

Working in concert:

Building common ground for the global governance of migration



Findings of ICMC's *Conversations on the Global Governance of Migration*

A report of Phase II
January – October 2010
and a synthesis of findings, Phases I and II
October 2009 – October 2010



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for the global governance
of migration

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CONVERSATIONS PROJECT

1. Formed in 1951 and granted ECOSOC status, ICMC works directly as well as through a membership network of Bishops' Conferences and other members worldwide, implementing and advocating for rights-based policies and durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, regardless of their faith, race, nationality or ethnicity. ICMC currently has programmes and staff working in 40 countries.

2. A full list of the participants in the *Conversations* project is attached as Annex I. The unduplicated breakdown is 33 Ambassadors, 21 senior government officials, 6 officials of regional intergovernmental bodies, 26 participants from international organizations (among them four agency heads, and nine of the organizations in the Global Migration Group), 38 representatives of civil society (including the private sector), and another 14 specifically from academia. In a small number of instances, there was overlap between categories, e.g., several Ambassadors heading international or civil society organizations.

3. The brief primer on the initiative is available at www.icmc.net/conversations-global-governance-migration.

4. *Connecting the dots: A fresh look at managing international migration*, ICMC, 2010, available at http://www.icmc.net/system/files/publication/connecting_the_dots_a_fresh_look_at_managing_inte_12459.pdf.

Between October 2009 and October 2010, the International Catholic Migration Commission¹ convened 138 leaders in the field of international migration, 54 of whom were Ambassadors and other senior government officials from countries of the north and south, both developed and developing, for a series of organized but informal *Conversations on the Global Governance of Migration*². Phase I of the project, funded by ICMC, was conducted between October and December 2009; Phase II, which was co-funded by the Swiss government, continued from January through October 2010.³

This is both a report of the second phase and a synthesis of findings from the two. It completes and should be read in conjunction with the fuller description of the project and report of the first phase, which were presented in ICMC's publication, *Connecting the dots*, widely circulated in January 2010.⁴

Part II presents broad orientations of the *Conversations* processes distinctly in Brussels, New York and Washington. Part III reports the breadth and depth of perspectives from those three processes, but consolidated thematically rather than geographically, with a central focus on the exploration by participants of common ground that exists or seems possible for the global governance of migration. In this section, the location of a discussion or participant is noted only where it is material to the perspective presented. Part IV then synthesizes the findings together with those from the first phase of the *Conversations* project. Finally, Parts V and VI close with recommendations and next steps, and Part VII, conclusions.

10 years ago this subject of 'global governance' was taboo; we couldn't have this conversation.

10 years is fast.

- Roundtable participant

“One problem is that too much of the conversation today is at regional levels. Not global enough. ‘Global governance’ may not be a welcome term, but ‘global’ is correct”
- Roundtable participant



BRIEF ON PHASE II OF CONVERSATIONS: BRUSSELS, NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON

As described in the publication *Connecting the dots*, participants in the first phase of the *Conversations* project urged taking the discussion of global governance to a second phase, engaging a much broader group of actors. Participants also recommended “taking the next step” with the *Conversations*, building on the questions and elements of convergence that had emerged during the first phase.⁵

Where the first phase of *Conversations* engaged migration actors based or convened in Geneva, those very participants asserted the importance of taking the next phase to Brussels, in particular to engage perspectives from officials of the European Union and other European organizations involved in migration matters; to Washington for inclusion of actors of or in relation with the US government, and to New York for conversation with a range of UN-based actors of developed and developing countries, as well as senior UN officials. In these regards, the *Conversations* could invite and benefit from perspectives in centers with significant national, regional and international focuses. In addition, a number of smaller discussions were organized around dinners with Ambassadors in Geneva, and a small roundtable in Vienna.

Once again, the ICMC coordination was led by Ambassador Sergio Marchi, formerly Canadian Minister of Migration and Ambassador of Canada to the World Trade Organization and UN agencies, acting as Special Advisor to the ICMC Secretary General, and by John K. Bingham, ICMC Head of Policy. Continuing, as in the first phase, to engage other leaders as formal partners in the project, ICMC was pleased to partner with Ambassador Regine de Clercq of Belgium, Executive Director of the first Global Forum on Migration and Development, Sergio Carrera and the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels, Dr. Susan Martin and the Georgetown University Institute for the Study of International Migration in Washington, and Bishop Nicolas Di Marzio and Dr. Joseph Chamie in the Center for Migration Studies in New York. ICMC was further aided by the hosting of working dinners in Geneva by Ambassador Alberto Dumont of Argentina, Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco and Archbishop Silvano Tomasi of the Holy See, and the luncheon for the Ambassadors’ roundtable in New York by Ambassador Vanu Gopla Menon of Singapore.

As in the first phase, the *Conversations* in Phase II centred upon a series of roundtables, smaller bilateral meetings, and lunches or dinners with Ambassadors and senior representatives of permanent missions, all conducted under Chatham house rules. 107 leading actors participated in Phase II, among them 27 Ambassadors, a mix of other officials of government and inter-governmental institutions engaged with international migration at national, regional and international levels, including executive officers and Parliamentarians, and civil society actors from academia, the NGO community and the private sector⁶. Unlike the first phase however, many of the bilateral meetings engaged national and regional representatives, which provided important and complementary substance for consideration.

As recommended by participants in the first phase, there was also broad outreach to widen interest in the subject and awareness of the process. Papers and other

5. For the summary of principal questions and key convergence among participants in the first phase, see Annexes II and III respectively.

6. Twelve of these participants in Phase II had also participated in Phase I, including three senior officials of the ILO, IOM and UNHCR, and the organizers.



*We need a bridge to go from
common interests to common action.*
- Brussels roundtable participant

presentations on global governance of migration and the *Conversations* were delivered at meetings and conferences organized, with inter-active formats, by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Webster University, the Hague Process on Refugees and Migration, the Caux Forum for Human Security and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In addition to the wide circulation of the *Connecting the dots* report of the first phase, articles reporting findings from the *Conversations* process were published in the monthly EurAsylum series on “The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change”⁷, and within a series on migration management in the journal, *Global Governance*⁸. Invitations were also received to participate in the Global Migration Futures Project of the University of Oxford, to offer a keynote talk on migration management at an international conference on “The New Politics of International Mobility” at the University of Osnabrück, Germany, and to contribute to IOM’s *World Migration Report 2010*.

Conversations in Brussels

The overriding perspective in Brussels was one of intra-regional reflection: the main preoccupation and focus was on getting migration policy right, first and foremost among the 27 Member States of the EU. The discussion kept returning to the local and regional EU realities, and there was a clear sense that the challenges of the migration equation were getting the better of the debate. There were a number of repeated representations which took the view that Europe was struggling with real and perceived arrivals of large numbers of migrants from Africa, as well as asylum seekers, and that this was causing challenges for politicians, officials and citizens in many member States—both in terms of the numbers, the place of origin of these migrants and asylum seekers, and their integration.

The issue of security was cited as an important and determining factor. One participant expressed the feeling by saying that, “security has impacted the migration terrain tremendously”. Border security remains paramount⁹—so much so, it was mentioned, that ironically it may be the goal of protecting borders that finally “encourages” governments to consider more closely the root causes behind why people migrate in the first place, and then adapt existing policies. Participants therefore readily conceded that a great amount of work still lies ahead of the EU.

It was suggested that “the window is more open for labour as compared to refugees and asylum seekers: they are coming to work. People are more open to this.” Region-wide schemes and possibilities for cooperation on labour migration included EU initiatives on “blue card” admissions of highly-skilled workers and their family members, seasonal workers, intercompany transfers and research and development.

And yet, even as participants recognised the impressive “regional experiment” achieved with respect to movement among EU Member States, several questioned

7. “Migration governance: Towards a global integrated migration regime?”, Bimal Ghosh and Sergio Marchi, EurAsylum, June 2010, available at <http://www.eurasylum.org/Portal/June2010.htm>.

8. “Global governance: Migration’s next frontier,” Sergio Marchi, *Global Governance* 16 (2010), 323-329.

9. It was reported that there are currently 400,000 border guards in the EU.

whether building on regional processes was, in general, an effective way forward. They noted that the “regional sphere” varies quite differently, differs in quality and progressivity, and is unconnected. A *global* approach has the potential of improving national and regional processes, because it leads to a better understanding and therefore management of the globally shared risks and benefits of migration. In the same breadth, they felt that the term, “global governance”, should not instil “fear”. Most felt that it is no longer a “taboo” within the UN or international discussion, and that the concept is a legitimate and accepted one, particularly in academic circles.

Can we look at basic principles on which a worldwide regime can be based?
- Brussels roundtable participant

What seemed most important, one participant suggested, was to identify the building blocks for better global governance of migration: a mission statement, evidence, and a tools-based approach that included basic migrant rights and obligations. In this direction, there was positive reaction among participants to the invitation: “Can we look at basic principles on which a worldwide regime can be based,” such as those existing in other spheres, trade and the World Trade Organization for instance. A first basic principle would be non-discrimination against migrants. It may also be constructive to include conditions, e.g., rights and obligations.¹⁰

Drawing further from the governance of international trade, a principle that could serve of value in migration governance, is the principle of “most favoured nation.” It was suggested to consider setting up a global group or process of States willing to take a “most favoured nation” approach to cooperation on migration, i.e., willing to accept advantages and conditions granted in bilateral migration agreements by extending them on an equal level to all members admitted into the group.¹¹ In order for States to be admitted into the group, there would be conditions regarding not only aspects of migration management but also non-discrimination with respect to migrants, efforts for meaningful integration, etc. The existence of such a group or process of States, it was argued, would create a strong incentive for States to collaborate in a systematic way, within a set of commonly agreed principles. It would have an “orderly, global liberalizing effect” in that countries that wanted to obtain the benefits of the group would strive to tackle more forcefully the issues within their jurisdictions, from the day-to-day treatment of migrants to the fight against human trafficking and other criminal exploitation of international migration.

