks 7th in the list of the world’s 22 high burden countries with incidences estimated at 379/100,000 for all forms of TB and 168/100,000 for smear positive TB.

The Annual Risk of TB infection (ARI) in Ethiopia is estimated at 2.2%.

Norway Cultural Orientation Shire Sub Office

In February of this year, Shire sub-office hosted a delegation from IOM Norway to conduct cultural orientation classes for a group of Eritrean Refugees in Shimelba refugee camp and medical health assessment for the group followed shortly.

The sub office talked to one family as they started their journey to a new life in Norway.

Simon Koito Osman, a former teacher fled Eritrea with his wife, Asqual and their baby Samuel, 6 years ago during the border war with Ethiopia and have lived in the Shimelba refugee camp ever since.

Simon is an educated man and understands the opportunity Norway has to offer his family. Simon understands the education, health care and work opportunities of resettlement in Norway. In talking to the trainers he knows his choice of resettlement offers his family a better chance in the future.

He plans to settle in Bergen, Norway with hopes of finding a good job that would support the family in a sustainable manner. Simon also shares his dream with enthusiasm and determination that the resettlement will present the opportunity to develop his handicraft skills and fulfill a dream of a normal life again.

Asqual says, “she is very happy knowing the fact that her children will soon be going to a good school.” Their 2 younger children Lucky, age 4, and Fani, age 18 months, were born in a refugee camp and know no other life.

The first born, Samuel, now 8 years old looks forward to “going to the school” which he saw in the video during his cultural orientation classes.

Samuel liked the school he saw especially the class rooms and the playing field; he is eager to learn and wants to be a medical doctor when he grows up.

Osman on Cultural Orientation training

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migration by providing viable alternatives.” Most Ethiopian irregular migrants from rural areas use smugglers to get them to the Middle East and beyond via Somalia, the Gulf of Aden and Yemen. But few are aware of the perils and misery of the journey via Bossasso in Somalia’s Punt land.

The migrants are often abused, robbed and at times abandoned in the Somali desert with no money, papers, food or water. Women and girls often face the added ordeal of SGBV. Those who reach Bossasso live in squalid conditions until they manage to find the means to make the crossing to Yemen in the smugglers’ often unseaworthy boats.

Many thousands of Ethiopians and Somalis have drowned trying to make the crossing, sometimes they are thrown overboard by smugglers who are trying to evade the authorities.

This awareness raising initiative is part of a broader regional project implemented in Kenya, Somaliland, Puntland, Yemen and Ethiopia, which is funded through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)-Government of Japan.

SLM Addis Facts & Figures

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<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Total Number of Departures and Arrivals Jan - Apr 2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>765</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
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<td>N. America</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>32</td>
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Total Number of Physical Examinations for Gov’t Cases Jan - Apr 2010

- USA: 90%
- New Zealand: 4%
- Australia: 5%
- Canada: 1%
- Norway: 0%

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We're on the web http://www.iom.int

Mission

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As the leading international organization for migration, IOM acts with partners in the international community to:

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