



## Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM)

### Linking Emigrant Communities for More Development - Inventory of Institutional Capacities and Practices

Joint ICMPD – IOM project

#### MTM Final Conference

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-14 April 2010

On 13 and 14 April 2010, 43 participants from MTM Partner States (PS) to the MTM Dialogue, representing Algeria, Cape Verde, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Italy, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, the Netherlands, Niger, Senegal, Spain, and Switzerland met informally in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for an MTM conference organised by ICMPD and IOM. Representatives of the African Union Commission, the European Union (EU) Delegation to Ethiopia, ILO, the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, and UNDP attended as observers. The meeting, hosted by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, marked the closing of the joint ICMPD-IOM project *Linking Emigrant Communities for More Development - Inventory of Institutional Capacities and Practices*, implemented within the framework of Pillar II on 'Migration and Development' of the Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM).

The objective of Pillar II of the MTM Dialogue is to focus on medium to long-term issues related to the root causes of emigration, notably through research, support services, capacity-building, etc. To fulfil this aim, and to respond to the call of PS in further strengthening practices and capacities of institutional structures addressing emigrant communities, as expressed in the MTM Copenhagen Conference (January 2005), ICMPD together with IOM in June 2009 launched, under funding of France, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland, the project *Linking Emigrant Communities for More Development - Inventory of Institutional Capacities and Practices* at the MTM Launching Expert Meeting in The Hague, Netherlands.

Financed by:



The joint ICMPD-IOM project, which notably aims to deliver an *Inventory of Institutional Capacities and Practices*, should be seen as a part or parcel of multiple initiatives aiming to support governments with significant emigrant communities to further develop a favourable environment and support knowledge-based policy development. By providing information supporting constructive discussions on possible options on institutional mechanisms, support policies and legislation, outreach channels and initiatives relating to emigrant communities, the project and its related Inventory further aims to:

- Show how some governments have chosen to institutionalise their relation with their emigrant community, and
- Serve as a basis for dialogue on good practices, lessons learned and future recommendations for further intra- and inter-state cooperation on emigrant community-related matters.

Although non-exhaustive, the Inventory of the joint ICMPD-IOM project offers an overview of comparable information on existing institutional practices and identified challenges related to emigrant communities faced by 13 countries of origin, namely Algeria, Cape Verde, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Syria and Tunisia.

In this context, the objectives of the MTM Final Conference were fourfold:

- 1) To present the Inventory and key findings;
- 2) To provide a forum for dialogue on possible opportunities for exchange of experiences of governments with regards to emigrant communities-related affairs;
- 3) To elaborate on means of dissemination of the Inventory, to make sure that it becomes a functional and serviceable instrument for MTM Partner States and Agencies; and
- 4) To pave the way for the next steps of this initiative.

The meeting was formally opened by the Director-General for International Organisations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. The opening session included further statements by Spain on behalf of the Spanish presidency of the EU, by the Delegation of the EU to Ethiopia, by IOM, and ICMPD.

Prior to the working sessions of the meeting, ICMPD and IOM, as implementing partners of the joint project, presented the project and its framework with four presentations, notably:

- The MTM Dialogue and Pillar II on ‘Migration & Development’
- The joint ICMPD-IOM project “Linking Emigrant Communities for More Development – Inventory of Institutional Capacities and Practices”

- Presentation of project findings
- Ensuring the usefulness of the Inventory – steps ahead

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## **Summary of Discussions**

The meeting encompassed five working sessions:

1. Practices put in place by governments to encourage emigrant communities to contribute to the development of their country of origin – how to enhance national capacities through south-south cooperation and exchange of good practices?
2. Outreach strategies to link up with emigrant communities – how can governments enhance outreach activities to inform their emigrant communities on and promote incentives put in place as a means to encourage return of various emigrant resources for the development of the country of origin.
3. Development of knowledge-based national strategies relating to emigrant communities – how can governments proceed from data collection to development of comprehensive policy?
4. Development of follow up activities. What are the next steps ahead?
5. Ensuring efficient dissemination and use - example: Development of the Migration & Development layer of the project “*Interactive Map on Migration*” (i-Map) and feeding in results of the joint ICMPD-IOM project – how to ensure that the i-Map Migration & Development layer becomes a useful tool for Partner States.

The five working sessions of the expert meeting were characterised by open and fruitful discussions, highlighting the importance of sharing and building on good experiences of governments to engage emigrant communities in, and incite transfer of financial, social, human and intellectual resources of citizens residing abroad for, national development processes.

