
For immediate release

Church leaders share vision on migration at 109th meeting of the ICMC Governing Committee

VIENNA, 23 January 2010—High-level Church leaders gathered in Vienna discuss global approaches to migration and appeal for solidarity with Haiti at the 109th meeting of the International Catholic Migration Commission Governing Committee.

In the days immediately following the 96th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, H.E. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn welcomed International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) President, Mr. John Klink, and eighteen members of the Commission's Governing Committee and staff to Vienna, to jointly address critical migration-related issues from the Church's perspective.

Among the distinguished members of the committee are H.E. Cardinal Schönborn, H.E. John Cardinal Njue, Archbishop of Nairobi; H.E. George Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney; H.E. Oscar Andres Cardinal Rodriguez Maradiaga, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa and His Beatitude Gregorious III, Greek Melkite Patriarch.

"Established by the Holy See nearly 60 years ago, ICMC plays a distinct role within the Church", notes Governing Committee member, H.E. Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Representative of the Holy See to the UN in Geneva. "ICMC's special charisma not only lies in its relationship with the Holy See and Episcopal Conferences worldwide, but also in its potential to drive global approaches to migration that are consistent with the Church's concern for the most vulnerable." ICMC accomplishes this work with staff and operations in 40 countries and with advocacy work carried out before international organisations.

Over the course of the three-day meeting, the Committee discussed challenges of human trafficking, refugee protection and integration, migrant rights and responsibilities, the right not to migrate, migration management and the care and protection of vulnerable migrant children.

Participants also expressed concern over signs of growing xenophobia and racism towards migrants, and entered into strategic discussions on how ICMC might engage with partners in addressing migration-related issues expected to emerge with yet greater severity in the months following the recent earthquake in Haiti—including the potential for an increase in human trafficking.

Together with the whole of ICMC, Cardinal Schönborn expressed great sorrow for the victims of the earthquake and their families, calling for continued prayers and solidarity at a special mass celebrated in honor of the International Catholic Migration Commission at St. Stephan's cathedral Thursday night.

In the months ahead, ICMC members will be engaged in preparations for the November 2010 meeting of the Commission's Council in Rome. High-level representatives of all Catholic bishops conferences worldwide, and observers from other organizations involved in migration are expected to be present at the meeting to discuss the greater promotion of human dignity and well being, and family unity within migration globally.

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