

## 10<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON MIGRATIONS (MIM) CLOSING DOCUMENT

### *“Emigration, Immigration, Development”*

Loreto (Ancona) September 28 – October 3, 2007

The history of international agencies' funds to support economic rebirth of developing countries spans across more than fifty years, divided in several stages. Up to the end of 70s, the funding plans were focused on economic rebirth of WWII's losing countries and, later on, to support de-colonisation processes, aiming at binding these Countries to the Atlantic Alliance (as opposed to the Soviet bloc). After the energy crisis in the seventies, massive funding by international associations was focused on fitting the “rest of the world” in Western, global market, where multi-national corporations (with their own systems focused on profit rather than development) had strengthened their positions, while funding by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (as well as other agencies) would later result in emerging and developing countries' being unable to pay the colossal debt that accrued. The gap between Rich and Poor countries has widened instead of shrinking and the future plans of the last development plan, featuring eight points to be achieved by 2015, are doomed to remain no more than a myth, indeed backed by the concept of exporting liberal democracy in all countries, as a development instrument.

The discussion that took place in the Loreto Meeting brought under the spotlight the “disasters of the white man” i.e. The damages wrought by mankind while pursuing its plan of exporting the Western development model and adapting these countries to Western market and economy. From these remarks stemmed the need to rethink funding to Global South countries, as well as an awareness of the need to de-develop our Western economies if we really want our world to undergo a development process that twill not turn into a destruction process in the end. It has been forty years since Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, an anniversary that makes it more important than ever to rethink development issues from scratch, taking people's rights and the need to organise and systematise redistribution of our planet's assets and resources.

The issue “migrations and development” has become a top priority topic in all the debates among international organisations, from UN to the World Bank to the European Union. The tenth edition of this Meeting has decided to tackle this issue with an unique and unusual slant. Instead of an institutional approach (like in international agencies meetings), but rather promoting a discussion among several emigration experts in order to try to understand which correlations might be supposed to exist between the migration flows/(im)migration on one hand and development on the other.

More than forty experts, hailing from USA, Canada, Mexico, Republic of South Africa, India, Philippines, Australia and Europe have discussed and exposed their views and analyses but also voiced their doubts and their critiques on the issue of co-development related to migrations.

The experts that gathered in Loreto have compared migration policies of all “Emigration Countries” with the policies adopted in “Immigration Countries” and compared the different migration contexts (and the related views on the matter) of the five continents. The stereotype of migration flows moving from the South of the world to the North has been debunked. Indeed, about 61 million of migrants (out of about 200 million) migrate to and from poorer countries, compared to 62 million moving from poorer to richer countries. 52 million of people migrate from “North” to “North” and 14 million instead move from “North” to “South”.

The whole continent of Africa is torn apart by the tragedy of refugees and émigrés, forced to migrate by political and social unbalances, most of which have been caused by the de-colonisation processes which were badly implemented and even worstly absorbed: a tragedy that plagues from 7 to 10 million of African people. The African continent is suffering from uncontrolled and chaotic internal migration while new migration flows among African countries (which account for about 70%

of overall migration flows in Africa) emerge. These inter-African flows therefore are considerably larger than migration flows from Africa to Europe (about three million migrants) or to North American countries, despite the historical (colonial and post-colonial) ties most African countries have with Europe.

In Asia, such countries as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Arab States of the Persian Gulf are becoming the new poles of attraction for migration flows while, at the same time, consistent migration flows are building up in countries with mixed migration flows (i.e. with immigration and emigration at the same time). In almost all cases this migration is seasonal in nature, with massive labour turnover and evident restrictions of the migrants' social and human rights. Indeed, in the Far East, the "contract workers system", which generates migration linked to temporary employment contracts is extremely widespread. This system does not allow migrants to obtain permanent domicile in the immigration country, and it seem to perfectly meet the needs and expectations both of the emigration and immigration countries: the former (especially Philippines and Indonesia) regard temporary emigration as a valid development strategy that involves also decreasing social pressure and providing incentives to massive remittances by migrants (to compensate the impossibility for the migrant's family to emigrate as well). Immigration countries regard these contracts as especially useful since they dramatically decrease migrant-related costs, especially for what concerns access to social services, healthcare and welfare/pensions but also, more generally speaking, all costs related to the complex phenomenon of foreign workers integration. Moreover, this type of immigration allows a greater degree of control over migration flows, making it possible to link them to the current economic situation. This recruitment system, entrusted to private recruitment agencies and combined with the migration pressure, generates large masses of irregular workers and illegal immigrants in spite of the highly restrictive immigrant laws in force and to the true mass deportation of immigrants that some countries carry out periodically. Another tragedy that often occurs in the area is the trafficking in human beings, especially in women and children.