During bilateral meetings with EU leaders, there was appreciation that the EU needs to engage much more with the world outside the borders of the Commission and Community. There was an expressed desire to be more active with civil society and with other governments, and that beyond producing international benefits, this process would also be of assistance to their internal migration policy development. As well, national leaders welcomed the possibility of meeting with counterparts from around the world, as a valuable complement to the intensity of meetings with fellow EU Ministers. Several pointed to a lack of “spaces” for sharing views and experiences internationally, a shortcoming they hoped would be addressed.

Conversations in Washington

The meetings in Washington took place with the backdrop of a political environment that is increasingly polarized on so many issues, including immigration. Similar to the EU, there was an impression of being overwhelmed by migration from the south, in the US case, “Mexican” migration in particular, and that this only served

10. In this direction, there has been thinking towards establishing something of a new “Code du migrant” in the EU, among others in connection with the action plan of the EU’s “Stockholm Programme” on migration.

11. It was further suggested that such a group could form the nucleus of some broader international structure.



*We have a 21st century global labour force,
and a 14th century response: a fence!*
- Washington roundtable participant

to aggravate an already complicated migration debate in the US. The recent law in Arizona seemed to be an adjective for this dilemma.

As a result, participants were hard pressed to see how the US political leadership was going to rise to the occasion of addressing migration policy, and do so in a comprehensive and effective manner. In truth, many were dubious whether this was possible at all domestically, at this time. It was felt that a “middle ground”—one that could sustain an intelligent and constructive dialogue, upon which constructive policy options would be able to emerge—was, at least for the moment, completely absent.¹²

As had been the case among participants in the Brussels *Conversations*, security was seen as a big “driver” of any discourse. But even acknowledging that the security of one’s people and country is the most basic of government preoccupations and responsibilities, there was a concern that it had become an “obsession” that was overwhelming all other considerations. One participant remarked, to wide assent, that the security issue—which can actually mean or be code for many things (e.g., “illegal” migrants, crime, control, etc.)—had created a “political paranoia that was running out of control.” A sense of balance was the first victim. Nor was there any effort to craft a thoughtful, long-term policy that would account for 15-20 years down the road: it was all about the immediacy of the “polls”.

The result, in the words of one participant, was that “we have a 21st century global labour force, and a 14th century response: a fence!” And for all the talk of constructing a longer and higher US fence, the participant predicted that if the government were to consider its long-term needs, “America will have to figure out where and how to make holes in this fence, because we will need people.” Thus what remains central is how to approach the concerns over security with the necessary confidence and assurances that it will not be sacrificed in any discussion of international measures.

*“If the basic information is not there, it provides such an easy out
for the political actors and policy makers.”*

- Washington roundtable participant

Participants were emphatic on this point as just one example of the importance of properly “framing” the discussion. It is not, for example, a choice between migration and control. Rather when one considers building a rules-based approach, both variables must be factored into the equation. Nor is a migration policy for “them”: it is about “us”, since migration now touches all countries, rich and poor alike. The objective is to build a better common future.

Participants widely agreed that the inadequacy of data is a significant barrier to building more effective policies, domestically and internationally, and to public acceptance of those policies. They recognized the need to establish a common base of credible intelligence, together with a greater exchange of analysis, research, practises, evaluations, monitoring, vetting procedures and experiences. One participant summed it up, “If the basic information is not there, it provides such an easy out for the political actors and policy makers.”

Many participants expressed the hope that better data together with greater cooperation and collaboration among countries could ameliorate the domestic political task confronting the migration debate in the US. In this regard though, and as was asserted on a number of occasions, such a discourse would still need to answer one basic question: “What’s in it for America?”¹³

12. Nonetheless one US participant suggested “We should push this [global governance], even if the political winds are in our face.”

13. As was further pointed out, it may indeed be the case that the insistence “our nation first!” would be common to all countries. This is to be considered, although obviously a “US, EU or any-nation-only” mindset would render an internationally-shared response impossible.

What are the simple things that can move; settle them first and then build the bases for broader international cooperation.

- Washington roundtable participant

The Washington roundtable made an important distinction in relation to the “sovereignty argument” against global governance, i.e., the position that States should not “give up” control of migration policy. In fact, it was asserted that forging an international response is *not* about national governments ceding or losing political authority. The reality—rightly or wrongly—is that in an accelerating era of globalization, great numbers of employers, migrant networks, agents, individual migrants and smugglers have *already* taken things into their own hands, irrespective of national policies on admission and border control. And while governments may be able to win some battles against unauthorized migration, there is the much larger, ongoing “war” for better control of who enters, leaves, transits and remains in national territories.

Rather as one participant put it, “an improved management of migration—one that shares both the opportunities and challenges—is actually about countries and governments *reclaiming* political sovereignty and control, and exercising it *collectively*, to the advantage of individual States, their citizens and migrants.”

Finally, participants stressed that building new governance measures is not the challenge or obligation for just *some* governments, or for that matter, the well-to-do nations alone. For these measures to succeed, the approach must be inclusive, with “all nations signing on”, developing as well as developed.

Meetings with high-level policy actors in Washington

One of the objectives that participants in the first phase of the *Conversations* process stressed was the importance of engaging US government and other Washington-based migration thinkers and decision-makers. As in Geneva, officials of the US State Department welcomed the invitation to engage in the process, and did so both within the roundtable and in discussion at a further meeting.

Reporting more broadly, however, and without attributing these perspectives to any particular participant, the importance of achieving better cooperation among States on matters of migration was emphasized repeatedly in Washington by policy makers and organizations that provide policy perspectives to governments. While acknowledging surprise at how rapidly inter-governmental consultation on migration has grown in recent years, as within the regional processes and the Global Forum on Migration and Development, there was also wide scepticism about near-term prospects for multilateral action to manage migration. Several argued that for the time being, bilateral negotiations seemed to offer the most likely way forward in this regard.

Indeed, more than in any other group of participants in the *Conversations*, a number of policy actors in Washington were distinctly sceptical. Some challenged repeatedly: are there really gaps? If so, which, if any of the gaps are “doable”? More than a few times, they recommended focussing on the “low-hanging fruit”, proceeding “piece-meal” first. As one participant put it, “What are the simple things that can move? Settle them first and then build the bases for broader international cooperation.” Among the examples provided:

- intercompany transfers
- a template of common elements for bilateral agreements on labour migration¹⁴
- promotion of migration-related development initiatives
- technical assistance and training of governments building immigration systems

14. It was mentioned that the Philippines, for example, has negotiated more than 150 bilateral agreements to regulate labour emigration of its nationals, which suggested the value of referring to a basic template or common set of elements in the elaboration of such labour agreements.



*It is not just a question of leaders seeing,
but also a question of courage.
How do we create the bases for courage?*
- New York roundtable participant

- data collection and analysis
- policy research and development
- assessment of GFMD impacts to date, possibly including the question: Should GFMD drop the “d” or add more “d”?
- sensible link-up of regional processes

Conversations in New York

In New York, there was greater preparedness to address the *institutional* process of how best to approach international migration, which logically reflects the fact that New York is home to the UN. At the same time, it was noted that migration is still a difficult, and at times, a divisive issue for many countries. A number of participants were unsure as to what the potential answers might be, and therefore approached the migration policy discourse very cautiously.

Most participants perceived that, for the time being, migration does not seem to be a central priority on the UN radar screen, outflanked by what are seen as more pressing issues. A number of participants also voiced the concern that, like so many other issues, migration becomes “overly politicized” in the formal corridors of procedures and discussion. It was therefore felt that pursuing informal channels and building momentum outside the UN structures could be a helpful strategy.¹⁵

Indeed, participants were emphatic that, as the Global Forum on Migration and Development proceeds to the end of its first cycle of annual meetings, and with the 2013 UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development quickly approaching, it was critical for the migration issue to take on greater prominence and political visibility—and soon—in an effort to develop realistic and timely alternatives for consideration by Member States.

As any effective regime for global management “starts at home,” building capacity was thought crucial. The lack of policy tools and coherence are a significant handicap for all too many developing countries. In fact, one participant observed that “it is only recently that the ‘top ten’ countries are getting their legislatures in order, so one can imagine the existing gaps in poorer countries, especially those facing problems of survival and civil unrest”.

*We do not need an international forum for just more discussion,
we need an international forum for action.*
- New York-based Ambassador

Meetings with UN Ambassadors in New York

A working luncheon with UN Ambassadors in New York, co-hosted with the Singapore Ambassador and Mission, was most valuable. Over a dozen Ambassadors and senior delegates of UN missions participated, from a broad diversity of regions, providing a useful and interesting complement to the ongoing meetings with UN Ambassadors in Geneva. Under Chatham rules (as in the entirety of the *Conversations* process), the diplomats freely spoke their minds.

While underscoring the importance of greater understanding and dialogue, there was a sense of frustration that there has been enough talk to justify some real steps towards a different and better approach. “We do not need an international forum for just more discussion, we need an international forum for action”, said one diplomat.

