

## Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration

### High Level Regional Roundtable

#### *Social and Economic Impact of Migration: migrant vulnerabilities and integration needs in Central Asia*

26 February 2016, Astana, Kazakhstan

**The High Level Regional Roundtable on the theme “Social and Economic Impact of Migration: migrant vulnerabilities and integration needs in Central Asia” took place in Astana, Kazakhstan on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016.** The roundtable was jointly organized by the International Organization for Migration’s Sub-Regional Coordination Office for Central Asia in Astana, and the Library of the First President of Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev Center).

Participating at the meeting were government stakeholders and community and religious leaders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as international experts and international organizations. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen the capacity of participating government and non-government stakeholders in the sphere of addressing the complex challenges related to irregular migration, labour migration, trafficking in persons and migrants’ rights in Central Asia, and the broader region, through sharing good practices, analysing emerging trends, identifying gaps and providing recommendations.

The event was organized within the framework of the IOM program “Addressing Mixed Migration flows in Central Asia through capacity building” Phase II (2015-2016) funded by the Government of the United States (BPRM-PIM).

The topic of the roundtable was the “Social and Economic Impact of Migration: migrant vulnerabilities and integration needs in Central Asia”, and sessions covered the following thematic areas:

- **The impact of human mobility and migration on economies, societies and the environment in Central Asia: addressing key challenges**

Labour migration has had a mixed impact on the countries of origin in Central Asia and the broader region. On the one hand, it has provided a stimulus to local development and served as an instrument of balancing labour needs, addressing such issues as youth unemployment, low wages and limited job supply. However, in the long term, large-scale emigration has at times produced negative consequences, putting strain on families, local communities and larger regions. New challenges have arisen with the fallout from the economic crisis affecting countries of destination, most notably through devaluation reducing the level of remittances and through application of reentry bans on irregular migrants.

During the session, the national as well as local perspectives on challenges facing returning migrants and communities were offered by representatives of Central Asian states as well as community and religious leaders.

- **Factors and consequences of migration out of and within Central Asia: key findings from IOM field assessments in Central Asia and national expert views**

The session drew on the past and current IOM researches, in particular the report “Mapping of Irregular Migration in Central Asia 2015” <http://www.iom.kz/publications> and the “Tajik Migrants with Re-entry bans to Russian Federation 2014” [http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/tajik\\_migrants\\_report\\_15jan.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/tajik_migrants_report_15jan.pdf) as well as field

observations from an assessment on re-entry banned migrants (conducted August-September 2015) and the preliminary results of the work of national experts investigating the vulnerabilities of returning migrants.

The discussed topics included the scale and characteristics of regular and irregular migratory flows, effects of the Eurasian Economic Union enlargement and of imposition of re-entry bans, possibilities of re-integration of returning migrants into the local labour markets and communities, crisis scenarios and sources of radicalism and extremism among Central Asian migrants and ways to address the issue.

- **Regional and national perspective on regulating migration: recent reforms and areas of need**

Participating states acknowledged that proper regulation of migratory flows requires further improvement of mechanisms for collecting, processing and analyzing migration statistics as well as improving co-ordination mechanisms between all involved state agencies. In this perspective, the session dealt with vital questions such as: migration management as a key area within national development strategies and regional cooperation schemes, following the Almaty Process; Legislative and institutional reforms and closer inter-agency coordination in such areas as: facilitating immigration of priority groups, regularizing seasonal and local cross-border movement, addressing trafficking in persons and tackling security threats; search for innovative approaches in migration regulation – which remains a top priority for most countries, such as maintaining ties with the diaspora, countering fraud and abuse of migrant workers' rights and informing own nationals of the risks and opportunities related to work abroad. Return migration highlights the link between labour migration and local and national development. In such context, human development implications of labour migration and remittance flows among the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan should be at the centre of national development policies and programming, and the Sustainable Development Agenda, as well as protection measures for the welfare of migrants, provision of quality health and social services, and improved skills of migrants through vocational education.

The session provided an opportunity for sharing national perspectives on the best ways to respond to issues arising in connection with return migration, with the contribution of national experts whose presentations covered the recent policy developments in the participating states, outlining challenges facing the policy-makers.

- **Protection of migrants rights**

The session drew on the special Reports "Migrants' Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan – 2014" and "On current issues affecting Human Rights Protection in the Area of Combatting trafficking in persons in the Republic of Kazakhstan- 2015" ( Human Rights Commission under the President of Kazakhstan / IOM Kazakhstan) <http://www.iom.kz/publications>.

The session was centered on the existing legal rules to constrain, regulate, and channel state authority over migration which are a result of state-to-state relations, negotiations and practice and are enshrined in non-binding instruments and multilateral and bilateral treaties, or have become part of customary international law. These rules constitute the framework for cooperative migration governance and reflect primarily the interests of states, their nationals and interstate relations. Recognition of the human rights of migrants and the need for the promotion and protection of these rights in the exercise of state sovereignty has been present in IOM's constituent documents since the Organization's foundation. The IOM Constitution and certain Council decisions provide the basis for IOM's involvement in promoting IML as part of its comprehensive migration management frameworks.

***For more information please visit:***

IOM Kazakhstan website: <http://www.iom.kz/new/192-roundtable-high-level-eng>

The Library of the Nation Leader: <http://presidentlibrary.kz/?p=7098&lang=ru>

Kazakhstan's Prime minister's site: <https://primeminister.kz/news/show/26/zamglavy-mzsr-rk-otmechaet-neobhodimost-usilenija-mezhgossotrudnichestva-v-sfere-trudovoj-migratsii/26-02-2016?lang=en>

Site of "Strategy 2050": <https://strategy2050.kz/en/news/32439/>





