



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones



ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

**Second Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations
Istanbul, Turkey, 6-7 April, 2009
Working Session 2
Integrating Migrants– a challenge for inclusive societies
Monday, 6 April, 15:00- 16:30
Organized jointly by the AoC and IOM**

Background Information

The report of the High Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations aptly recognized the relevance of the integration discourse and stressed the role of leadership in countries of immigration in promoting diversity as a source of strength, not as a threat.

Integration is a dynamic two-way process, involving both immigrants and the host society, with rights and responsibilities for both sides. Within this two-way process, a number of interlocutors are essential in facilitating integration: community leaders, elected officials, local administrators and opinion makers, not to mention academics who can assist policymakers with policy measures by providing up to date information and analysis, and non-governmental, faith-based and civil society organizations which often offer perspectives from the frontline of integration initiatives.

In the context of the current financial crisis, there is the risk that community relations might be exacerbated and strained as migrants are mistakenly perceived as competing with the native labour force. In this economic climate, migrants' contributions to the host countries tend to be overshadowed and social and public service investments aimed at facilitating integration curtailed.

In light of these challenges, integration policies remain an even more important element of effective migration governance and should always accompany the management of migratory flows. As migration becomes increasingly multidirectional, the integration of migrants is one of the most important challenges faced by many governments and societies worldwide.

This panel discussion is held in recognition of the many key stakeholders in integration measures representing differing backgrounds and experiences. The panel can also serve as an initial platform allowing for a space within the AoC for cross-fertilization of experiences on best practices and lessons learned on integration policy measures.

Organization of this working session

The session will be structured first by starting with brief remarks from the moderator and each panelist, followed by a Q&A session with the participants, and a broad group discussion. The session's format geared toward fostering a creative group discussion on integration policies and measures.

The panel will be made up of

- **2 mayors**. Given that integration takes place primarily at the local level, the role of mayors in designing and implementing integration policies and programs are central to a successful and fruitful cross-cultural integration process. The 2 mayors will highlight their cities unique integration policies and experiences.
- **Newspaper director or media person**: The role of the media in raising public awareness and shaping public opinion on the contributions of migrants to the host society, both economic and cultural, is significant. The media representative will hail from a widely recognized paper which helps shape public opinion on migration and integration issues.
- **Expert/academician**: This expert will broadly discuss interaction between research, public opinion and policy making on migration and integration issues.
- **A representative from a civil society organization** concerned with integration activities.

An issues paper for this migration panel will be made available to the panelists and participants prior to the Forum.

Objectives of the Working Session

This panel discussion is meant to:

- Feature local perspectives and good practices on the challenges of integration, diversity management and social inclusion;
- Promote dialogue, offer different perspectives and discuss the roles of various stakeholders in integration policies;

- Discuss the benefits of certain integration measures and initiatives, for the host and home communities and migrants;
- Examine how public and private services as well as local administrators can promote new initiatives with immigrant communities and civil society organizations on integration measures.

This panel will also provide the occasion to inform on AoC/IOM initiatives to promote a knowledge network among people interested to pursue information sharing and capacity development on integration issues. In addition the AoC in collaboration with IOM will initiate a web-based migration and integration clearinghouse featuring approaches, guidelines, policy and academic resources, and links to associations/organizations and institutions working in the field of migrant integration.