

## **Migration**

- 6.17 *The dynamic dimension of migration:* Virtually every state is both a country of origin and of destination for migrants. In a world of porous borders, rapidly evolving modes of transportation and communications, and globalized economies, diverse populations are destined to interact through continued migration, presenting new challenges, particularly for host countries. How this dynamic is portrayed in the media, discussed by political and cultural leaders, and managed by policy-makers will determine whether populations view increased diversity as a source of strength or as a threat.
- 6.18 *Proactive strategies for addressing migration:* Coordinated strategies at the national, regional and international levels are indispensable to prevent the inhuman and discriminatory treatment of migrant populations. The solution is not to build walls around nations. The most promising approaches appear to be those collaborative efforts taken by countries of origin, transit and countries of destination for large immigrant populations to deal with the reasons for mass migration. In this regard, significant progress would be achieved if wealthier countries met their commitments of increased investment in the developing world, as this, together with good governance and capacity building efforts in developing countries, would help improve economic conditions in those countries.
- 6.19 *Benefits of migration:* Migrants make important contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of the societies in which they settle. At the same time, immigrant workers provide a significant economic boon – though often at the cost of considerable personal sacrifice – to their home countries. Furthermore, remittances constitute a large percentage of the foreign exchange receipts of labor exporting countries.
- 6.20 *Challenges of migration:* The integration of immigrant communities can raise a number of challenges including difficulties for immigrants in accessing education and social service systems and in overcoming restrictions in housing and job opportunities, barriers to becoming full citizens, and experiences of racism. However, the integration

of Muslim immigrant populations in the US and Europe presents particular challenges, especially since the events of 2001. These populations who began to experience more discrimination nowadays in Europe and in the United States are increasingly fearful of encroachments on fundamental civil liberties. However, the challenges faced by Muslim immigrants are more pronounced in Europe than in the US. Indeed, Muslim immigrants to the US, on average, have higher levels of education and are more affluent than non-Muslim Americans.<sup>13</sup>

- 6.21 *Combating discrimination:* Important steps toward the development and implementation of policies that facilitate immigrant communities' participation in the mainstream of society have been taken through the adoption in 1997 of the European Employment Strategy, which seeks to remove barriers to employment for migrant workers and ethnic minorities, and through the establishment of the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). These experiences should be expanded and enlarged, beyond the European context.
- 6.22 *Supporting expanded inclusive dialogue at all levels:* Establishing coherent integration strategies requires regular dialogue among representatives of government and immigrant communities, civil society representatives, religious organizations and employers, engaging at local, regional, national and international levels. While informal and *ad hoc* engagement is valuable, institutional structures that support dialogue on a regular ongoing basis can ensure the efficacy of such approaches in promoting greater integration. Such efforts help achieve a balance between the demands of integration and the need to maintain one's cultural and religious identity.
- 6.23 *Leadership:* Political, civil society, and religious leadership in the West can help set the tone within which debates regarding immigration take place by speaking forcefully and publicly in defense of the rights of immigrants wherever they are endangered and by acknowledging the contributions that immigrants make to the life and livelihood of their communities.

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<sup>13</sup> See Georgetown University's Project on Muslims in the Public Square (Project MAPS), and Nimer, Mohamed, *The North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada*, New York, NY, Routledge, 2002 for data on income and education levels of U.S. immigrants from predominantly Muslim regions.

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Recommendations in this field are made with the understanding that governments with significant immigrant populations are already working in earnest to facilitate integration. Recommendations here are the result of our discussions and are made with a view to supporting existing efforts in this field. Initiatives that support successful integration include the *Handbook on Establishing Effective Labor Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination*<sup>18</sup> and the Global Forum on Migration and Development proposed at the time of the writing of this report by the UN Secretary-General.

1. *Governments with significant immigrant populations should expand incentives, support mechanisms, and funding for schools and associations that work with schools to involve students in service-learning and civic education programs.*
2. *Municipal governments and local foundations should expand support for the establishment of youth community organizations.*

Both programmes help situate young immigrants in the broader communities outside of the schools and provide direct experience in social interaction and civic activism with other youth which can reduce feelings of alienation.

3. *Public and private donors should increase funding of civil society institutions that work with immigrant communities to develop support mechanisms that allow for greater parental involvement in schools and that provide information and education to empower immigrant communities.*

Such mechanisms would address those barriers (i.e., language barriers, transport difficulties and costs, taking time from work and household care, and inexperience with parent

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<sup>17</sup> 2005 United Nations Development Programme Annual Report.

<sup>18</sup> Developed jointly by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the International Organization for Migration, and the International Labor Organization.

involvement in schools) which often limit or prevent parental participation in schools. Such efforts could substantially contribute to reducing the social alienation of immigrant youth by minimizing their experience of living in “two different” worlds – one inhabited by their families, particularly their parents, and the other by their peers and teachers in school. Developing mentoring programs to help immigrants better understand laws, customs, and how to get involved in society would help maximize integration. Similarly, creating a multi-lingual alert system to advise immigrants about changes in laws affecting them would be useful.

4. *The European Union should work with member states to standardize and integrate data collection across the continent which monitor immigrants’ access to, and experience of, the labor and housing markets as well as health, social, educational and other community services.*

The availability of such data would enable the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), related research institutions, and governments to track the progress of efforts aimed at combating discrimination against immigrant communities. This would in turn help to identify those policies and initiatives of governments, corporations, and civil society institutions that have been successful in fighting discrimination so that they can be recognized (possibly even awarded in a highly public way by the European Union), further researched (perhaps included in annual “country reports”, and possibly replicated elsewhere.

5. *Public and private donors that are concerned with interfaith relations and/or immigrant integration should expand funding for dialogue and community organizing within immigrant communities.*

Increased support for such initiatives would enable the emergence of immigrant community leadership (including religious leaders) who have successfully integrated into American and European societies as well as the development of associations and networks that can serve as representational bodies to engage in cross-cultural and interfaith dialogues with other communities or with government agencies.

6. *Immigrant community leaders and host country authorities should work together to produce material (including, for example, Internet newsletters, public service announcements and circulars) aimed at promoting respect for diversity and good community relations.*

7. *American and European universities and research centers should expand research into the significant economic, cultural, and social contributions of immigrant communities to American and European life. Likewise, they should promote publications coming from the Muslim world on a range of subjects related to Islam and the Muslim world.*

Such research would support those in the political and media sectors seeking authoritative data on the integral roles played by immigrant communities. Vocal public leadership in support of immigrants reduces the feelings of alienation in immigrant communities and

allows debates over integration policies to proceed while minimizing the specter of racist and xenophobic sentiments clouding them. Developing a media campaign to combat discrimination through ongoing messages about immigrants and highlighting the benefits of the country's diversity, contributions of immigrants, and the danger of stereotypes is critical. The media campaign should also emphasize that all who live in the country have the right to demand and obtain good services, complain about discrimination, and seek appropriate redress.

8. *Governments should participate in the Global Forum on Migration and International Development in order to increase cooperation and develop an integrated approach to migration and development.*

This consultative forum will allow governments to establish a common understanding in the areas of migration policymaking that have the greatest potential to contribute to development. It will also foster a better appreciation of the advantages that migration brings to host countries.