15. The evolution of the international
landmine treaty was
cited as a case in point.

*No country or group—no matter how powerful—
can take on the major issues of the day alone.
Migration is one of the ‘new generation’
issues for global governance.*
- UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon

In terms of what kind of “actions”, several Ambassadors believed that if currently there was movement, it was heading in the wrong direction. The more “repressive” forms of legislation and regulations cropping up in different jurisdictions were believed to be ineffective in the long run. More importantly perhaps, they were seen to be harmful vis-a-vis public opinion as well as for migrants. While addressing local and typically short-term political needs, they created false expectations and hardened political views in the long-term. Ambassadors felt that “thoughtful strategies were required to get the job done”.

A number of the diplomats also advocated for a focused agenda. At least initially, prioritizing several issues, rather than aiming to cover a wide array of disciplines was seen to be a much more realistic approach. Many proposed that the speed be “incremental”.

Several diplomats also spoke favourably of trying to consolidate the variety of existing regional migration processes. Many participants agreed that that an important challenge was, as one put it: “how can we make better sense of all these initiatives? What are the common building blocks that can begin to sustain an international approach?” Can the political cooperation that is present regionally be extended beyond their respective regional boundaries? Despite the differences between these initiatives, the Ambassadors felt there was potential for finding important traction in terms of building relationships and confidence, joint problem-solving and shared opportunities at a more international level.

How can we make better sense of all these initiatives? What are the common building blocks that can begin to sustain an international approach?
-New York-based Ambassador

Finally, the issue of partnerships was raised: that governments cannot do it alone. Again and again, Ambassadors emphasized that governments must also involve civil society and business. One Ambassador felt this was crucial, “as a way of generating public advocacy and keeping the pressure on governments for change”. At the same time, a number of participants expressed the hope that civil society could be more focused and less “critical” when it comes to the governance agenda. Differing views around different policy matters was one thing; building a system and a process to properly consider and decide on all those issues was thought to be quite different. The latter needed an objective partnership built on “confidence and consensus building”.

Senior UN officials in New York and UN Secretary General

Several meetings were held with senior UN officials. Again, there was considerable attention devoted to the planning for the UN High Level Dialogue in 2013, and in particular the question of the profile of migration as an issue and better global governance as an approach. There was an appreciation that informal preparations for this Dialogue should start earlier rather than later. In addition, while there was no broad expression of migration as a priority yet, there was a clear sense in the meetings that it was time to take stock of recent initiatives, not only within and related to the UN, such as the Global Migration Group, but also “outside” the UN, chiefly in the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the many regional processes that take up migration phenomena around the world. Regarding the need for new energy in global governance, one official bluntly raised the spectre of the alternative, i.e., in the absence of substantially increased multilateral cooperation on migration: “If you ‘bilateralize’ this, the answers are going to be wrong, wrong, wrong. Or at least incomplete.”



Most recently, and outside of the process of these *Conversations*, it was directly relevant—and noteworthy—that at the World Policy Conference in Marrakech, which focussed on the theme “global governance in finance, the economy and politics” on the eve of the November G-20 summit in Seoul, the UN Secretary General referred to migration as one of the “new generation” issues for global governance.¹⁶ Such governance, the Secretary General said, is central to “a world economy that works for all people and not just a fortunate minority”.

16. For a brief report of the World Policy Conference in Marrakech see: <http://news.ph.msn.com/top-stories/article.aspx?cp-documentid=4402792>.

*What one or two things will most move this issue?
What one or two catalytic steps?
What one or two obstacles do we see?
Is there a logical structure, even if not an institutional one?*
- New York-based Ambassador

PHASE II FOCUS: COMMON GROUND IN THE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF MIGRATION

The following sections consolidate and report perspectives shared in these processes in Brussels, New York and Washington, as well as in the Ambassador dinners and smaller meetings in Geneva and Vienna. Rather than location-specific, perspectives are organized thematically under the headings (1) the five pillars of current governance of migration (2) areas of common ground in current migration management (3) impediments to common ground, and (4) key agents of change. Where a perspective seemed to be held only by a distinct group or actor, it will be indicated.

The five pillars of current migration governance¹⁷

Participants noted the existence of a range of instruments, processes and relationships—“5 pillars”—that engage at various levels in efforts to manage international migration today:

1. national policies and programs
2. bilateral, regional, and global dialogues and exchange of practices, including the GFMD and regional consultative processes
3. supranational, formal structures and cooperation, e.g., the EU and many of the economic communities of African states
4. multilateral agencies and their work,¹⁸ such as UNHCR, IOM and ILO¹⁹
5. international legal frameworks, especially the refugee and human rights conventions

While all of these pillars govern aspects of migration in their own right, they further interact in a number of formal and informal ways. That interaction—which has increased measurably in recent years—represents important cooperation and indeed, critical elements of the governance (if a kind of “soft” governance) of international migration, but the sum of the parts has not to date resulted in coherent global governance.

Areas of common ground in current migration management

Participants noted and discussed a number of examples of States finding and acting together on common ground with respect to issues of international migration—without suggesting that any of these examples were necessarily complete, perfect or models for replication.

Cooperation among member States in the European Union

Participants noted the achievement of the EU in embracing citizenship of the nationals of 27 member States. It was asserted that Europe may be one of the most advanced efforts to govern migration across multiple borders. Nonetheless there are huge differences even in member States and rights, e.g., the right to health care.

17. This section is excerpted from ICMC's publication *Connecting the dots*, op. cit., p. 7.

18. It was noted that the current multilateral agencies that are involved with migration policy, are, in fact, governance tools that are directed by and on behalf of States. Yet, one concern repeatedly underscored was that agency mandates do not extend fully or with adequate clarity to today's migration trends and prospects. In short, institutional architecture and modes of operating need updating.

19. Participants noted, for example, ILO's work in developing the *Multilateral framework on labour migration*, a tool negotiated in a tripartite process of experts convened by the ILO and adopted in 2005. A comprehensive set of non-binding principles and guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration, the framework recognizes both the sovereign right of nations to determine their own migration policies and the “crucial role of social partners” in that policy making, and provides an extensive compilation of best practices pertaining to labour migration policies and institutions.



We need a good assessment of where we are, on the way to developing some governance. We need to build on common ground.

- Ambassador participant

Not enough attention is given to how a better international framework can help Europe. If the international framework were better, Europe would benefit.

- Brussels roundtable participant

Even as a number of participants pointed to recent movement among EU member States away from “hard law” and normative approach to “softer approaches”, e.g., harmonization, cooperation, some described growing fear even of softer approaches. As perceived by one senior European official, “It’s bizarre. The countries with the highest standards of protection seem most fearful of harmonization... perhaps because it is not possible to have harmonizing without solidarity.”

Nonetheless, European participants emphasized the importance of promoting already existing legal instruments in the field of migration, including UN and ILO Conventions on migrant rights that have not been ratified by member States. “The principles cannot be pushed away,” one participant asserted, “even where States or other actors may not agree, ratify or implement, at least there is a reference.”

Common ground in the protection of refugees and asylum seekers

Participants widely acknowledged refugee protection as the area of broadest common ground in current migration management, a credit to the stature of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the strong support and credibility over the years of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Building from common ground to more common action, Europe continues to develop its transnational “common European asylum space,” including shared approaches to reception, asylum procedures, jurisdiction, relocation and “burden-sharing”. However, as further noted in the section regarding “impediments to common ground” below (section 3), several participants noted significant pressure in the opposite direction from certain member States and leaders to lower standards across the region, and real retrenchment in refugee and asylum regimes, often demonstrating an interest by more than a few to restrict protection to the most narrow sense. One European representative emphasized that the retrenchment should not be underappreciated, “beginning with straight numbers.” Most clearly however, lessons learned in the evolution of the asylum systems in Europe—among them that if rules are not the same in all countries, asylum seekers often look for the country with the “best asylum”—underscore the need for a supranational approach that, in the words of one of the government ministers who participated in the *Conversations*, is both “shared and integrated.”²⁰

Elements of common ground in labour migration

Participants paid strong attention to common phenomena of labour markets and labour migration. Regardless of region, the clearest common ground in labour mobility—for the moment—was felt to be migration of high-skilled workers.

Many participants seemed to believe however, that approaches centered strictly upon legal migration of the highly-skilled needed to be “scaled up” to a wider range of skills, and labour migration to an international level, to satisfy labour market demands. In the words of one business leader, “Everywhere we look and

20. As stark evidence of the need for more shared and integrated approaches, the official pointed to the disparity in current asylum approvals across EU Member States, e.g., from less than 1% to 30% for applicants from similar countries and circumstances.

Everywhere we look and have activities in the world, there is a persistent skills shortage in the labour market. Everywhere.

- Roundtable participant, - business sector

have activities in the world, there is a persistent skills shortage in the labour market. Everywhere. And contrary to the general perception that it is the PhD level in shortest supply, it is the mid-level skills. When operating in a labour market that doesn't support economy and skills at all levels, the highly-skilled can't work and businesses will take themselves elsewhere... This is where the captains of business industry lose their interest in these discussions. They don't see why a discussion of middle skills is not happening."

European participants noted that the European Commission has increasingly positioned itself as something of a "promoter" of labour migration in Europe. For example, a high-profile "blue card" was launched to facilitate the entry of high-skilled workers, and the EU moved this year on permits and frameworks for seasonal workers and intracompany transfers. "Mobility partnerships" were structured to engage workers from countries outside the EU within temporary and circular migration schemes,

Yet one European official asserted that despite efforts—and even within certain efforts—the area of migration where Europe has been "least successful" has been labour. The mobility partnerships for example, were actually set within larger security programmes that prioritized return and readmission mechanisms and combating irregular migration. The recent European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, which on its face endeavoured to define common ground in a number of migration contexts, did little to advance any positive approach to the harmonization of labour migration. To the contrary, rather than assert common ground affirmatively, the Pact's more deterrent impulse, regarding labour migrants in particular, was to insist on prior consultation and consensus among the group of member States for anything other than case-by-case regularizations of migrants in irregular status—the vast majority of them workers in important sectors of member State labour markets.

