

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2010

INTERSESSIONAL WORKSHOP ON MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Session 2:

Nationality and Social and Political Participation in a Transnational Context

Introductory Remarks by the Moderator: *Ms. Wies Maas*

- Welcome back to the second session of today's International Dialogue on Migration and Transnationalism.
- Thank you for joining us for this, what promises to be a very interesting, afternoon session. I would in particular like to welcome our panelists, who have kindly agreed to share some of their insights and experience with us.
- Let me start by introducing myself: My name is Wies Maas, and I will be moderating this afternoons' session. I am a policy and research officer at The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration (THP). For those of you who do not know this, THP is a independent platform for an inclusive dialogue on refugees and migration involving all relevant stakeholders in the debate.
- THP strives for more evidence-based and just refugee and migration policies, so you might imagine I am absolutely delighted to be given the opportunity to be moderating here, at one of the key international, inclusive dialogues on migration going on in the world today.
- I will try to speak as little as possible this afternoon, and will try to leave that up to you as panelists and you as delegates as much as I can. What I will do is, I will briefly introduce to you the issue at 'our table' this afternoon and will then introduce our honourable speakers, who will each provide a presentation of approximately 10 minutes, which will leave us with two full hours for discussion.
- The theme of this panel is: Nationality and Social and Political Participation in a Transnational Context.
- Whereas the morning session of today focused more on setting the scene and on what transnational realities in general can mean for policy making, this session will build on that, but at the same time will try to narrow the focus by specifically looking at:
 - political, civic and social participation of migrants, both in destination and origin countries;
 - and at policies and best (or bad) practices for improving this participation
- So questions and dilemmas that we would like to address during this session, are issues like:
 - Who gets to vote, and who does not and on the basis of what criteria? What is the link between taxation and representation? And how can such out-of-country voting be organized in practice?
 - Who is entitled to citizenships and corresponding rights?
 - How are we dealing with double or multiple nationality and multiple loyalties, is there a political threat or a threat to security, and/or is there a development opportunity?
 - And maybe most importantly: what is the role of migrants and diaspora in political and civic participation in the country of origin? By some states involvement is warmly welcomed, as a source of knowledge and resources, other states however might see this involvement as unwanted interference.
- Fortunately I am not the one to answer these pressing but complicated questions, and I have 'my' panelists and you, as audience to discuss this.
- Of course we need to realize there is not one understanding of what transnationalism entails, just as there is not one 'model' of transnationalism which works for the benefit of all: host, home countries, migrants and societies at large. I do hope however that this afternoon we can find a couple of models and best practices that do work at least for the benefit of some, whereas I also hope we can will no hesitate to look at some potential challenges.
- Now without further ado I would like to introduce to you the first speaker of this panel:
 - [The moderator introduced the panelist]