

**A Thematic Meeting on  
“The role of communications in promoting widespread recognition of the benefits  
of migration, improving public perceptions of migrants, combating discrimination,  
and promoting integration”**

Wednesday, 29 April 2015  
ILO Building, Geneva

**Summary Report<sup>1</sup>**

1. The second GFMD 2014-2015 thematic meeting<sup>2</sup> was co-convened by the governments of Greece and Mexico. The meeting was opened by **Ambassador Mehmet Samsar**, Director General for Consular Affairs of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Turkish GFMD Chair, in the presence of **Mrs. Martha Ortiz de Rosas**, Ambassador at large for Migration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vice ministry of Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Mexico; **Ms. Athanassia Ioannou**, Head of Social Integration Unit, Directorate General of Citizenship and Migration Policy, Ministry of Interior, Greece and **Mr. Stefan Kapferer**, OECD Deputy Secretary General. An inspiring video presentation (*Saphan Siang Special*) was also shown during the opening session.

**Opening Session:**

2. In opening the meeting, **Ambassador Mehmet Samsar** noted that after almost two years since the [2013 High Level Dialogue](#), there remains no clear framework on what should be the priority areas for work and specific actions to be taken by states and other actors in creating greater public awareness about the contributions migrants make to countries of origin and destination, as well as in combating discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance against migrants and their families. Limited discussion of the issue has taken place within the GFMD framework.
3. Improving public perceptions, according to **Ambassador Martha Ortiz de Rosas**, representing co-convenor Mexico, is a very timely topic particularly in the context of the negotiations on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. She stressed that due to the lack of understanding of the migration phenomenon, migrants are wrongly seen as a burden and resulting in huge costs for destination countries. These perceptions are often used to lead public opinion against migrants' interests which, in turn, leads to approaching migration from a security point of view instead of focusing on their human rights.
4. **Ms. Athanassia Ioannou**, on the other hand, hoped for the meeting to promote not only tolerance but also acceptance of migrants by recognizing that they are bearers of human, social and cultural capitals. Migrants have the right to be recognized and accepted. The change of attitudes, she said, must start from the very beginning of the schooling era. In addition, she saw the role of migrants themselves in changing the negative public perceptions. In this regard, government and the civil society should empower migrants to stand for their recognition and have their own voice in the media and in every public discourse.
5. In his keynote speech, **OECD Deputy Secretary General Stefan Kapferer** underlined the importance of countering the myths about migrants and migration with hard facts and evidence. A common public perception, he said, is that migration is uncontrolled and costly; but in reality, immigrants help make labour

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.gfmd.org/docs/turkey-2014-2015> for the agenda, background paper, discussion notes, PowerPoint presentations and other contributions to this first GFMD thematic meeting.

<sup>2</sup> The meeting was attended by \_\_\_ participants representing \_\_\_ UN Member States and \_\_\_ GFMD Observers.

markets more dynamic, and that migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits. People largely overestimate the magnitude of migration and underestimate its positive impact. Improving public perceptions is a must, he urged, because they shape public policies. Governments need to signal that things are under control and must rebuild public trust in migration policies and institutions.

6. Throughout the day, three successive sessions were held on the following topics:
  - Session I: Promoting evidence-based communication about the benefits of migration
  - Session II: Improving public perceptions of migrants and migration through effective communication channels, tools and messages
  - Session III: Communicating effectively about migrants and migration

### **Session I: Promoting evidence-based communication about the benefits of migration<sup>3</sup>**

7. **Ms. Athanassia Ioannou** representing co-convenor Greece, moderated the first session which featured successive presentations from the **Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for International Migration (Mr. Gregory Maniatis, Senior Adviser), ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Ms. Anna Olsen,)** and **German Marshall Fund *Trans-Atlantic Trends 2014* (Ms. Astrid Ziebarth,)**.
8. In opening the session, **Ms. Ioannou** opined that the rise of xenophobia and racism as well as persistent discrimination against migrants can have a negative impact on social cohesion and endanger democracy, the rule of law and the respect of human rights. She asserted that myths and rumors surrounding migration become more “toxic” (typically xenophobic and racist) in host countries during certain conditions such as global economic crisis and a high influx of migrants. This is not only an issue to receiving countries but also to sending countries as myths can generate misconceptions and high risks for migrants. To promote a positive public perception of migrants as enablers of development one suggestion is to create platforms of dialogue and consulting committees in origin and destination countries.
9. In his presentation, **Mr. Maniatis** shared the initial results of a confidential project on “Global opinion on migration” involving **229 surveys that span 173 countries and territories**. The general conclusion was that migration is not a top concern across the world and that opinions about migrants have remained relatively stable over the past decades. Also, economic issues move opinions about migrants and migration more than cultural issues. Public opinion is also influenced by a) whether the discourse is about legal or illegal or undocumented migration; b) economic shocks; c) perceived number of immigration flows; d) personal experiences of migrants by local population; e) information and f) national leadership. He stressed the need for effective messaging and communicating with the public about the positive aspects of migrants and migration. Moral messages and advocacy reforms that deliver strong aspirational messages help can help in this regard. **Mr. Maniatis** articulated some key suggestions for activists, political leaders and other concerned stakeholders: (1) Use straightforward, unambiguous and honest language when talking about migration; (2) Acknowledge genuine public concerns; (3) Politicians should appeal to values and emotions, not just statistics; they must talk about immigration in a way that it addresses a national interest, and not just the interest of immigrants and employers; (5) Leaders need to be proactive, not reactive; communication is more effective on leaders on offense rather than on defense. (6) Migration should be embedded in a narrative of solution.
10. **Ms. Olsen** made a presentation on using evidence to drive campaign and advocacy work, in the context of the ILO project, “Tripartite action to protect the rights of migrant workers within and from the Greater Mekong sub-region (GMS Triangle),” particularly in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, to ensure safe migration resulting in decent work. The project works on several levels at countering factual misperceptions about migrant workers in the media by using evidence-based research, providing viable options for individual behavioural change, and driving long-term shifts in migration