Separately, a participant in the US roundtables referred to a number of Caribbean programmes for labour migration that have been implemented under bilateral agreements. Indicating the importance of careful evaluation as to what may or may not really be "common" ground in labour migration schemes, perhaps most especially in bilateral contexts, it was asserted that programmes were not well-managed with protection, and so "conditions were often appalling."

Common ground of expanding mobility

It was observed that among the 24 economic communities around the world, 22 have some form of agreement or intention on the free movement of people within their regions.²¹ An analogy was made to regional free trade policies that solve problems for the movement of goods; positive results might similarly be possible with such approaches to human mobility.

We go slowly towards free movement.

- European participant

Mention was made of increasing elaboration of visa agreements and visa liberalization between the EU and neighbouring States (e.g., Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina exempted by the end of next year), where as one European participant described it, "we go slowly towards free movement."

21. Some 14 regional economic communities are in Africa, including the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Other economic communities comprise States across large regions of Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia.

The negative public perception of migration and migrants is a huge problem, which creates significant impediments for politicians. When you talk about our country's needs, it's clear that we need more migrant workers.

But when you open the newspapers, you get an extreme and opposite view.

- European Ambassador

In terms of fostering a relevant and inclusive partnership to discuss the process for building an international system of collaboration on human mobility, one participant argued that the "international travel" regime is not present. Yet it is estimated that there are some 2 billion border crossings each day. Thus, the point was that the network defined by civil aviation organizations, maritime groups, customs alliances, and the World Tourism Organization should be invited to the table. It was strongly felt that their insights, practises, and experiences in formulating their own international procedures could be most helpful.

As a corollary, it was suggested that the global education sector should also be engaged. The movement of foreign students around the world, their common pursuit by governments, the innumerable programs that permit them to stay in countries after their formal education is complete and the structures that ground all this activity could yield constructive lessons.

Enforcement as common ground

Finally, all participants noted the area of enforcement as a veritable standout of transnational cooperation, most notably with the boom in cross-border and regional immigration control partnerships, including FRONTEX in Europe, the growth of bilateral and multilateral engagement in anti-trafficking/anti-smuggling projects, and the proliferation of return and readmission agreements. Participants were of one mind, however, that there has been far too much of an enforcement reflex, that it is neither desirable nor possible to base migration policy on enforcement alone, or even "enforcement first." One participant emphasized that such contexts called for reflection on the difference between common ground and common good; other approaches are needed for management efforts to be more comprehensive and effective.²²

Impediments to common ground for global governance

Political trends

Participants on both sides of the Atlantic referred repeatedly to the rise to prominence of extremist parties and ideologies, in part fueled by global economic distress. In fact, they noted the vagaries of even "mainstream" national parties or leaders in several countries.

Across the board, participants underscored the urgency of States and the media shifting their imagery from the scapegoating and criminalization of migrants to migrants not being a threat, and noted the role that international organizations could play in supporting that shift.

Retreat from binding frameworks on migration and governance

Paradoxically amidst much positive effort by States, regional entities and international organizations at standards-building, protection and harmonization, multiple participants noted growing resistance to longstanding common approaches and a reflex to retreat from elaborating binding standards in multilateral fora and frameworks. In short, States were more and more expressing distinct preference for informal processes.

Some participants ascribed the aversion to a fear on the part of some States, particularly among traditional destination countries in the "north", of heavy, discordant

22. Indeed, several European participants were critical of the EU's broadening from traditional border enforcement to an external dimension of border control, i.e., extending into North Africa and Eastern Europe. In the words of one participant, "the only field of migration that has any movement at all is trying to create environments where migrants and refugees can stay in their own country."

All countries today are points of origin, transit and destination: we are all in the same boat.

- Roundtable participant

or polarized institutions and processes. As one government official put it, “we have real concerns about what a global governance would look like—especially if it were another north-south bash-up.” Another government participant suggested that, oddly, “It’s the countries that have the best human rights that don’t want to discuss migration.”

States are backing away from the formal sphere and governance... creating instead many other arrangements where they can talk and make decisions without ‘governance’.

- Roundtable participant

One offshoot of this aversion to broad multilateral processes and institutions was for the States concerned to favour regional approaches. It was suggested however that too much of the conversation is already at regional levels. It was further cautioned that rather than “building blocks” of global approaches, some regional processes can be “stumbling blocks”, actually blocking global action, as has been the case in some trade matters, for example. Participants emphasized the importance of expressing clearly and consistently: “global” is not to the exclusion of national or regional management, but complementary, balanced and integrated to national and regional efforts.

Broad disincentives and opposition to “managed” migration

Agencies, recruiters, brokers and other actors operate *outside* of commonly recognized rules and regulations, often leading to the dark side of migration: human trafficking, danger and victimization on migration journeys, exploitation in transit and post-arrival, and other abuses.

Several participants asserted economic motivations, macro and micro, fuelling the lack of will on the part of authorities to genuinely regulate labour migration, e.g., turning a blind eye to very visible masses of irregular workers because those workers were needed, hard-working, cheaper and easily “replenished” if necessary.

Participants also noted bluntly the objective “effectiveness” of migration *outside* regular channels. As one participant observed, “human trafficking and smuggling deliver what other migration regimes don’t. Parents and children take these risks because they are desperate for a migration outcome: basically, they just want a future, for themselves and their families. And they know they’re being exploited.”

A further barrier to finding and acting on common ground for better managing global migration is the distinct and longstanding distrust that a substantial number of civil society actors have even for the *term* “migration management.” Much of this distrust is based on the use and understanding of the term as pertaining principally to enforcement activities (return) and instrumentalization of migrants, their rights and dignity.

Key agents of change

Emergence of potent demographic, social and political trends

It has been said that “demography is destiny”, but among European participants in particular, there was a sense that “there is denial that Europe has a demographic problem. Europe needs migrants. This is something different than saying simply that



problems outside the EU make people move.” Moreover, even when European officials cite population projections, based on current trends, that foresee a drop of 30-40 million in EU population by 2050, “It is impossible for people to hear ‘we need the people’”.

At the same time, participants also pointed to some positive signs of societies incorporating certain effects of contemporary migration. For example, participants suggested that, over time, more and more politicians pay attention to voting migrants, and more and more parties have migrants on their lists. It was also noted that virtually all countries were now sharing the experience of both immigration and emigration, and even transit, leaving to the past much of the sense of pure division of countries of origin and countries of destination.

Participants on both sides of the Atlantic recognized trends in local and national politics as a change agent of the first dimension. At local levels, “Migration has everything to do with local level and integration”. In the US, it was noted that the “problem” of migration had actually gone in recent years from a regional approach to a national approach even to a state-by-state approach, i.e., “backwards”.

There was much discussion on the interplay of national and regional or international politics and decision-making, with participants offering considerable push-back. As one Ambassador put it, “But even if we were to say that the world is really a bunch of villages, does that mean we have to run it like a bunch of independent mayors?”

“New” decision-making dynamics under the Lisbon Treaty

New structures of power and decision-making give the EU distinct opportunities to effect change. Under the terms of the new Lisbon treaty, the European Parliament and European Commission are given co-decision powers, with qualified voting replacing the prior emphasis on consensus (and its common consequence, tyranny of the minority.) Several participants expected such provisions to bring in other non-state thinkers and actors, and the new voting power of the European Parliament to make it more active, and successful, on these issues. One European participant suggested that, with its new powers in decision-making, the European Parliament will be able to “push” the European Commission, “if skilful.”

People win or lose elections on migration. That’s the issue we have to deal with. Politicians suffer from migration. But in Europe, the EU can be relied upon to do this. The EU doesn’t have to defend this at a national level.

- Brussels roundtable participant

It was also suggested that the increase that these changes brought about in the influence of NGOs and other non-state actors engaging with the European Commission and Parliamentarians should not be underestimated. As evidence of the greater role and influence of civil society in relation to the European Parliament, several European participants noted the special impact of the recent demonstration by civil society regarding the EC’s “returns directive” as the *first* major protest directed at the Commission and Parliament on migration. Already, it was emphasized, EU responses include new fora, such as the Integration Forum, and a civil society platform attached to the new European Asylum Support Office.

European participants described the new enthusiasm for deepened dialogue and more regular collaboration on migration matters among EU, US and Canadian policy-makers. In this direction, it was mentioned that the US recently designated an

official to a new post in Brussels to “compare notes and results” among “receiving” countries, e.g., on how the EU is handling migration movements such as refugees and migrants from Sri Lanka, and the question of the EU acceding to the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention.

Regional consultative processes: leading to global change?

Participants observed great value and also diversity among the many regional processes related to migration with wide differences in focus, quality, regularity and effectiveness.

Several participants cautioned that the value of these processes was “overplayed” at times, even against global processes and/or UN systems, e.g., as if all countries were active, when some were not, and even among countries in one region there can be a huge difference in how some are acting.

Furthermore, at present, the regional processes are generally not linked, though there have been occasional exceptions. Indeed, several participants pointed to obstacles to their “linkability”, such as differing agendas and vision, minimal management structures, etc. On the suggestion that the processes might come together or possibly add up to something of a whole, it was remarked that, at least as presently constituted, this was neither their purpose nor within their capacity.

Convergence is not always good, especially in the absence of norms.
- Roundtable participant

Another participant cautioned that while there has been a level of policy coherence among the regional processes, and conceivably could be more, “convergence is not always good, especially in the absence of norms.” For example, what if everyone were to say, “we have to market our migrants like the Philippines?” Or, “it is important to converge on ever-more temporary migration, even in the US and Canada?” There is the risk of adopting the lowest common denominator policies.

