



The Rhodes Declaration on Human Mobility

On the occasion of the Meeting of the World Public Forum's Dialogue of Civilizations in Rhodes, Greece, October 8-11, 2009, representatives of international and regional public and national institutions, members of civil society organizations and faith-based groups, representatives of intellectual, cultural, spiritual, business and media spheres from different countries, representatives of various civilizations and cultural traditions, and individuals who share the principles of mutual openness, accessibility and respect, adopted the following considerations and recommendations.

CONSIDERATIONS

- i. International human mobility for work, study and personal development is a **significant factor** in the world economy, international relations, culture and human development.
- ii. Global interdependence has inevitably led to an increasingly seamless transfer of capital, technology and natural persons. Managing mobility more innovatively will **optimize the international division of labour and skills** to benefit all stakeholders.
- iii. International human mobility contributes to **economic efficiency, cultural development and international understanding**. Properly managed, it can enhance political stability as well.
- iv. Long term demographic and technological developments have laid the groundwork for **increased international human mobility in the future**.
- v. **The “diaspora nation”**, officially 200 million people but certainly many millions more, is not sufficiently recognized, appreciated or afforded access to social, cultural, educational and health resources.
- vi. Human mobility takes **many forms**, permanent or temporary, economic or humanitarian, within countries, between neighboring countries or across the globe.
- vii. Remittances are the source of **the largest and most stable financial flows** from richer to poorer countries and contribute directly to a more just and fair balance in international economic relations.

- viii. A correct analysis of the current world economic crisis demonstrates the continuing importance of international workers and professionals and their **contributions to societies of origin and destination**.
- ix. **Climate change and natural disasters** are likely to accelerate the pace of population movements in the twenty-first century.
- x. **Internal migration** is itself a major phenomenon in many countries and entails economic and social consequences similar to those that result from international mobility.
- xi. International organizations, regional entities and other groups have made valuable contributions during the recent economic crisis to reforming the global financial architecture. It is expected that they will foster a more rational and equitable regime for human mobility in the coming period. In this context, the emergence of the **G-20** is likely to play an important role.
- xii. **Temporary arrangements for work mobility** help to fill gaps in the receiving country's work force and enable returning workers and professionals to enrich their home economies through the resources they accumulated during their international work experience.
- xiii. **Many nations have boosted their development** through circular migration and investments from the diaspora that improve the quality of life at home, a phenomenon that deserves to grow without let or hindrance.
- xiv. **The absence of agreed international norms and practices** in human mobility leads directly to the encouragement of irregular movements and creates an opportunity for the exploitation of those who seek a better life outside their home country.
- xv. Advances in **information technology** have helped link diaspora communities with the societies from which they originated. Considerations of privacy and security are necessary to prevent misuse of such technologies.
- xvi. **The media** have an important role to play in presenting a fair and rational coverage of mobility issues, particularly by explaining the positive relationship between migration and development.
- xvii. Political and cultural discrimination against people seen as foreigners derives in large part from misunderstandings that can and should be overcome by **more forthright educational and integration policies** managed through partnerships involving governments and other relevant stakeholders. Equally the health dimension requires special focus.
- xviii. The foreigners among us are "**messengers of civilization**" and contribute strongly to the dialogue of civilizations that we support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to optimize the advantages of international human mobility and to deal appropriately with increasing pressures and challenges, governments should take steps to encourage and facilitate international human mobility in legal and orderly channels, whether temporary or permanent.
2. In addition to central governments and international organizations, civil society, the private sector, associations, religious entities and local governments have a crucial role in encouraging better understanding of human mobility as a positive factor and in working together to improve conditions for diaspora communities through public debate, advocacy and the provision of services; the role of these institutions should be encouraged.
3. The international community should devise credible mechanisms to monitor the impact of the economic and social crisis on mobile populations, especially during the recovery and reconstruction phase.
4. The international community as a whole should work to expand the application of information technology to international human mobility in order to assist diaspora communities and those who provide services to them.
5. Urgent measures should be taken to eliminate regulatory hurdles and significantly lower the cost of remitting money. The increased use of technology can greatly simplify the process and cost of remittances.
6. The private sector and large corporations in their long term plans should seek improved symmetry between the emerging demand for skills and orderly arrangements for the supply of workers and professionals.
7. New tools should be created and mobilized to catalyze private sector activity and foster meaningful public-private partnerships. The Association for International Mobility is an essential and constructive instrument. Other civil society institutions could equally make positive contributions.
8. The publication of a *Labour Mobility Index*, together with adequate resources, will help governments and societies towards better policy and treatment of mobile populations.
9. The World Public Forum--Dialogue of Civilizations should continue to provide a platform for discussion of human mobility and should foster the adoption of constructive measures by states and societies.

Rhodes, Greece

11 October 2009