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<sup>3</sup> Please see Annex for a more exhaustive description of national country experiences, policies and programs on promoting evidence-based communication about the benefits of migration.

management. The ILO also conducted a public attitudes survey in 2011 that looked at knowledge, attitudes and practices in 4 major migrant workers destination: Thailand, Malaysia, Korea and Singapore. The survey found that people who interact with migrants have more positive views about migrants and migration; there is limited knowledge about the real impact of migrants on the society and the economy; and, generally, that there is recognition that migrants are needed to fill certain jobs but awareness about their rights is limited. Guided by these results, Thailand launched the *Saphan Siang* Youth Ambassadors program to counter myths, shape public policy agenda and encourage interactions among natives and migrants. In all campaign and advocacy efforts, the engagement of the private sector is needed.

11. **Ms. Ziebarth** presented the outcomes of a *Transatlantic Trends Survey* conducted in 2014, covering 13 countries. When looking at public opinion polls, she emphasized the importance of language – e.g., the concept of "imagined immigrant" stems from different understanding of the word "immigrant." The survey results revealed a nuanced picture across the respondent countries in terms of public attitudes towards migration (e.g., if it is seen as a problem more than an opportunity), public policies on migration, integration of migrants and the perceived economic and cultural impact of migration. The results also showed that there is an undecided "anxious-middle" segment of the population that can be influenced by policymakers through more effective and appealing communication, rather than by mere facts and statistics.

## **Session II: Improving public perceptions of migrants and migration through effective communication channels, tools and messages**

12. The second session was moderated by **Professor. Ahmet Icdyugu**. Presenters included **Mrs. Kathya Rodriguez (Costa Rica)** Director General of Migration; **Ms.Celine Kohprath (Switzerland)**, Spokesperson, Federal Department of Justice and Police, Secrétariat d'Etat aux Migrations, Information and Communication; **Ms Michele LeVoy**, from **PICUM**; **Mr. Leonard Doyle**, Head of the **IOM** media and communications division; and **Mr. Thibault Chareton**, media and migration specialist from the **UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)**. In opening the session, Professor Icdyugu stressed that public perceptions of migrants are often negative and that different groups influence public opinion. Thus, the second session would explore ways of improving public perceptions through public discourses and anti-discrimination frameworks and countering the negative messages.
13. Before her presentation, **Mrs. Rodriguez** showed a video of a campaign entitled "1+1: Hacemos" which stands for "1 Costa Rican national plus 1 Foreigner make a single nation together". She shared that Costa Rica passed a new paradigm-changing law in 2010 that seeks a balance between migration and development and migration and security. As Costa Rica has become a transit country, a comprehensive migration policy was introduced in 2013 to promote the integration of migrants and to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups. To counter negative perceptions and understand the real facts about migrants, Costa Rica established a national observatory for integration and carried out a study. As a second largest host country for refugees, the integration of refugees has been especially challenging, and the government is working closely with UNHCR in this regard. Cross-border and intercultural measures are also undertaken, such as the Upala model, which considers the binational identities of migrants and communities.
14. **Ms.Kohprath** says that migration is often misunderstood and misrepresented in the media. In a direct democracy like Switzerland, the perception of migration has an important and direct impact on policies and laws. The Swiss Government tries to address the negative perceptions at local, national and international levels. At a country level, the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency in particular funds relevant programmes and projects, while at the international level, the government supports research and dialogue on migration and development. But the focus of Ms. Kohprath's presentation is on the national level, wherein the government tries to improve public perceptions through information sharing on migration, facilitating interaction between migrants and locals; and raising awareness and combatting prejudices. A short video in the context of opening centers for asylum seekers was shown to illustrate the participatory communication approach that includes all concerned stakeholders, including local residents and migrants themselves. This promotes a shift from a fact-oriented discourse to a broader cultural discourse by collecting testimonies from concerned actors and putting a human face on the stories of migrants.