Business and private sector actors

European and US participants alike noted the tremendous impact that multinational corporations and universities have had on the movement of highly skilled workers, both in legislation and rules and in administrative practice. Corporations and other private sector entities look for consistency and predictability, frequently promoting—for the sake of efficiency—harmony at a level of best practices across the different countries from which they draw skilled workers.

As the integration of national economic markets meld into a global market, there are ever-greater pressures for effective, global labour mobility. The stakes, therefore, for the private sector, are considerable.
- Brussels roundtable participant

Among participants from the private sector, it was stated that *Connecting the dots*, the report of the first phase of the *Conversations* on global governance, addressed many of the “right” issues. However, the link between labour migration and the labour demand and skills shortages was thought to not have been sufficiently examined. They suggested that the governance of labour migration particularly needed to address two broad skills-shortage issues and one worker rights issue.



The first shortage is of workers with high-level skills, whose mobility is usually driven by the pursuit of a career opportunity or a life experience. In general, the country, the employer and the job are known before the migration process starts. Labour migration of this kind is usually less controversial and obtaining a work permit relatively straightforward. It was suggested that the business community understands this mobility, and further, the impact of delays, complications in recruitment, employment processes and immigration procedures.

We believe that the corporate community is being tremendously underutilized. If asked, they would step up.

- Roundtable participant, business sector

The second shortage is of workers with mid-level skills. It was asserted that this is where the biggest skill shortages lie, and specific policy challenges emerge. In contrast to the higher-skilled, mobility is more often driven by a lack of economic opportunity in the home country of the migrant worker. Typically neither the employer nor the exact job is known, and the choice of host country often reflects a mix of hearsay and a sense of where the barriers to entry are the lowest. As a result, skills mismatches are common and workers often end up in jobs well below their skills level. Issues of skills recognition and certification are also a concern.

Third, private sector and other participants noted the widespread challenge of ensuring the worker rights of lower-skilled migrants. They recognized that low-skilled workers made up the largest pool of migrant workers and suffered the worst forms of labour exploitation and abuse. In the words of one of the private sector representatives, this is the area that places labour migration “in a bad light, and stigmatises a whole sector of private employment agencies, for not following international norms, practices and ethics.” For that reason he said, the international private employment agency industry is “extremely interested” to encourage and adopt international standards for labour migration.

It was suggested that the model of facilitated mobility—and rights—of the highly skilled (and members of their families) has not extended to mid-skilled and lesser-skilled workers because neither business nor other civil society actors have catalyzed the political will in that direction. One participant asserted that the application of such models of migration to workers with the full range of skills, and further at an international level, would be helped in particular by the engagement of “captains of business, putting their political weight in.” Among other things, there is an enormous opportunity for public-private cooperation to craft appropriate policy responses to workers with the broader range of skills, including support for private sector skills assessment tools and labour-matching mechanisms.

Several of the private sector participants cautioned, however, that business can be deterred by a fear of being demonized on all sides: as exploiters; for giving jobs away to foreigners; exporting jobs, etc. Business leaders may also be easily disappointed or sceptical of slow-moving processes, long discussion and uncertain result. For example, one private sector participant referred positively to work done on the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, but wondered what has happened with it?²³

Finally, participants noted the slow but serious engagement of the private sector in processes such as the 2009 GFMD meeting in Athens, with participation expected again in the 2010 GFMD. In the US, the business sector (e.g., Apple, Hewlett Packard, JC Penney, Nordstrom, Radisson Hotels, Western Union) has broadly weighed into

and been important in the fight against human trafficking, among other things, regarding supply-chain management. It was emphasized however, that the business sector is interested predominantly in migration, not development.

Select or diverse actors = agents of change?

The selection and/or diversity of actors in the discussion can bring a wider range of perspectives for consideration. But a caution was noted that groups that are not “like-minded” may not produce anything. One participant attributed a sense of the effectiveness of the Inter-Governmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies (IGC) process above all to the fact that it gathered like-minded participants.²⁴

Indeed, even within the many regional consultative processes, a critical question is “how many countries are needed in the room and who?” Again and again the question arose as to whether the key factor was often really *which* ministers or government actors were around the table, e.g., ministers responsible for security and the interior vs. ministers of migration, labour, commerce, foreign affairs.

It was widely felt, however, that the discussion of international migration to date has mainly been dominated by North American and European actors. Many participants emphasized the importance of perspectives and possibilities from other regions, especially countries from or through which large numbers of people migrate, e.g., south-south migration. At the same time, it was further cautioned that even so-called “regional sensitivities” and “regional approaches” to solutions were thought to largely reflect which phenomena the most powerful countries in the region were most focused upon: migrants leaving, transiting or arriving.

How many countries are needed in the room and who?
- Roundtable participant

Finally, two actors were recognized for engagement as “new” agents of change in migration: The World Bank and the Alliance of Civilizations. Several participants saw The World Bank as having the authority, resources, research capacity and global reach to be a potentially significant and constructive force. Its work for example, on developing data, awareness and respect for the substantial quantity and role of migrant remittances was cited as an example of the kind of game-change engagement that the Bank has only in recent years begun to assert directly in matters of international migration. Separately, it was noted with interest that migration has also expressly been picked up as an issue within the new global Alliance of Civilizations. Participants encouraged exploration of this new actor and potential.

An “M-20”

Earlier this year, as a prelude to the G-20 meeting in November, the Korean Chair considered the convening of a G-20 conference specifically on the question of international migration. As envisioned, the “M-20” (migration-20) would ideally comprise “old sending and receiving countries and new sending and receiving countries”. It would make for an invaluable and inclusive political stock-taking and discussion among a critical mass of leading nations.

Even though the conference did not proceed under the Koreans, it struck participants as novel and interesting. One participant thought it was “a very interesting example of getting the right number and right actors in the room.” Many agreed at

24. The IGC is an active State-led process that started some 30 years ago as a forum for discussion of UNHCR issues together with UNHCR and others but in a non-UN space, to escape strict constraints of UNHCR Executive Committee protocols. With 19 members at present, including the US, Canada, many European countries, Australia and New Zealand, as well as UNHCR, IOM and the European Commission, the IGC meets annually at the ministerial level meeting and more regularly in working groups of experts.



least with respect to the number, though some expressed reservations on whether the current G-20 countries really had enough of a representation of countries of origin of large numbers of migrants. In any event, some European officials thought that an “M-20” kind of approach could put political leverage on EU Member States, especially if the chair of the G-20 was European.

Clearly participants felt that there was merit for further reflection on developing a future “M-20”. In this regard, it was suggested that either in New York or Geneva, the UN Ambassador representing the current or future G-20 Chair could bring together the G-20 Ambassadors for an informal brainstorming session. This would allow for a better preparation should this proceed. At the very least, such a session would keep the idea alive.

Parliamentarians

In every roundtable of the *Conversations*, participants referred to the indispensability of political will, leadership, and cooperation for any system of global governance to become a reality. It was noteworthy then that over 200 Parliamentarians from all over the globe participated in a lively discussion on global governance that was held by the Inter-Parliamentary Union at its 123rd Assembly meeting in Geneva in October.

Because the political buck stops with national governments, everyone is in charge, which means that internationally, no one is in charge!
- Parliamentarian

The discussion confirmed that migration is a “hot” issue on all political radar screens, Parliaments included. Moreover, Parliamentarians spoke to the need for change. Especially striking was that none of the interventions spoke to ‘local’ migration issues: they were all positioned in an international context. The political delegates used words like “cooperation”, “co-responsibility”, an “umbrella framework”, and “integral decision-making”—rather than the usual business of “all politics being local”.

In fact, one politician urged her counterparts to move forward more intentionally, claiming that, “We all have attended so many migration conferences. They all address the same old issues and have the same old discussions. We’re just running around in circles!” In this context, the IPU was strongly encouraged to consider establishing a working group of Parliamentarians to further consider the issue of migration management and come up with a set of recommendations.

The Global Forum on Migration and Development

The GFMD continues to exceed expectations, with such high numbers and levels of participation that the cost borne by host and donor countries has actually become an important challenge.²⁵ European participants in the *Conversations* reported that European Commission Vice President Jacques Barrot was happy to be at the third meeting of the GFMD in Athens, 2009. In 2010, EU Home Affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmström is expected to attend, as is Assistant Secretary of State Eric Schwartz of the US, leading the highest-level US delegation to the GFMD to date.

Moreover, thanks in good part to the diligent and ambitious work of Mexican officials, participants seemed impressed with the GFMD’s new emphasis on having and measuring impact, i.e., “moving from talk to action.”

25. Facing the prospect of contributing substantial financial support towards the cost of the Global Forum meetings of 2010 and 2011 while wrestling with domestic budgetary concerns, the two governments that had initially committed to hosting those GFMDs withdrew, replaced by Mexico and Switzerland respectively. While at the time of this writing it was reported that Morocco had just withdrawn its offer to host the GFMD in 2012, Sweden had committed to hosting the GFMD meeting in 2014, the year following the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in New York.

26. A presentation of the results of the “informal” survey was made to the GFMD Friends of the Forum meeting in Geneva 29 April 2010.

27. The first of the GFMD “ad hoc working groups”, Policy coherence, Data and Research, is co-chaired by Morocco and Switzerland and has focused on the five objectives of: linking research and policy more effectively and strengthening cooperation between government policy-makers and the research community; assessing the impact of policies and practices; building capacity for data collection and research; making better use of existing data through the preparation of country profiles to promote policy coherence; and collecting new data by adding migration questions to censuses or through specialized surveys. The second ad hoc working group, Protecting and Empowering Migrants, is co-chaired by the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates and has focused on promotion of partnerships to reduce costs and risks of migration and the protection and empowerment of migrants throughout the migration cycle, regardless of migration status.

