

Caritas Internationalis Contribution to the Consultation of the UN Secretary General Report on International Migration and Development

1. Caritas Internationalis is the worldwide confederation of 162 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations working to build a better world, especially for the poor and oppressed, in over 200 countries and territories. Caritas focuses its activities on policy issues related to poverty and social inequality; migration and asylum; issues of emergency humanitarian assistance and international development and peace throughout the world. Regarding all these issues, the confederation develops policies for political advocacy and lobbying at a global level, as well as at the regional and national levels. Many of the Confederation's member organisations conduct projects and advocate for adapted policies in both the areas of development and migration.

2. Caritas welcomes the report of the Secretary General which comes at a crucial moment in time where international migration is at the top of many national, regional and international platforms. It is encouraging and very timely that this debate should be reinitiated now with a focus on identifying positive synergies rather than seeing development policies as a tool of migration control. As he rightly points out, “... *international migration ... is a fundamental feature of today's world system*”¹. Indeed, migration has been a powerful instrument throughout human history to boost wealth in countries.

Some fundamental remarks: the need to focus on the added value of linking development and migration policies

3. The aim of connecting development and migration should be to reinforce the **fight against the root causes of poverty**. Access to education, more and better jobs, decent working conditions, and free access to basic health care are elements that contribute to the prevention of *forced*² migration by increasing the opportunities in the countries of origin. Caritas wishes to highlight that the complex and contextual connections between migration and poverty need to be **further explored** in order to understand home country development. Poverty is not always the main cause of migration and the contribution of migration to reducing poverty is complicated. The ‘migration and development nexus’ needs to be researched in greater detail and ongoing programmes should be monitored and evaluated and an exchange of the best practices ought to be undertaken.³

¹ UN report « International Migration and Development », 18 may 2006

² Caritas Internationalis considers as forced all forms of migration where people have no valid alternatives to choose from. This includes i.a. human rights violations, the lack of economic opportunities and environmental constraints.

³ Caritas Europa has replied in the same sense to the EU Commission's communication on migration and development of 1 September 2005, see <http://www.caritas-europa.org/module/FileLib/060524CommentsMigDev.pdf>

We therefore support the call of the Secretary General for a comprehensive and coherent global policy on migration and development and to put the "*migration puzzle*"⁴ together while keeping Human Rights central in the debate.

4. Refugees, people seeking asylum and migrating for economic purposes reflect global, as well as local patterns of insecurity and injustice. This lack of security must be addressed in context of **sustaining the improvement of the lives of local people**, not by limiting migration and denouncing it as a threat to security. Security in this context means the freedom from persecution, or the freedom from environmental degradation, but also the security of housing, work, a decent income for the individual and his/her family. Experience has shown that (a) improved security tends to lead to a reduction in forced⁵ and voluntary migration, and (b) a substantial improvement in the security situation in a country is often followed by high levels of return migration by those who initially left for security reasons.

5. A UN **migration framework** should be based on human rights and include support of the international legal framework for migration, with its cornerstones being the Geneva Refugee Convention of 1951 and the 1967 Protocol; ILO Conventions 97 and 143 and the 1990 UN Convention on the protection of all migrant workers and the members of their families; as well as the International Convention against organised crime, particularly relevant being the Palermo Protocol of 2000 with regard to the definition of smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

Co-development and policy changes

6. We congratulate the rapporteur for putting together a wealth of information, facts and figures on international migration. This will contribute to a more **facts based debate**. We hope that the facts will be interpreted correctly and that the right policy decisions will be taken subsequently. Our experience shows that the unemployment of migrants⁶ has more to do with discrimination and limited access to the labour market than with the supply side.

7. **Co-development** is the key word in this debate. Indeed, if countries are concerned about root causes of poverty and forced migration they have to take into consideration that **changes – development – will be indispensable both in the industrialised world and the developing world**. People and politicians have to realise and accept the fact that they're living in or leading more and more open societies with a diversity of cultures, traditions, etc. It is therefore necessary to have fact-based debates and policy developments rather than debates based on perceptions and prejudices. Official Development Aid (ODA) must be allocated in terms of the needs of people in line with the MDGs and not on criteria such as the numbers of migrants from specific developing countries in donor countries.

⁴ Op. cit., para 7

⁵ Caritas Internationalis defines forced migration as.....

⁶ Op. cit, para 52

8. It is true that the face of migration has changed thanks to the communications and transportation revolution. There is however a “**missing link**” in this transition, namely the outdated restrictive visa- and labour migration policies of receiving countries. We concur with the statement of the Secretary General that “*it is in the interest of all that migration occurs in a legal, safe and fair fashion, in strict adherence to international human rights standards*”⁷. Migration can be positive for countries of origin and countries of destination, the risks related to it however, are too often for the migrants. Caritas insists on the full respect of human dignity contrary to the debate where migrants are reduced to mere “economic units”. Caritas therefore explicitly supports the report where it stresses the centrality of Human Rights and Tolerance in the debate.

