



International Catholic
Migration Commission

Conversations

On the Global Governance of Migration

Helping to build a process
for achieving Global Governance

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Introduction

Migration is an issue that is most reflective of the times in which we live.

With globalization bringing new technologies and deepening international integration and dependency, the movement of goods, services, capital *and* people has been greatly increased and facilitated. Indeed, the number of migrants has doubled since 1980 alone, reaching more than 200 million people.

Furthermore, we no longer live in a world composed strictly of “sending” and “receiving” countries. Today, all nations have migrants leaving from, arriving to and transiting through, their territories—South to North, North to North, and increasingly, South to South. In theory, this should facilitate a more coherent form of migration policy and decision-making, given that all states have an appreciation of the migration pressures and a longing for better, more manageable approaches and solutions.

Yet, the governance model remains almost entirely national.

Over the course of the past decade, we have seen an important and continuing increase in transnational efforts by governments, international organizations and civil society to maximize the opportunities of global migration while, at the same time, addressing its challenges.

From an international perspective, the UN has been steadily integrating issues of global migration into its agenda. There have been a number of notable global initiatives, including among others: the appointment of the Special Representative on Migration; the commissioning of the Doyle Migration study, which led to the creation of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM); the tabling of the GCIM’s report of findings and recommendations; the convening of the High Level Dialogue on Migration to discuss the report and other inputs; and the establishment of an annual Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

Through these and other processes, UNHCR and IOM continue to demonstrate leadership in strengthening understanding and capacity through the implementation of their respective mandates, regarding different but intersecting aspects of contemporary migration. Similarly, governments—together with international organizations and civil society—have also been active on inter-regional, regional and bilateral migration fronts, including especially the growing number of regional consultative processes.

As a result, a growing number of knowledgeable people, deeply engaged with the global migration dossier, recognize the importance and necessity of mobilizing global leadership in order to achieve a greater level of international cooperation and collaboration. For many of these experts, it is not a question of *whether* a discussion of global governance of migration goes forward but rather *when* and *how*.

As an international organization that has long been involved with migration, and worked with migration actors at all levels, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) would like to contribute to better understanding the question of “how.”

Moving forward

ICMC joins those who believe that the thinking and planning for a process that will ultimately lead to an effective global governance of migration needs to begin immediately. We are hopeful that an

exchange of possibilities and perspectives on such governance will contribute to a better understanding of how to make that shift, and of the issues and steps that must be considered along the way.

Indeed, we sense the growing determination to move this process to the next stage. We also recognize that this represents a formidable task for our international community, which will require thorough and inclusive discussions.

In a modest but committed way, ICMC aims to contribute to the informal dialogue by engaging with many different actors in order to explore the different elements—both process and policy-related—associated with the issue of global governance.

Conscientious of the collective value of the perspectives offered by these diverse actors, ICMC has welcomed Ambassador Sergio Marchi to the organization's Geneva headquarters, as Special Advisor to the Secretary General. Having formerly served as Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (as well as International Trade, and Environment); Canadian Ambassador to the UN and WTO in Geneva; and Commissioner on the Global Commission on International Migration, his valuable experience will contribute to a greater understanding of the potentials offered by global mobility.

Ambassador Marchi will facilitate the first phase of what we have entitled *Conversations on the Global Governance of Migration (GGM)*. We are hopeful that this exercise in bringing together relevant actors with valuable and diversified expertise will generate further developments in this critical area of migration policy.

At the conclusion of our joint discussions, and based on the input received, the objective will be to organize, draft and publish the elements and perspectives—without attribution—regarding the global governance of migration. It is hoped that this may serve to further stimulate the public discourse on this specific topic, facilitate the development of a number of relevant benchmarks, and encourage decision makers to take up its cause with appropriate urgency.

Political will and institutional capacity

Advancing an international agenda on migration requires political will and commitment. It also calls for appropriate institutional capacity and architecture.

In tackling international problems, leaders increasingly recognize that they can neither talk about the forces of international trade and investment, nor on the challenges of world hunger, disease and terrorism, the dangers posed by climate change, nor indeed, about global migration and development—and then proceed to deal with them in an isolated fashion.

The need to act in much broader and interrelated terms has become evident, if we wish to provide remedies that work and better connect the many dots.

The global coordination and response to the current global financial and economic crisis—including the establishment of the G-20, and its requests and support to such bodies as the WTO, World Bank, and the IMF—perhaps best typifies this understanding, and the paradigm shift that is taking place in political governance.

