



All Africa
Conference of Churches



World Council of Churches

Comments of the delegates of the All Africa Conference of Churches, Caritas Europa's Migration Commission, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, the Middle East Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches to the Global Forum on Migration and Development. – Brussels, 9 July 2007

"When an alien lives with you in your land you shall not ill-treat him. The alien living with you must be treated as a native-born. Love him as yourself for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" Leviticus 19, 33-34

Our organisations represent churches from Africa, Europe and the Middle East and globally - Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic - as well as Christian agencies particularly concerned with migrants and refugees and the issue of development. Based on the narrative of the Bible - a narrative of migration - we are deeply committed to the dignity of the human person, the concept of global solidarity and the promotion of a society welcoming strangers and respecting their rights. Being part of the global fellowship of churches, which is internationally active in promoting worldwide justice, we are particularly well acquainted with the links between development and migration.

WE ARE PLEASED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- as it signals an end to overall restrictive migration policies in the North, which have proven to be unrealistic and unworkable and therefore lead to suffering of those migrating and anxiety in receiving countries, replacing them by a debate on positive impact of migration;
- because it acknowledges the need to have a truly global dialogue on migration and development, between countries of immigration, of transit and emigration, which goes beyond national or regional fora;
- because it creates a platform for dialogue between states and non-state actors, thus acknowledging the important input of non-state actors in developing coherence and synergy on migration and development.

IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL, THE FORUM WILL NEED TO

- start by acknowledging that migrants are not simply providers of manpower, but human individuals with dreams, hopes, a cultural heritage, friends and families and last not least inalienable dignity and rights;

- provide a space for further developing a coherent and binding body of international rights of migrants, based on ratification and effective transposition of key human rights instruments on migration, including ILO Conventions as well as the UN Convention on The Rights of All Migrant Workers and the member of their families alongside with practical cooperation;
- carefully consider that different forms of transfers for development have different genesis and different purposes: while remittances are by definition privately owned, official development assistance (ODA) is an obligation of states. While remittances will in a first instance be of benefit to migrants and their families, ODA support will as a priority need to address the needs of the poorest of the poor, - often those who are not in a position to migrate- acknowledge the specific motivation and potential of diverse groups: refugees/ internally displaced persons and other uprooted people, labour migrants, persons migrating to join their family and develop targeted policies according to this diversity. This would include recognising their particular potential and vulnerability;
- foster initiatives which explore and encourage measures for synergies between migration and development policies, e.g. flexible visa regimes with multi-entry permits for circular migration, matching grants for remittances;
- recognize that only a situation of security and stability for migrants and their families in countries of origin and migration (e.g. secure residence status, right to property, safety respect for their physical and psychological integrity), will enable migrants to develop full potential as actors of development;
- take up the input from the Civil Society day and incorporate it into its conclusions.

IN ORDER TO FURTHER EXPLORE THE MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS, A FOLLOW UP PROCESS TO THE GFMD WILL

- need to elaborate a fuller process of preparation of governmental and civil society actors towards the forum, e.g. by the holding of joint regional fora of government and civil society before the global forum;
- need to look at a system of global governance on migration which respects rights of migrants, interests and policies of countries of immigration and emigration;
- need to look at policy coherence with other areas with considerable impact on migration and development, e.g. trade relations, agricultural policies, arms exports;
- have to provide evidence on gender specificities of the development impact of migration, e.g. the question if remittances of women migrants have a specific development impact and if they can be particularly supported in their development related activities;
- need to strengthen the role of the diaspora and migrant communities in shaping policies on migration and not only on development.

The statement has been developed as result of the debates in and between the All Africa Conference of Churches, Caritas Europa's a Migration Commission, the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, the Middle East Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. It however has due to time constraints not undergone the full approval procedure of the different networks and therefore is formally endorsed by their respective delegates at the Global Forum's Civil Society dialogue.

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