



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project
支持中欧人员往来和移民领域对话项目



International Labour Organization

Policy Seminar on “Migrants and Cities”

IOM Press Briefing Note

China - “Migrants don't threaten our cities. They rescue them,” claims IOM's Director General, Ambassador William Lacy Swing, in the World Migration Report, which had its Chinese-language launch at a policy seminar in the rapidly growing city of Guangzhou this week.

The event, part of the EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility support project, is funded by the Partnership Instrument of the European Union, and facilitated by IOM's Liaison Office in China, in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It concludes today (11 March) having analysed the latest European and Chinese trends and experiences of migration and cities.

"Out of the approximately one billion migrants in our world today, about half reside in cities," noted IOM's Head of Office in China, Pär Liljert. "Driven by internal and international migration, the world's population is becoming increasingly urban and cities need migrants' energy and ambition. The potential of migrants in shaping cities is indisputable. Migrants need what only cities can offer: a chance to succeed."

Internal migration to cities such as Guangzhou (which has grown from under 2 million in 1980 to over 14 million today) has been phenomenal. In the last three decades, China has experienced the largest rural-urban migration in history. The country's rapid development has also triggered the in-flow of international migrants and Guangzhou is also a prime example of this phenomenon.

However, around 40 percent of China's population still resides in the countryside. According to research presented at this week's policy seminar, when China moves from being an emerging to a fully developed advanced economy the share of people living in cities will exceed 90 percent. This increased urbanization is predicted to create new opportunities and promote the sustainable development of the Chinese economy.

Effectively managing the flow of people to cities from the countryside, foreign countries, and other cities will be crucial in determining whether that happens. The stakes are huge and will fundamentally affect the future course of China.

During the event IOM will launch a Chinese-language version of its flagship publication, the World Migration Report. Entitled "Migrants and Cities: New Partnerships to Manage Mobility", it explores how migration and migrants are shaping cities, and how the life of migrants, in turn is shaped by cities, their organizations and rules.



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The policy seminar benefitted from the participation of key Chinese counterparts, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the National Development and Reform Commission, the State Administration for Foreign Expert Affairs, the Guangzhou municipal authorities and Guangdong provincial authorities, the EU Delegation to China, Consulates-General of the EU Member States in Guangzhou, Consulates-General of African and Asian countries in Guangzhou, and European and Chinese experts on cities and migration.

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