**Working Session I: Practices put in place by governments to encourage emigrant communities to contribute to the development of their country of origin – how to enhance national capacities through south-south cooperation and exchange of good practices?**

Plenary discussion took place, whereby some of the key points raised by representatives were as follows:

- ❖ Whereas there in recent years have been multifarious practices put in place by government to encourage contribution of emigrant communities for development in their countries of origin, one crucial issue in this regard is the enhancement of trust between countries of origin and their emigrant community.
- ❖ It is important to promote that South-South and South-North cooperation should focus on ways to create a conducive environment in order to enhance trust between nationals abroad and their countries of origin, by means of sharing experiences on, *inter alia*:
  - Dual Citizenship;
  - Portability of social rights (e.g. transfer of social security benefits);
  - Relations with migrant associations and civil society;
  - Investment facilitation and orientation;
  - Creating favourable conditions for returnees.
- ❖ To further develop national practices and policies relating to migration and development, countries of origin are increasingly initiating South-South consultations. Some countries have already put in place local consultations with neighbouring countries and/or participate in dialogues undertaken within regional or sub-regional frameworks such as ECOWAS. Notwithstanding this, on-going consultations between countries of origin do not always take place within strategic institutional frameworks of cooperation.
- ❖ To pursue policy coherence with regards to migration and/or emigrant community related issues, it is key to enhance inter-institutional coordination at national level and to mainstream migration and development into national policies, notably Poverty Reduction Strategies.
- ❖ Initiatives for global mapping of emigrant communities' presence, profile and characteristics, and frameworks for engaging the African Diaspora (identified as the 6<sup>th</sup> region of Africa) for development are being designed at international level, including the set up of dedicated institutions, elaboration of strategies and plan of actions as well as the development of targeted cooperation programmes.

**Working Session II: Outreach strategies to link up with emigrant communities – how can governments enhance outreach activities to inform their emigrant communities on and promote incentives put in place as a means to encourage return of various emigrant resources for the development of the country of origin**

The following main points were underlined by representatives during plenary discussions:

- ❖ Countries are increasingly initiating and fine tuning programmes to reach out to their emigrant communities through a wide range of initiatives and/or events either in the country of destination or in the home country. Non-exhaustive but illustrating examples include Planet Lebanon, the Ethiopian Diaspora Day, the Homecoming Summit in Ghana, the Investment Forum of Malians Abroad, etc. Moreover, outreach activities are and can effectively be carried out through spontaneous networks of migrant associations and/or through more structured ones, such as Local Offices of National Councils and/or Cultural Centres in place in main destination countries.
- ❖ To ensure maximal efficiency and capacity of national institutions to address issues relating to emigrant communities, some countries have established dedicated structures, whereas others have chosen to create a department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The role of consular services vis-à-vis other kind of assistance or initiatives to promote investment/engagement is instrumental and prevail in various types, mirroring national structures and country specificities.
- ❖ In development of policy/cooperation, it is vital to enter into dialogue and consultations with emigrant communities in order to find out their needs and wishes, so as to elaborate tailor-made systems.
- ❖ Decentralised cooperation is an important factor to support migration and development and to provide the possibility to migrants and/or migrant associations to contribute to local development in their countries of origin. Good examples highly praised are the MIDA Programme of IOM, and triangular cooperation. Moreover, decentralised cooperation has been given increased international, national and local recognition and actions are increasingly being initiated in this context. However, a challenge exists in terms of adequate structures being in place/or being put in place to manage these initiatives.
- ❖ To enhance outreach and engagement of emigrant communities, there is a need to enhance public exposure of initiatives relating to migration and/or emigrant communities. Partner States called for support on this matter.
- ❖ There is a need to further explore the potential of South-North Institutional cooperation.

**Working Session III: Development of knowledge-based national strategies relating to emigrant communities – how can governments proceed from data collection to development of comprehensive policy?**

Plenary discussion took place, whereby some of the main points raised by representatives were as follows:

- ❖ Continuous mapping and profiling i.e. collecting quantitative and qualitative information on emigrant communities, constitute a necessary background for development and up-dating of knowledge-based policy and practices. Such experiences must also be articulated, bearing in mind the multifaceted aspects and evolving nature of emigrant communities.
- ❖ Data gathering processes present challenges for countries of origin. This can be addressed through various mechanisms, such as:
  - Cooperation with destination countries and their respective municipal authorities;
  - Surveys in specific areas of origin and/or destination;
  - The issuance of ID-card to migrants;
  - Registration for out-of-country voting;
  - Cooperation with migrant associations and/or civil society.
- ❖ It is important to map out the needs of countries of origin in order to better identify areas where the broad range of resources and expertise of emigrant communities could contribute to the development process of the country.
- ❖ Mapping in countries of destination and origin could contribute to the elaboration of tailor-made policies, instruments or mechanisms matching both the emigrant communities' profile and capacities with the development needs of the countries of origin.
- ❖ Data collection involves various stakeholders (national, international, civil society etc.) and needs to be carefully coordinated. Limitations, however, exist in sharing information on data available with separate entities, resulting in risks of overlapping of exercises and/or lack of reliable information.