Some equally strong migration flows exist also in South America and it involves various regions of the American subcontinent. The most noteworthy are the internal migration flows in the Andean region and the South Cone, and of course the strong Northbound flows towards USA and Canada (especially from Mexico).

Immigration countries, especially Europe, Canada and USA, seem to regard themselves as "besieged castles" and are obsessed by this idea, a fact which leads them to pursue immigration restriction policies which in turn keep on generating growing masses of illegal immigrants. This is especially true of USA where a series of conflicting and contradictory laws has increased the amount of illegal immigrants (mostly from Mexico and Latin America) to 12 million. Europe too now has to cope with illegal immigration (the number of illegal immigrants in Europe is estimated to be about 2 million). European migration policy is currently in a deadlock, stuck between the need to coordinate and unify migration policies and the problem Member States face in surrendering part of their autonomy on the matter. Meanwhile, although immigration has become instrumental for European economy, the labour markets and society as a whole, the borders remain closed thus making it impossible for immigrants to legally enter in a country. Italy epitomizes this type of situation: immigrants fill well-defined occupational niches and sectors but are vulnerable both in the labour market and in the process of integration in society.

Generally speaking, all Immigration countries (both "younger" ones and those with a well-rooted tradition of immigration) seem to be focused on searching for the "ideal" immigrant, following the Canadian model of "designer immigrants": adult male, possibly with no family, with suitable qualifications and ready to undergo a strong labour turnover. In the meantime, globalist economy further aggravates the unbalances that plague the so-called "new world disorder" and keeps on generating "wasted lives" while swelling the ranks of the "seekers of a Eldorado" that typically end up in the net of (often criminal) emigration agencies.

While in the seventies "development" of poorer countries was perceived as a remedy for migration flows, as the experience had proven that development initially accelerates human mobility, experts today ponder on how to find a place for migration flows in the broader context of development.

Migrants should first of all be regarded as positive agents of development for the immigration Countries. Let us now focus on integration of migrants in the receiving country. The

current situation is quite complex, as integration of each migrant depends on the migratory flows, length of stay in the country of immigration and how the immigrant fits in the labour market and in society as a whole. The most recent migration flows happen in a context marked by precariousness and critical marginalisation of migrants. If we want to allow migrants play a vital role in the development process of their receiving countries we need courage and political determination to tackle and solve some of the key issues: guaranteeing complementarity of migrant labour without making employment relationships too much ethnic influenced (i.e. jobs allocation depends on the migrant's ethnic group); harmonising the need for stabilisation with the need for "poor" and "low" jobs; avoid segregating immigrants in "immigrant jobs" without increasing unemployment; renewing entrance procedures without increasing the risks of social dumping; prevent immigrants' work from becoming a destabilising factor and damage the system of rights and rules of the wage system; link migration flows management to development cooperation policies.

Indeed, good immigration management is a challenge that cannot be separated from the need of designing a development model that shall not only be competitive from the economic point of view but also socially sustainable, i.e. promoting peaceful cohabitation in a pluralist society and strengthening social cohesion between all communities and groups sharing the same territory. The ethical correctness of migration policies can be measured also by gauging their ability to break free from the claustrophobic standpoint that defines them as separated from the broader categories of policies needed to build an integrated society. The purpose of migration policies and policies for immigrants shall be gauged by considering these policies' capability of setting in motion all the resources of a society, and this in turn means bringing under the spotlight all the issues and problems related to a society's structural peculiarities and, most of all, the issues and problems that define a society's ethics and culture.

As regards countries of Emigration, the Loreto meeting highlighted how emigration often impoverishes many territories and villages as it takes away their best elements. In fact, the Immigration countries' tendency to favour immigration of qualified and trained workers is actually causing a "brain drain" which undermines development in the poorest countries. In addition to that, often the immigrants' potential is not fully employed by the immigration countries: in Italy, more than 50% of immigrants have good qualifications or university degrees but are nonetheless employed in low-qualification jobs.

The meeting's participants also passed a disparaging judgement on migrants' remittances, often publicly praised as a factor of development. Remittances are inherently family/private initiatives which help survival and increase of consumptions at family/local level, therefore their impact on a society's systematic and structural development is limited: they are piecemeal, sketchy and non-systematic "micro-measures" that do not generate a development system and indeed often worsen imbalances in the regions they are directed to.