As we try to apply this thinking to global mobility, there are many critical issues to be addressed. We must approach them thoughtfully and reasonably, and avoid divisive, antagonistic debate. We should

attempt to define the different pieces of the global migration puzzle and how to help make them fit better and more coherently with one another.

A few considerations and questions before us:

- i) Much work has been done by a number of leading intergovernmental organizations in their respective domains, including UNHCR, IOM and the ILO. Similarly, many other intergovernmental efforts have proven to be of great value in defining new perspectives and in facilitating new procedural approaches. Unlike other social and economic issues of international magnitude, however, a single, overarching intergovernmental agency responsible for global migration policy, either inside or outside the UN system, currently does not exist. Is this not the right moment to focus on those institutional and policy reforms that would be required for a truly global response to migration?
- ii) Why do Ministers responsible for migration have no regular meetings in their calendar where they could come together at the *global* level to agree on *collective* action towards issues of shared concern? By rather stark contrast, for instance, Ministers of Finance meet at least twice a year at the IMF and World Bank; Ministers of Trade meet every second year at the WTO; Ministers of Health meet annually at the WHO; Ministers of Labor are invited to meet every year at the ILO; Ministers of the Environment seem to be meeting constantly in different configurations, to deal with climate change.
- iii) And in such a process, how would the respective international agencies, each responsible for a piece of the global migration pie, fit in?
- iv) After three years of annual sessions, is it possible to imagine the Global Forum on Migration and Development moving from a discourse mode to a more action-oriented trajectory? If so, which issues and actions would the Forum need to initially focus on for action, and how would it best be able to implement a pragmatic, best practices approach?
- v) What should the role of the UN SG's Special Representative on Migration be in the overall objective of facilitating a more active form of global leadership and coordination?
- vi) How and where could civil society provide its inputs and contributions? Currently, many issues related to migration, from processing to integration, enjoy an intense collaboration with civil society, both on the ground and in policy building. How can this continue and even improve, with the eventual elaboration of a new global architecture?

Objectives of the Conversations on the Global Governance of Migration (GGM)

These are the kind of questions and issues that we will need to address in contemplating a global response to migration. Other representatives will no doubt bring other factors to the table, and that is why we believe the GGM can be a valuable instrument for outreach, discussion, and advocacy.

The GGM will coordinate and facilitate a process of dialogue, in partnership with various organizations involved in migration, in the weeks and months ahead.

Our objectives for the dialogue are clear and focused, and founded on five guiding principles:

- i) The brainstorming and solution-seeking conversations will be informal, candid, substantive, and conducted according to Chatham House Rules.
- ii) The conversations will engage as broad and diverse a set of migration actors and experts as is possible within a first phase that will culminate at the end of December 2009.
- iii) The conversations need to advance our understanding and thinking on how the international community can best and collectively address the challenges that global migration poses.
- iv) The conversations will be conducted through a series of meetings and roundtables, co-partnered with different organizations, and assume an open, free flowing, and non-negotiating approach.
- v) At the conclusion of our conversations, ICMC will organize the collective input, thereafter drafting and publishing critical elements and perspectives regarding the global governance of migration. It is hoped that this will serve to further stimulate public discourse on this important topic; develop a number of relevant benchmarks; make recommendations and commitments to additional meetings and events next year as appropriate; and encourage various decision makers to take up the cause.

Engaging together

ICMC does not claim any special responsibilities when it comes to the issue of global governance regarding migration. We are but one interested and engaged migration actor that wishes, in cooperation with many others, to make a constructive contribution towards advancing the understanding and increasing the public attention, to this important realm of migration policy-making.

Neither do we underestimate the sensitivity that can be evoked at even the mention of a global governance for migration. Among other things, governments and international agencies already face a charged and difficult international agenda.

Yet we remain hopeful. Hopeful, that nations will draw strength and inspiration from the many positive, dynamic features of migration that they share. Hopeful, that interested migration actors of all kinds will not hesitate to participate in these informal conversations with reflection, fresh energy and creativity. Hopeful—and in the end confident—that an engagement of this kind will make a distinct contribution to the national and international consideration of contemporary migration.

It is with this sense of hope that, ICMC invites you to engage with us in this exercise. We would warmly welcome your ideas and proposals. Please feel free to send us your views by writing or emailing us before the end of November 2009 at: GGM@icmc.net.

Thank you in advance, for your support and insights.



Johan KETELERS
ICMC Secretary General