28. The “Platform for Partnerships” is a new GFMD initiative, supported by the Swiss government, to promote the exchange of thinking and construction of concrete partnerships among governments, intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, including NGOs. As presented to the Friends of the Forum at its meeting 29 April 2010, “even though the GFMD has no operational capacity, it can offer support to governments and others for cooperation and practical follow-up.” Initial development of the Platform involved discussion among

We are really under pressure there to deliver a more operational approach.

- European participant

One participant referred to a survey conducted among States²⁶ that concluded that more than half of the “action recommendations” from Brussels and Manila GFMDs had been completed by 2010, in particular among the many States engaged in the GFMD’s two “ad hoc working groups” on policy coherence and protection, respectively.²⁷ In addition to the activity of those working groups, the new initiative “Platform for Partnerships”²⁸ and the launch at the Mexico meeting of a formal assessment process²⁹ demonstrate serious efforts to build and follow-up on the voluntary commitments of States in GFMD meetings. It was telling that a European participant in these *Conversations* noted “we are really under pressure there to deliver a more operational approach.”

The Global Migration Group³⁰

Though only participants in the various New York *Conversations* discussed the GMG, there was strong feeling that this convening of 16 intergovernmental agencies continues to hold potential for advancing the agenda of international cooperation on migration. Multiple participants commended the GMG for its progress, especially this past year, in building a record of inter-agency collaboration at a working level and produced increasingly credible outputs, including a well-attended international symposium in Geneva in May 2010. As evidence of the GMG’s particular value in demonstrating the ability of multiple actors to act on cross-cutting issues of migrants and migration, participants pointed to the recent achievement of the GMG member agencies in converging, unanimously, on a public statement strongly reiterating the human rights of irregular migrants.³¹ Both for the extraordinary unity and for focusing on one of the most sensitive issues in migration, the GMG action was hailed as landmark.

Whether the GMG could do more with a two-speed structure of agencies set on their levels of engagement on migration matters, and/or with more resources (including a secretariat) was thought to be worth further exploration. There was specific mention of the “need for the ILO to be much more active” in the GMG. Finally, several participants noted tensions that needed to be worked out in how the GMG and the GFMD—both born at the same time, in part as responses to the 2005 report of the Global Commission on International Migration—related to each other. Of particular concern is the ongoing exclusion of the GMG from any formal role in the GFMD, consequent to the charge to the GFMD to remain a state-led process outside of the UN system.

The UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2013

As the first international meeting on migration and development explicitly at ministerial level since the 2006, the HLD has the potential not only to review the value of the GFMD process, but also to re-set the broad agenda on issues, approaches and processes going forward. Indeed, there is in principle an expectation that the HLD will have a negotiated outcome, unlike its 2006 predecessor. The question then would be, what kind of negotiated outcome?

There was thinking among participants that some actors and interests might once again favour a lesser result, however, as was the case in 2006. In this direction, one participant described as “ominous” the opposition seen in Europe earlier this year to



The challenge may now be how to avoid moving backwards.

- Roundtable participant

interested actors, the creation of a web interface and the presentation of actual projects during the civil society and States programmes of the GFMD in Mexico.

29. As presented to the meeting of the GMFD Friends of the Forum in Geneva 1 September 2010, the assessment would be led by the GMFD chair-in-office within a group of 12 States, and consist of a clear, transparent and precise assessment of the GFMD, its impact and what is needed to assure its continuity into the future.

30. The 16 members of the GMG are the ILO, IOM, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the UN Development Programme, UNESCO, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNHCR, UNICEF, the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime; the UN Regional Commissions (ECPAC), the World Bank, and since 30 September 2010, UNIFEM and WHO.

31. Statement of the Global Migration Group on the human rights of migrants in irregular situations, 30 September 2010, Geneva, available at: <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/pdf/GMG%20Joint%20Statement%20Adopted%2030%20Sept%202010.pdf>. The then 14 GMG member agencies were represented at the meeting by 9 of their principals. In the discussion preceding the adoption of the statement, the issue was addressed by Mr. Johan Ketelers, Secretary-General of the International Catholic Migration Commission. His remarks are available at: http://www.icmc.net/system/files/activity/icmc_statement_to_the_global_migration_group_12944.pdf

the UN Commission on Population and Development proposal to examine migration in 2012, preparatory to this next HLD, as was done the prior time. Pointing further to the drastically different economic and social environment heading towards this HLD as compared to 2006, one UN official expressed concern that “the challenge may now be how to avoid moving backwards.”

Participants noted the “highly choreographed” nature of such dialogues, with rules (“for everything”, e.g., including how many minutes per speaker) to be decided in 2012. Several participants advised that the real “dialogue” may take place in structures and processes that prepare and lead up to the event, including meetings of the UN Second Committee. In preparing for 2013, parallel processes even outside the UN could be considered. It was recalled that the 2006 HLD was able to benefit from the parallel work of the Global Commission on International Migration, which completed its global studies and publication in the run-up to the 2006 HLD.

It was suggested that the EU could play an influential role at the HLD, both on structure and outcomes. Noting that current European action plans on asylum and legal migration will come to an end in 2011-2012, the EC will probably then set the ground for the next phase, maybe even a mid-term review, and possibly link it to the HLD in 2013.

Improving the international management of migration is not losing sovereignty; it is really about countries and governments reclaiming sovereignty and control, and exercising it collectively for the benefit of individual States, citizens and migrants alike.

- Roundtable participant

SYNTHESIS: FINDINGS FROM PHASES I AND II OF THE PROJECT

1. Acknowledging the global nature, forces, numbers and risk-reward dynamics of contemporary migration, a clear majority of leading actors in the field recognize the need to improve the governance of migration, with global complements to national and regional migration management.
2. Why? A growing majority of actors, including the private sector, see that the alternative to building a complementary global governance of migration is chaos.
 - a. Not better organizing migration allows for voids to be created or exacerbated. In other words, *not* connecting the dots, and failing to bridge the gaps only creates larger headaches in the future for political and policy leaders. Issues such as national security, social justice, economic opportunity, and social cohesion must be approached coherently and holistically, in an effort to build improved and effective public policies.

The challenge today is financial. We'll have the same crisis tomorrow with migration if we don't regulate that, if we don't organize better.

- European participant

- b. There is rising recognition that national sovereignty may be diminished more by a lack of transnational organization of migration (i.e., "ceded" to migrant smugglers, traffickers, etc.) than by agreements by sovereign states to develop joint and global approaches in that regard, such that concerted management is actually a way to regain control and order. Complementary global governance is really about reclaiming control and responsibility collectively, rather than ceding authority.
 - c. It is not "either-or." As one participant suggested, the key may be to go counter-intuitive: there is no necessary contradiction between mobility and control. For example, for those who want more control, it is necessary to improve international management; for those who wish to reduce migration, especially forced migration, it is necessary to engage in development in a more serious way.
3. Many of the leaders in the migration field point favourably to other global phenomena and governance that complement national approaches. In the new world order, "going it alone" is fast becoming the exception; the old way of doing business. Cross border issues tend to attract the interest and cooperation of a host of governments and institutions, sometimes universally so; sharing both burdens and opportunities, all in an effort to develop and enforce more effective public policies.

Thus, international processes, resources and institutions in the fields of health, trade, finance, human rights, security, environment, and intellectual property, for example, are all subjected to some form of global governance.



- a. Without pointing to any specific models of governance, the rationale for improving complementary global governance for migration would have to be the same as the rationale that built those other forms of governance: a *perception by States that such governance serves any number of State interests*, including protecting migrants, in the same way for example, that the World Health Organization serves many of the health-related interests of States, particularly across borders. As one high level government official put it, “what would such a platform get us that we are not already getting? If we could answer that question in a more rigorous way...”

Identifying gaps is not the place to start, but rather identifying the interest of States.

- Roundtable participant

- b. There may be a need to drive a consensus on the benefits of migration in order to convince States, policy makers and other opinion leaders that those benefits need to be better assured with global approaches.
 - c. One advantage is that important forms of global and complementary governance of migration already exist, for example, regarding refugees, enforcement and human trafficking.
 - d. There is also concrete cooperation, which demonstrates that “common ground” is neither dreamy nor should it be reserved for the future only.
 - e. There is concern, however, that coordination and coherence do not necessarily translate to fairness or benefit, for example in many of the temporary and circular migration schemes, especially for lower skilled workers.
4. Many also underscore the particular challenge of moving ahead on governance of *migration*:
 - a. The emotional and at times explosive social, cultural and political reactions that migration can generate—in countries of origin and transit as well as destination.
 - b. Indeed one obstacle to considering global governance may be that, as one participant put it, “the very reason we need it is the very reason we don’t get it: the asymmetry of the weak vs. the powerful.”

Our country is trying to fight irregular/illegal migration... and even then, these people are not criminals. They are just out of status.

- Ambassador participant

- c. Approaches to security may be “the elephant in the room,” trumping even existing frameworks and agreements, though as one government official put it, “the humanitarian and security worlds speak to each other all the time.”