**Working Session IV: Development of follow up activities. What are the next steps ahead?**

Representatives emphasised the following points:

- ❖ Interest was shown to continue and build on the current Inventory exercise and specific request from countries were made, notably relating to support/assistance in policy development and enhancing institutional capacities to mainstream migration into development policies at national level. Support to temporary return of highly qualified migrants was also raised.
- ❖ It was highlighted that a South-South cooperation perspective should be encouraged for a consecutive project. It was further emphasised that follow up activities need to be elaborated from a global way of thinking, ensuring however action at local level.

To ensure regional anchorage, it is further key that relevant actors such as the AUC and sub-regional stakeholders (e.g. ECOWAS) are invited to take part in the follow up project. To ensure effective and efficient continuation of activities relating to the joint ICMPD-IOM project, South-North cooperation of institutional character should further be reflected in any follow-up initiatives. This is also to ensure sharing of and building on experiences between countries of origin, transit and destination.

- ❖ Countries expressed their willingness to ensure South-South exchange of expertise and to host experts of other countries to share and build on interesting practices of other origin countries.
- ❖ It is important to maintain momentum and follow up activities within the framework of the MTM Dialogue. However, the Dialogue needs to ensure practical results and concrete actions.
- ❖ Input and ideas raised by participants during the session will be taken into consideration and included to the maximum extent possible in the final elaboration of follow-up project activities. ICMPD and IOM will furthermore soon meet to discuss elaboration of possible bridging projects.
- ❖ Donor countries supporting the joint ICMPD and IOM endeavour, expressed the importance that follow-up initiatives should:
  - Build on demands and needs of countries of origin;
  - Have an emphasis on South-South exchange of expertise between countries;
  - Ensure that efforts are translated into practice to ensure sustainability of project results.

**Working Session V: Ensuring efficient dissemination and use - example: Development of the Migration & Development layer of the project “*Interactive Map on Migration*” (i-Map) and feeding in results of the joint ICMPD-IOM project – how to ensure that the i-Map Migration & Development layer becomes a useful tool for Partner States.**

Plenary discussion took place, whereby some of the main points raised by representatives were as follows:

- ❖ Interest was shown in the development of the Migration & Development layer of the i-Map as a means to ensure effective dissemination of Inventory findings. In this regard, the potential of the i-Map as a global instrument was underlined. Moreover, it was suggested to transmit results and the methodology used in the Inventory through regional consultative processes and global forums (e.g. GFMD).
- ❖ Meeting with embassies of participating countries covered by the Inventory, was suggested as a way to inform countries on the findings. This exercise could also be

applied in setting up meeting with migrant associations/networks, as a means to inform them on what is in place in their respective countries and to receive their input on important factors to take into consideration for the elaboration process of the follow-up project proposal.

- ❖ To ensure greater access to i-Map, suggestions were made to ensure a broad public access to the i-Map Migration & Development layer and include a link to the i-Map at website of academic institutions (e.g. MPI, Sussex University, Oxford University, CARIM Network and Maastricht Graduate School of Governance)
- ❖ For the development of the i-Map and its three layers (Mixed Migration Flows, Migration & Development, and Legal Migration), requests were made to ensure that regional processes relating to migration are reflected in the profiles in the layers. Various initiatives which have a similar focus should also be properly reflected.

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In the closing session, the joint ICMPD-IOM project team expressed its gratitude and thankfulness to the participating countries for their active participation and valuable contribution to the successful implementation of the project. Partner States were furthermore praised for their excellent collaboration during the information collection missions, and for their valuable and enlightening answers to the joint ICMPD-IOM questionnaire.

Representatives expressed their gratitude and thankfulness to Ethiopia, host country, for its warm hospitality, and thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the joint ICMPD-IOM project team and the chairs for the excellent meeting arrangements, as well as for the open and rich discussions.

In the closing session, IOM, ICMPD and the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, respectively organisers and host of the closing conference, formally closed the discussions, reiterating the importance of South-South and South-North cooperation, as well as cooperation between states and international stakeholders involved in migration-related matters to share and build on good experiences pertaining to emigrant communities.