The meeting's participants pointed out that the relationship between migration and development is influenced by borders control/patrolling bilateral agreements between Immigration countries and Emigration countries: in Europe and USA economic aids to emigration countries are subject to the countries' correct supervision over expatriation or illegal immigrants' repatriation.

Having acknowledged that the "emigration and development" debate seems to focus chiefly on remittances, brain-drain, Inter-state cooperation and anti-human trade measures, we should ask ourselves whether these issues have been discussed to the benefit of migrants and their regions of origin, or rather because of the rich countries' interest in keeping migration flows under control.

Another chapter of the relationship between "migrations and development" deals with migrants returns and their small wealth of money and increased professional skills/qualifications they can then invest in their home country.

The Loreto Meeting's participants have voiced their doubts and scepticism on this issue as well, basing on empirical analyses on the migrants return phenomena. In most cases, the money and wealth they bring with them is quite small and is typically used to help/support the migrant's family than to further territory or country development. These small fortunes are invested exclusively for micro-projects, therefore further scattering and spreading them across the country. The migrant's professional experience is often degraded and employed in low-qualified jobs. In addition to that, the migrants' areas of origin are usually poverty-stricken, therefore lacking the necessary substrate of development structures that would make it possible to employ economic and

human resources brought home by return migrants.

Indeed, debate on co-development, which has been going on in France for years, effectively exposes all the contradictions of the "development model" that Western countries and their institutions have imposed on poorer countries and at the same time tries to view the well-established idea that migrants cooperate to development of their country of origin from a different angle, as this concept may result in migrants' being regarded as partially responsible for their home countries' absence of development. This of course is not an attempt to discredit the important role that many immigrants' associations play in development of their home countries: these associations work to pursue integration and everyday do their best to get support from the institutions and Associations of the emigration countries (often facing serious problems in doing so) and at the same time try to contact and cooperate with the institutions of their home countries and in doing so they help development, albeit sector-specific and fragmentary. Just think of the so-called "3x1" initiatives by the Mexican migrants of the Zacateca, by which the migrants' region of origin is involved in development projects made by the migrants themselves.

It is well evident that migrants organise themselves and act on a local scale both in their home countries and in the countries they immigrate in, trying to access to support funds for community development initiatives and for their own "dream" of setting up enterprises as they return to their home country. Indeed, this spontaneous "bottom-up" movement is quite widespread and it is a token of the migrant's will to play a leading role in society. Local authorities, both in home and receiving countries, play a key role in promoting transformation of economic, social and cultural structures that may favour actual integration of migrants in their area of influence, in order to promote access to economic citizenship, social mobility and political participation and helping migrants to store and accumulate capitals to be later reinvested in local and trans-local development through decentralised cooperation. By looking at this sector, one feels that it seems to be expanding and evolving continuously and yet one also feels that all initiatives attempted so far are mainly poverty relief measures that do not actually reduce poverty by generating wealth nor do they represent a true development factor.

If we do not want the current focus on migration and development-related issues to go "out of fashion", we must ponder on the impact that migrations have both on immigration countries and emigration countries. This means broadening the scope of analysis to include humane, political and social factors underlying these phenomena in addition to statistical and economic issues, already under the spotlight.

We must get rid of any hypocrisy and be aware that, should current migration policies persist, Europe, North America and Australia will reap most of the benefits by exploiting one of the few resources of poor Countries: highly qualified manpower.

Although it is true that remittances now provide financial support to immigrants' families, we would fool ourselves if we thought they could represent an effective development tool: if we do not radically change the development model we pursued until now, the remittances' cost and potential related risk will soon overshadow their actual benefits.

It is therefore a top priority to shift our attention from the "South-North" migration flows to intra-continental migration flows: start collecting reliable data on internal migration in Latin America, Asia and most of all in Africa and the consequences thereof, trying to devise analysis models that take into account the poor Countries' development contexts, the real needs of local communities and of Countries' as a whole as well as all their political and social issues (conflicts, corruption and resources). If we do not take this road, all discussions on international migrations will stay fixed on their European and Western views and produce only ruinous development policies that damage poorer Countries in general and Africa in particular.

*The 10<sup>th</sup> International Meeting on Migration has been organised by:*

***Missionari e Laici Scalabriniani Agenzia Scalabriniana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo [Scalabrinian***

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