- d. There is an urgency for States and the media to shift their imagery from criminalization of migrants to migrants not being a threat, and to support the role that international organizations could play in achieving that shift.
5. Almost all actors remark that the common ground in migration has recently expanded faster and to an extent unimagined even five or ten years ago. Evidence includes:
 - a. continued development of the EU and numerous regional free movement agreements (e.g., economic communities in Africa);
 - b. the traditional national go-it-alone reflexes on migration policy-making looking more and more to bilateral and multilateral engagement, including regional processes, solutions, and agreements, e.g., in Europe and Asia;
 - c. inexorable movement: from national to regional to international discussion and cooperation, including the proliferation of regional and inter-regional consultative processes, regional action and the GFMD.
6. Actors are also certain that the common ground for complementary global governance continues to expand, if unevenly, and most notably in the areas of human trafficking, labour and regional mobility.
 - a. There is less certainty, however on where and to what extent common ground expands *next*; what cooperation is possible, or who will “push” it and how?
 - b. There is important tension, and divergence among actors, on the “assumption” of gaps, on identifying and acting on specific “gaps”—as one US participant put it, properly considering “not just gaps, but is there an important gap that needs to be filled.”
 - c. There continues to be strong divergence in spoken/political rhetoric regarding what is wanted or not wanted: new or more widely applied hard law (e.g., the UN Migrant Workers Convention), new institution-building or applications (e.g., climate “refugees”) vs. “softer” cooperation, practices, informal and non-binding processes; and enormous divergence between international versus regional approaches.
7. A big choice to be considered is whether to approach “common ground” *piecemeal*, as is predominantly the case at present, or more “whole meal”: i.e., in their full “real world” context rather than slice-by-slice.
 - a. For example, not just pieces or slices of high-skilled workers, intracompany transfers, refugees, victims of human trafficking, etc., but the wide range of human mobility; not just labour migration but labour *markets*; not just region-by-region but also the trans-region and full global picture. The value of this more comprehensive consideration can be illustrated in the interplay of people, mobility options, choices and outcomes, for instance: free movement can provide refugees opportunities to find or build solutions themselves, without either asking for assistance or even being given the label “refugee”; human trafficking can ensnare movements of refugees as well as labour migrants. Several participants further cautioned that certain piecemeal focuses, e.g., trafficking, could be too easy as opposed to the need for focus on wider protection.

We cannot address labour and economy phenomena by labour migration policies alone; they need to be seen within the broader context of labour market policies.

- Roundtable participant, business sector



- b. Arguing against the dangers of piecemeal approaches, one participant emphasized that states and other actors absolutely “do not want to make the mistake of migration without integration.”
 - c. A global approach needs migration policies to be more integrated with policies of cooperation and development, to reduce both forced migration (human cost) and forced return (human and enforcement costs.)
8. Though no policy is 100% effective, as one participant put it: “*good policy needs tools.*”
- a. Data and research are essential for evidence-based discussions and decision-making, including for example the migration profiles being developed with the support of the EU.
 - b. An elaboration of basic principles that are widely accepted may be helpful, even a kind of social compact of rights and obligations.
 - c. Sustainable migration policy needs to consider countries of origin and destination and the migrants themselves. The new EU-driven migration profiles are an important resource for EU and member States, other national and international actors in their elaboration of migration policies and development aid.

It is not just about rights, but also about evidence, tools and mission for all migration: labour, humanitarian and family.

- Roundtable participant

9. It is one thing to observe majority thinking, and even growing majorities converging on the need for more shared and integrated approaches to managing international migration. It is another thing to consider if there is a *critical mass* willing to work on this. For any significant movement towards global governance however, it may be necessary to reach a “tipping point,” or tipping event, but if so, what? A catastrophe? An accumulation of chaos?

The current 'limbo' cannot continue much longer. While we will not easily shift to a full governance, it's already getting a bit late in terms of talking and preparing the ground. We can't lose much more time.

- Ambassador participant

RECOMMENDATIONS

As participants asserted and underscored: this is about building common ground, and strengthening common action.

1. It is important for the US, the EU and other regions to go beyond immediate term thinking, more fully evaluate their own experience and then stimulate global debate and cooperation among all stakeholders in the management of international migration.
 - Consideration should be given to organizing an informal meeting or conference along these lines.
 - Priority should be given to generating positive results-oriented discussion in regional and global processes leading up to the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2013, and within the upcoming assessment and meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development.
 - The influence that NGOs, the private sector and other non-state actors can bring in these directions should no longer be underestimated, including in the building of critical mass and political will, not least in the context of new European powers and structures under the Lisbon treaty.
 - The experience and actors of the international travel and global education sectors should be engaged in these deliberations.
2. Further attention should be given to how to best “frame” the discussions on global governance of migration, addressing States’ *interest* and not just “gaps.” This would include how to situate, balance and account for the security imperative, and how to redefine the political vocabulary in making the case that a global approach would permit governments to *reclaim* responsibility and control *collectively*.
3. An elaboration of what “better global governance of migration” could look like should be pursued:
 - to develop a clear mission statement, i.e., global governance for who, for what, towards what purpose; why it is in the interest of States as well as others
 - to articulate a broad-based call for better global governance, engaging civil society, the private sector, Parliamentarians and other stakeholders
 - to identify interested government actors in countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as regional and intergovernmental organizations to form a nucleus of States to work on basic principles and practical models for cooperation.



In these directions:

- the engagement of business leaders and the link between labour migration and labour demand and skills shortages, should be pursued much more strategically.
 - proceeding from its successful panel in October, the Inter-Parliamentary Union should consider establishing a small, representative working group of Parliamentarians to further examine the issue of migration governance, and develop a set of recommendations.
 - an “experts” retreat of migration actors and political decision-makers should be organized in an effort to translate principles and elements into practical mechanisms, and give form to an improved level of governance. Beyond their own professional opinions, participants will also be able to draw from the wealth of perspectives and recommendations that *Conversations* has produced to date.
4. A *social compact* (“*contrat social*”) of migrants’ rights and obligations, at global level, should be considered. All stakeholders should participate in developing that compact.
 5. Stakeholders should employ not a rights-based approach alone but a broad “*tools-based approach*” to address shared challenges comprehensively while ensuring that work on common ground remains centered on the common good.
 6. Building on the comments by the UN Secretary General that migration is a “new generation” issue for global governance, and in consideration of the “M-20” model originally proposed by Korea for discussing concerted management of international migration, an “M-20-like” proposal should be considered by the next G-20 Chair and its members.
 7. With the forward-looking work undertaken by the Mexican government in relation to the 2010 GFMD and its theme, “partnerships for shared responsibility and prosperity”, States should support and enact a “shift” in GFMD proceedings, ushering in a more deliberate “action-oriented” mode.
 8. Preparations for the HLD in 2013, preferably in informal mode, should begin in earnest, with global governance as an important theme.

NEXT STEPS

Whether one would wish to be, in the words of one of the roundtable participants, either “prudent or bold” in rising to the challenge of improving the global governance of migration, the wide interest in the subject and in this *Conversations* process thus far demonstrates the need to broaden the process with partnerships that are both prudent and bold. Humbly, and with that invitation in mind, ICMC proposes that the following set of “next steps”, which participants saw important for follow-up, are not for ICMC alone to take. Rather, they require the direct support, financial and otherwise, of partners in State, intergovernmental and academic institutions engaged with international migration.

Immediate-term

- Publish, circulate and present this report widely, e.g.:
 - to all participants
 - to the wider migration constituency
 - to the Global Migration Group
 - at the Global Forum on Migration and Development
 - to the academic community
- Present findings to and engage directly with:
 - Parliamentarians, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union
 - civil society organizations, especially NGOs and labour groups
 - business leaders
 - funders of near-term activities and follow-up

Near-term

- With particular attention to upcoming meetings of the GFMD and the UN High Level Dialogue in 2013:
 - engage with the GMG, in particular the current troika (UNDP, OHCHR and UNICEF) and UNESCO chair for July – December 2011
 - work with the Swiss government hosting the 2011 GFMD
 - organize meetings with senior UN officials, pursuing the Secretary General’s fresh call to take up governance issues in international migration
- Conduct a new round of *Conversations* activities:
 - in at least one developing country
 - with business leaders



Medium-term

- Meet with government officials responsible for migration, e.g., senior migration officials or ministerial chiefs of staff
 - explore the possibility of a retreat of ministers from both developed and developing countries
 - explore interest in an “M-20” approach
 - host an “experts” meeting, for the purpose of developing and mapping a set of realistic options/models for strengthening the level of international management of migration
 - organize a concluding conference and produce a consolidated report of findings and recommendations

Long-term

- Identify and work with a core group of States and relevant stakeholders interested in developing a consensual model of global governance of migration to complement national and regional migration governance
- Animate a broad campaign to promote the benefits of this model, enlisting personalities eminent in all migration sectors, aimed at political and policy makers, civil society, the private sector, targeted media and the public

CONCLUSIONS

International policy making differs from the domestic front. First, global challenges require global solutions. Second, global solutions demand global alliances. And finally, global alliances cannot be constructed on the basis of narrow national self-interest alone. If they are to be successful, these alliances must also reflect shared global values.

In an age of unbridled human mobility, this raises central questions;

- What values are shared, and what do leading actors—policy-makers, thinkers and stakeholders—think is needed, for better management of international migration?
- With an eye on the common good, what international approaches make national and regional approaches more successful?
- Where, if at all, does “common ground” exist among nations and regions for complementary global governance—whether in cooperation already underway or imminent potential?
- What concrete steps are within reach—and what, if anything, is the cost of not taking those steps?

Since October 2009, ICMC asked these questions of 138 high-level representatives of governments, intergovernmental institutions at regional and global levels, civil society organizations, the private sector and academia who participated in ICMC’s *Conversations on the Global Governance of Migration*. This is what we learned.

