



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



IOM's International Dialogue on Migration
Co-sponsored by WHO and CDC

Seminar on Health and Migration, 9-11 June 2004
Closing remarks

- Migration and human mobility are a fact of modern life.
 - Can't stop movement and don't want to as the movement of people is essential in today's more global economy
 - Contemporary migration is complex and varying hence challenging not only migration policy but linking with other policy domains such as health -- including global public health
- As people move, so they connect individual and environmental health factors from one country to another
- Here too the issue is not to stop movement but to manage the health implications and opportunities.
- Well managed migration health, including public health, promotes understanding, cohesion and inclusion in mixed communities. It can be a tool to facilitate integration of migrants within communities, to stabilize societies, and to enhance development.
- At each stage of the migration process, from the decision to migrate, to the journey itself, through reception and integration in a new community and to return to the country of origin -- the physical, mental, and social well-being of individual migrants, their families, and their communities needs to be considered in policy making and practice
- The importance of integration (i.e. autonomous participation and contribution to society) with respect to a successful migration outcome has therefore called for a comprehensive interpretation of migration health beyond infectious disease control toward inclusion of chronic non-infectious conditions, mental health concerns, and of understanding of health and human rights issues.
- The promotion of healthy living conditions for everyone implies the establishment of public health policies and practices that would integrate all members within communities, regardless of citizenship and migration legal status.
 - Here, we are speaking of a paradigm shift -- of a change in the way we think about health and mobility
 - We believe there is a need for a change from a mindset of exclusion to one of how we might best address the health and well-being of migrants and their communities.

Why so? ... Migrants in a state of wellbeing will be more receptive to education and employment, and be more inclined to contribute in the fabric of the host societies; migrants not perceived to be a health threat to host societies will be less exposed to discrimination and xenophobia, and be more likely to be included as equal participant in communities.

- A well-managed approach to migration health presents opportunities for improving global health, including global public health, and understanding, for the benefit of all societies.

Action points

- This is a time of real opportunity in migration health and we must seize the moment
- First, this seminar was dedicated to creating understanding, to now no longer consider migration and health as two isolated domains, but as an integrated part of migration -- one action point is for each of us in our respective roles and responsibilities to make a commitment to promote and advocate the integration of health issues in the various aspects of migration you are called to deal with -- students, business, asylum seekers and refugees, returnees
- Second, is the need for a commitment to partnership -- here we are speaking of co-responsibilities, which was illustrated with some of the topics discussed
 - Partnerships between governments -- the opportunities that bilateral agreements provide to manage not only the mobility of health workers but to promote cooperation in the economic sphere more generally and importantly in the public health, social, and development realms
 - Partnerships as well between organizations at the community, national, regional and international level
 - For its part, IOM commits to continuing the catalytic role of highlighting the importance of comprehensive approaches to migration health, and bringing together the relevant stakeholders, as we have done here this week as a first step

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June 11th, Seminar on Health and Migration