INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT KEY ASPECTS FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE 2006

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Migration has become one of the major issues of concern in the world in the last few years. The

Promoting cultural diversity also requires finding a balance between the need for social cohesion, on the one hand, and the respect for cultural diversity on the other hand. Respect for cultural diversity and for migrants' different socio-cultural background must indeed be balanced with the need for social cohesion.

In this respect, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families plays a key role. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990 and entered into force on 1 July 2003. Recently the commitment of the United Nations system to better protect the human rights of migrants was also affirmed by the General Assembly's declaration of December 18 as the International Migrants Day in order to make the special situation of migrants more visible, including their grave human rights' problems. In 1999, a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Migrants was appointed within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Acceptance and implementation of the Convention is a strategic objective for UNESCO in close co-operation with other United Nations partners. UNESCO participates, with ILO, IOM, the OHCHR, and several NGOs, in the Steering Committee for the Global Campaign to co-ordinate activities both at the international and national levels to promote further ratifications of the Convention. UNESCO will continue to promote the ratification of the Convention through research and analysis of obstacles to its implementation and through advocacy activities, awareness raising and training. It will also foster the implementation of the
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platform for these debates and the exchange of views, thus enabling the elaboration of scenarios for the future of migration.

B. OTHER PRIORITIES

1. Promote a balance between cultural diversity and social integration in multicultural societies

As a consequence of cross-border population flows many countries have a growing number of immigrant populations that differ widely, both from a cultural, religious or linguistic point of view, from the native population. Many countries have seen an increase in xenophobia and racism at various levels of the society, effecting foreigners as well as immigrants who have become nationals. This situation calls for policies that respect the rights of migrants, underscore the benefits of diversity and at the same time promote social cohesion. UNESCO is already heavily engaged in a number of initiatives promoting pluralism, tolerance and cultural diversity, as shown amongst others by the recent adoption of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and its work on racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

2. Contribute to the fight against human trafficking and exploitative migration

Despite increased spending on enforcement measures in major destination countries, the number of migrants in an irregular situation has not declined and trafficking of humans remain a global reality. Trafficked persons are victims of serious human rights' violations. Smuggling and trafficking also undermines security because of links with organised crime, violence and corruption. In addition, irregular migrants are often stereotyped and regarded as criminals.

3. Strengthen the capacity, sustainability and effectiveness of diaspora networks

Since the beginning of the 1960s, brain drain has been identified as a serious problem affecting developing countries in their capacity for development. Recently, however, there is a strong emphasis on the potentials to reverse this trend and achieve brain gain, based on the idea that the expatriate skilled population may be considered as a potential asset instead of a definite loss. Migrants' international experience, which includes notably the acquisition of skills and of foreign languages, can be very useful to sending countries. While distance has long been an obstacle to migrants' implication in their country of origin, today's information and communication technologies bring the opportunity to empower diaspora networks and enhance their impact on international co-operation policies.

4. Improve statistical data on migration related to higher education

The increasing globalisation of higher education, the new trade in higher education services, the use of distance learning and overseas campuses are leading to more demand for data and statistics on student mobility, mobility of educators and related issues. Furthermore the strong impact of migration on 'brain drain' and 'brain gain' requires well documented statistical data to allow monitoring and analysis.

NOTE

[1]Russell, S.S. (2002). International Migration: Implications for the World Bank, p.15.