
For workers, for families and for migrants brutalized in transit

The future of migration is *now*... a time to build governance

Statement presented verbally and in writing to the
International Organization for Migration – 99th session of the Council 30 November 2010
by John K. Bingham, ICMC Head of Policy

Check against delivery

Mr Chair:

ICMC congratulates IOM on its new World Migration Report, beginning with the meticulous and inclusive manner in which it was developed, and its positive core. We can hardly think of a more important focus than “building capacities for change”.

Our programmes and members worldwide tell us that the future of migration is not 5 or 10 years away but now.

The future of migration is “now” in *demographic imbalance*. Our members in the north are concerned by the need for workers in all fields, but the need for policies that treat those workers fairly, including regularizing those whose labour is *structurally* needed in their countries of employment. Our members in the south are concerned by the growing “culture of migration”, i.e., the expectation of whole generations of children that they will “have” to migrate some day and among those who turn working age but cannot find jobs at home. What has happened to the “right to *not* migrate”?

The future of migration is now in millions of *families separated and left behind* by international migration. Family de-unification is a major and under-attended problem not only for children and families themselves but for social cohesion in countries of destination as well as origin. To quote from the report to States of the 400 civil society delegates and observers at the Global Forum a few weeks ago, “we believe that family dis-integration on the scale being produced by migration today is inexorably weakening our societies.”

In building capacities for change, one change we would urge is an end to ***atomizing human families*** in migration policies and discussion. We talk about children, women, single workers, now even DNA —but rarely about families: family not only as the fuller context of all of its members but also as the first protection—indeed—ordinarily, the real “first responder” in all social contexts—as well as holders of fundamental human rights *in* family. We continue to see this daily in the work we do on the ground with families confronting extraordinary difficulties together, among Iraqi refugees for example, and after the recent flooding in Pakistan.

The future of migration is now in the millions being *trafficked or brutalized in transit*, i.e., *gauntlet* migration. We welcome IOM’s work with stranded migrants, as well as its cooperation with UNHCR on joint procedures to identify and protect victims of human trafficking. Long active in counter-trafficking programmes in many regions of the world, including shelters and victims services, ICMC is also pleased to be collaborating with both IOM and UNHCR in projects regarding better identification, first aid, vulnerability evaluation protection and assistance not only for refugees but for the full range of those in

need of protection and assistance at point of contact: victims of trafficking and torture and victims of violence or trauma in transit. The recent massacre of 72 migrants in Tamaulipas only points to the need worldwide to reflect and act—with urgency—for the improvement of *safe* migration, beginning with legal channels of migration that match the labour need of the countries that employ them.

In this regard and finally Mr. Director General, we share the same 60th birthday with IOM and UNHCR. As on many birthdays at that age, it is a time to ask questions about purpose and destiny and moment. Our three organizations were founded just after the Second World War when millions of men women and children were moving across borders, or struggling and suffering in places to which they had moved, many forced to move and many without papers or permanence. The suffering—and the impossibility of letting it continue—was strong. The world responded creating our organizations, among others, to develop and collaborate in practical mechanisms to address the need, with humanity. Today, **60 years later, it falls to us to ask if we are not in a similar moment**, facing the question if we too will rise—or not—to meet a somewhat similar challenge. Today, once again, there are millions of men, women and children moving, not all, not all, but large numbers struggling and suffering in places to which they have moved, most of them workers rather than post-war migrants, but many just as objectively forced to move, and again, many without papers or permanence. Their suffering and the impossibility of letting it continue are strong. What mechanisms, what new capacities might we together, States, international organizations and civil society, collaborate on in response?

We think this goes to the heart of your framing, Mr. Director General, in section “F” of your report to the Council on the **global governance debate**. Having just completed a year of *Conversations on the global governance of migration* with 139 of the leading actors in international migration, [including 54 ambassadors and senior government officials—from the north and south, developed and developing countries—and among others, 26 senior officials from international organizations, including yourself, Mr. Guterres of UNHCR and Mr. Somavia of ILO,] we share the observation that you made in your report:

“our impression, from discussions with Member States, is that unilateral approaches to migration management do not produce an adequate response to today’s challenges and opportunities in the field of migration, and that there is a clear need to address migration management at the regional and international levels.”

Among the participants in our *Conversations* project, there was indeed **broad convergence that global phenomena like migration require more organized global responses, not instead of but complementary** to national and regional responses. Participants were of one mind: that the time was now—not necessarily for a new institution or framework in one jump, but to get to the business of improving migration management together.

Clearly, the change is upon us all. How *can* we build that capacity to respond—carefully, practically, **working in concert; building common ground for the global governance of migration**, to address the challenges of our 7th decade together?

I have left copies of our report, dated 1 November, including recommendations and the next steps in the *Conversations* process, on the back table.

Thank you.