9. The **Triple win**⁸ is important but too often arguments such as the “brain drain” are abused by countries of destination to stop migration from developing countries. Moreover, the overrepresentation of migrant workers in 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous and demanding) would reinforce a segregation of the labour market with all social consequences for cohesion in society related to it. Such “glass ceiling” policies risk to create “2nd class citizens”.⁹ Migrants often end up in deprived areas, reinforcing segregation on the housing market and all socio-economic consequences related to it, such as: social exclusion, lack of (access to) education, access to health, labour market. An overview of the situation of poverty of migrants in countries of destination can be found in Caritas Europa’s Third Poverty Report¹⁰

Terms of reference for a constructive debate

10. **Education** plays a crucial role in development. Systems for studies abroad certainly have their merits, but improvement of these systems is necessary. We highlight, e.g. the exploitation of students on the “international education market” and inadequate policies of countries of origin as well as countries of destination. Issues such as the existence or sustainability of financial support to students either by grants or by giving access to the labour market, need to be addressed.

11. With regards to **Human Trafficking**¹¹, in 2005 Caritas Internationalis adopted a Commitment Paper on “*Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*”¹². This commitment is translated into action through the rapidly growing COATNET¹³ network, which indicates the magnitude of concern of Caritas organisations with the phenomenon. In the frame of the debate on management of migration we insist that victim identification and protection needs improvement.

⁷ Op. cit. para 23

⁸ Op. cit. para 6

⁹ Reference to the phenomenon is made e.g. in para 257

¹⁰ Caritas Europa Third Poverty report «*Migration, a Journey into Poverty?*” (2006), see <http://www.caritas-europa.org/code/en/abou.asp?Page=2>

¹¹ See op. cit. para 69

¹² See http://www.caritas.org/Upload/t/trafficking-ing1_1.pdf

¹³ Christian Organisations Against Trafficking Network, see <http://www.coatnet.org/en/>

12. Concerning the debate on **temporary migration**, Caritas emphasises that “temporary” does not mean that integration is not necessary. Moreover, the right to family life for temporary migrants should be safeguarded. On the other hand, evidence shows that secured rights of residence in the country of destination (e.g. through dual citizenship) promote safe circular migration. Many Caritas organisations are also active in the field of return and reintegration of migrants. Our experience shows that a return policy without accompanying measures for a durable reintegration is a waste of resources. These reintegration measures should benefit both the local community and the returning migrants.

13. The report pays a lot of attention to **remittances**. Remittances do play a role in the development of countries of origin, but Caritas Internationalis does not consider the issue essential in the debate. Remittances will have no measurable impact if the adequate framework is not put into place, such as a performing educational infrastructure. One aspect that has not been highlighted in the report is the need for adequate documentation of migrants in order to have access to banking and transferring services. We refer in particular to the situation of so-called “tolerated” and “non-status” migrants.

Conclusion and recommendations

NGOs, as representatives of **civil society**, play a crucial role in both development and migration/integration policy areas and should be consulted at all levels. We draw attention to the initiatives of the Council of Europe, not mentioned in the report, which has issued multiple recommendations regarding the rights of migrants and the development of migration policies.

In its reaction to this first step in the consultation, Caritas Internationalis recommends:

- To improve protection of the **fundamental human rights** for all by fostering good governance
- To increase efficiency and effectiveness of ODA, focusing on basic needs of the most vulnerable by ensuring coherence of other policy fields such as international trade with the Millennium Development Goals
- to ratify and implement the [International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families](#) by all member states
- More **research** on the effectiveness of development, migration, integration and return policies.
- To develop **adequate labour migration policies** and legislation to allow for safe migration and as a powerful tool to combat trafficking and exploitation of human beings.
- To consider **regularisation** of undocumented migrants¹⁴ as an essential element in a comprehensive migration policy
- To make more efforts in developing **integration policies** for migrants in the receiving societies in order to turn them into welcoming societies.

¹⁴ We refer to the Caritas Europa position paper on undocumented migrants for more detailed proposals: <http://www.caritas-europa.org/module/FileLib/060224CEPPundocumentedmigrants-ExBoapproved2.pdf>

Equal rights are a powerful tool in this process, together with the promotion of equal opportunities, e.g. on the labour market.¹⁵

Caritas hopes, with the Secretary General, that with the High-Level Dialogue an age of enduring cooperation on migration and development will be launched. This includes an approach of the phenomena from the right angle, as a Human Rights issue rather than a Security issue. Caritas will provide input on this process, based on its practical experience in the fields of migration and development.

Vatican City/Geneva/Brussels, 27 June 2006

¹⁵ For more detailed proposals, we refer to the Caritas Europa advocacy paper on integration : <http://www.caritas-europa.org/module/FileLib/CEPPIntegAdvocacyPaper.pdf>