Across-the-board, the leading actors see and say that there is indeed common ground. Many are further convinced that the common ground is expanding, steadily if not always consistently, with increasing cooperation among governments and intergovernmental institutions and processes. Many remarked that the rate of change and achievement is one that no one imagined possible only a few years ago.

A growing majority of actors also agree—emphatically—that national management of migration needs complementary management at regional and international levels. Pointing on the one hand to the risks and chaos that arise from failing to organize migration in the face of galloping globalization, imbalances of development, demography and even urbanization; and on the other hand to models of global governance that are often effective in other fields, most believe that it is high-time for more concerted management of international migration.

Of course, political will is the *sine qua non* to this change—including the political will of many of these same actors. But without suggesting how or when that political will might be expressed, ICMC concludes from twelve months of the *Conversations* that a call to action has emerged, inviting all actors to:

- recognize, with all the implications of that recognition, the chaos of go-it-alone national approaches to the global phenomena of contemporary human



We face a choice between being prudent and bold: either listen to the prudent, who are too careful not to kick the States or international organizations, or be bold with vision. It's better to have a conversation about bold vision. Otherwise, we are just adding to the back and forth. Do not be afraid of that conversation; nor of global governance. Use that term; maybe define it.

- Roundtable participant

mobility. *This is a particular challenge for “northern” and other countries that benefit from the arrival and labour of large numbers of migrants but have long blocked or diluted most efforts at complementary governance.* It is also a major interest of civil society—and notably not only of migrants and rights groups but also of major business and private sector entities.

- extend existing elements of management, or shape new ones, that are smart and fair at the international level, to do what national approaches cannot. *This calls for decisions as well as discussions that equally engage countries of origin and transit as well as migrants and civil society actors.*
- build on common ground that already exists in regional and global aspects of migration management today, beginning with strong convergence on the need to improve governance for more effective international protection and labour migration.
- understand migration management properly as a set of *complementary* activities that:
 - actually reclaim for States the ability to exercise sovereignty and control over migration dynamics, which is lost in “go-it-alone” national approaches;
 - assert and respect migrant rights and obligations, in accordance with international standards and in proper balance for dignity, fairness, social order and social cohesion;
 - are more comprehensive, formal and predictable than mere “cooperation” and “best practices”, i.e., operating within existing frameworks (better implemented) and, where necessary, new ones, rather than “soft law”;
 - encompass family unity, residence and integration dynamics rather than focus exclusively on enforcement, economic aspects of migration and/or temporary and circular migration schemes.

ANNEX I

PARTICIPANTS IN ICMC'S CONVERSATIONS ON THE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF MIGRATION

Phases I (October - December 2009) and II (January - October 2010), as indicated

The following individuals participated in any of the multiple roundtables, small meetings, working luncheons and dinners that ICMC organized during the year of *Conversations*. We apologize for and will swiftly add to this list any name that you may notice is missing.

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Ms. Crystal WILLIAMS	Executive Director American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) (Phase II)
Dr. Jozef de WITTE	Director Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (Phase II)
Mr. Michael WINZAP	Deputy Head, Political Affairs Division IV Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland (Phase I)
Ms. Zeynep YANASMAYAN	Doctoral candidate and Assistant, Migration and Governance University of Leuven/law (Phase II)
Amb. Johnny YOUNG	Member, ICMC Governing Committee Executive Director, Migration and Refugee Services United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Phase II)
Dr. Hania ZLOTNIK	Director, Population Division United Nations Department for Social & Economic Affairs (Phase II)



ANNEX II

QUESTIONS SURFACED FOR FURTHER REFLECTION AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN PHASE I

of the *Conversations on the Global Governance of Migration*, October – December 2009.

- excerpted verbatim from the ICMC publication *Connecting the dots*, op. cit., pg. 6, 9, 12, 13, 19 and 21

Regarding convergence on the term and value of “global governance of migration” (p. 6)

- Is migration sufficiently perceived as a universal phenomenon so as to require a universal response? If so, then why do governments prefer that the responsibility for migration policy remains predominantly at the national level, whereas many other global matters (e.g. labour, trade, health, human rights, etc.) have been commended, in substantial part, to international instruments and agencies?
- What would a more universal response actually govern? Who would be regulated, and how?

Regarding pieces of global migration governance that currently exist (ps. 9, 12 and 13)

- Is the Global Migration Group taken seriously at present by the heads and senior management of its member agencies, or is a different approach needed?
- If there is consensus that the GMG will not be effective without substantial change, who has the will and authority to direct that change?
- What is the GMG’s relationship—actual or potential—with the GFMD?
- How do outcomes and policy coherence run from one Forum to the other?
- Who is assessing the GFMD, and are they making progress in shaping a more global approach to global migration issues among other migration processes and structures?
- How can the GFMD in Mexico and beyond advance the discussions from “talking” about migration issues to a more “active mode”?
- How can the High Level Dialogue in 2013 be organized to be genuinely interactive and action-oriented?
- How can the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative on Migration be more of a connector and driver of these multiple pillars and processes (so many of them relatively new) of migration governance?
- How to promote, beyond dialogue and single region focus, practical and rights-based cooperation among the numerous regional consultative processes, especially between regions that share significant movements or other challenges of migration.



Regarding divergence and gaps: a look at contradictions, false opposites and intersections (p. 19)

- Who can conduct a gaps analysis that will sharpen the appreciation and implementation of existing tools of migration governance and ensure that attention is actually devoted to gaps where new approaches may be needed?
- How can States be encouraged to consider a more global strategy in developing their migration policies, including demonstrable evidence that benefits outweigh risks, real or perceived?
- What lessons, and what prospects can bilateral and regional engagements of States regarding migration offer to the improvement of global governance of migration?
- Why is there no permanent, formal forum providing countries a regular opportunity to discuss and act on global migration issues, e.g., a regular meeting for ministers responsible for migration?
- To what extent should or can better global governance of migration reinforce the right to *not* migrate?

Regarding gaps in vision and leadership (p. 21)

- What is the vision of our leaders when it comes to global migration?
- Can—or why cannot—current actors work more effectively together?
- Where is the political will and commitment to improve upon current structures?
- How can the role and contribution of NGOs and other civil society actors be better organized within the major migration structures and processes?

ANNEX III

KEY CONVERGENCE AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN PHASE I

of the *Conversations on the Global Governance of Migration*, October – December 2009.

- excerpted verbatim from the ICMC publication *Connecting the dots*, op. cit., pg. 25 - 26.

Context

1. Thanks in part to the process of globalization, the movement of people is, and will continue to be, increasingly facilitated. As an issue, international migration will only gain in political and policy importance.
2. Currently, migration governance remains almost entirely national, thus suggesting a significant gap and vacuum.

Taking stock

1. Participants in the *Conversations* recognized that as a global phenomenon, migration requires a global response and approach, if the international community is to effectively address both its opportunities and challenges.
2. “Timing” was seen as important: given the existing and potentially new challenges on the horizon, it was felt that governments do not have the luxury of inaction on the international level.
3. There was some concern expressed that the term ‘global governance’ is seen as a “loaded” or “intimidating” issue for some governments and/or agencies. Further reflection on a more neutral term could be helpful.
4. Neither the objective nor the consensus of the *Conversations* was to propose a supra, multilateral agency responsible for both forced and voluntary migration.
5. The principal underlying assumption was that a shared and coordinated international approach would be a benefit for all parties concerned: for States, for their citizens and for migrants.
6. It was suggested that effective global governance could to a great extent be built from the bottom up, and extended outwards from national and regional processes.
7. Participants identified five pillars that currently intersect with one another and increasingly provide important elements of global governance of migration: 1] national policies and programmes; 2] bilateral, regional, and global dialogues; 3] supranational structures and cooperation (e.g. the EU); 4] multilateral agencies; and 5] international legal frameworks.



8. It was felt that a set of broad migration principles could further assist and guide the development of international measures of governance, and that the report of the Global Commission on International Migration had articulated a coherent set of six such principles that are still relevant and helpful.
9. Mandates, resources and/or architecture of the international agencies most involved with migration are in need of some updating; participants made repeated references to better utilizing “existing” tools and “sharpening” these tools.
10. It was strongly felt that the migration issue could be a more central component in the agenda before the UN, including in the work plan and priorities of the UN Secretary General.
11. A number of key contradictions which form part of the migration discourse were identified, including the importance for developing a clear vision of, and leadership on, migration policy-making.
12. With respect to some of the existing processes:
 - The Global Migration Group was viewed as important but disappointing in its current form, and there were many recommendations for reform.
 - The Global Forum on Migration and Development was regarded more positively, notwithstanding a number of limitations. There was a strong disposition that the next Forum in Mexico, later this year, needs to shift from a purely “talking” mode into a more “active” mode.
 - The substantial increase in regional consultative processes in recent years was noted, and despite the differences in focus and outcomes, it was generally believed that there was considerable scope for closer collaboration and cooperation.

CONNECTING THE DOTS... IN CONCERT.

Migrants are dreamers, workers and entrepreneurs. They often risk everything for a different and better life for themselves and their families and, in turn, their diversity of ideas, experiences and energies help to renew societies.

But as a deeply emotional reality, migration also packs fears and perceptions that create anxieties for citizens of all backgrounds, in all our lands.

In view of all of these reasons and contradictions, ICMC's *Conversations on the Global Governance of Migration* worked over the twelve months of October 2009 through October 2010 to build a process to bring political leaders, policy makers, civil society and business leaders together:

- To help think through this policy and political challenge
- To help retain and reinforce what is working well
- To help find the will to rethink and rebuild, where new realities demand it
- To help to try and "get right" the international politics of the issue

To help, in effect, to marshal the global vision and leadership that global migration demands.



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