- 15. Ms. LeVoy** cited an estimate of about 10 to 15% of all migrants globally to be undocumented. Majority of these undocumented migrants come through airports and other regular means but lose their status later, as the EU Clandestino Project revealed. In framing the discourse on irregular and undocumented migrants, she underlined the importance of terminology in shaping public perceptions. Thus, PICUM has a campaign called "Words matter," which advocates the use of the terms "irregular" and "undocumented" and rejects the term "illegal". In her view, there are two areas where public policies can have positive effects on the perception of undocumented migrants. The first is improving access to health care and the second is promoting access to justice system. She also stressed the importance of political leadership and courage in protecting and meeting the needs of undocumented migrants.
- 16. Mr. Doyle** referred to the IOM background paper on countering negative perceptions as he began his presentation. He stressed that media nowadays shape public policies. He pointed to the challenge of different public responses to identical images, and underlined media's role in conveying the right messages to combat negative public perceptions. He cited the recent crisis in the Mediterranean Sea which has exacerbated negative sentiments about migrants and fears of heavy influx of migrants into Europe, which in turn have affected public policies. In his view, governments need to talk with the media and work with media business leaders. He saw the social media as an important arena for conveying positive images of migration and communicating in a smarter way to people trying to cross borders, in order to avoid perils in their journey.
- 17. Mr. Chareton** explained that the UNAOC was an initiative of the Secretary General, with the goal to galvanize international action against radicalism through international, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. Migration is one of UNAOC's work pillars, together with education, youth and media. The UNAOC has done a vast amount of work on improving public perception about migrants and migration, promoting social diversity and encouraging integration through the use of media and education. Recently, for instance, it has organized a series of seminars in France and Switzerland to bring together editors, journalists and migration experts from Europe and the MENA region. A concrete outcome of this project was the development of a "Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration." Other crucial initiatives include the Online Community on Migration and Integration: a website that showcases successful models of integration and highlights good practices implemented by a variety of stakeholders; media trainings with Google and the World Bank to provide journalists with reporting tools; and a youth video festival called "Plural +" in partnership with the IOM. Mr. Chareton also shared about the challenges that UNAOC has identified in working with journalists such as: a) a strong emphasis on the 'otherness' of the immigrant; b) migration reporting is often too episodic; c) a great lack of diversity in the newsroom; d) a big need to humanize stories and to tell stories behind the numbers; and e) journalists need to learn how to use the new technology tools, as well as the dynamics of economic forces and religion. He also emphasized the increasing importance of ethnic media in giving a voice to migrant communities. This is especially true among the youth who see diversity as both positive and fluid, and who believe that identity is a choice that they can make with the use of new technology.
- 18.** During the open discussion<sup>4</sup>, some countries shared about their own initiatives (see Annex) in improving the perception of migrants and migration. It was highlighted that fighting xenophobic views is very challenging, but the media can be a very powerful protagonist in this regard. Raising awareness not only about the perils of the journey, but also the potential of using migrants' resources for other purposes was also stressed. To promote evidence-based communication about migration's mutual benefits for source and host countries, it was suggested to institutionalize recognition programs that inform the public about the achievements and exemplary contributions of migrant workers. Conversely, it was suggested to recognize foreign employers and agencies that create a positive environment and experience for migrant workers.

### **Session III: Communicating effectively about migrants and migration**

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<sup>4</sup> Owing to the rich presentations, the meeting lacked sufficient time to accommodate all countries that wanted to intervene to give about their perspectives on the issue(s) and/or to share their national programs and policies on countering the negative perceptions of migrants and migration. See Annex for more details on country presentations and interventions.

19. The third session, moderated by **Ambassador Martha Ortiz de Rosas**, representing co-convenor Mexico, featured the presentations of **Ms. Susana Antunes (Portugal)**; Assistant to the High Commissioner for Migration; **Mrs. Bilkiss Rajahbalee-Cader (Mauritius)**, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office; **Ambassador Eva. Åkerman Börje (Sweden)** GFMD 2013-2014 Chair; and **Mr. Charles Autheman**, Program Manager of Panos Europe.
20. **Ms. Antunes** shared that immigration is a recent phenomenon in Portugal, which has a rather long history of emigration for the purpose of discovering the world. Due to the inflow of migrants starting in the 90's, the government set up a High Commission for Migration, a public institute dealing with integration and fighting against racial discrimination. Among its initiatives was the setting up of national and local support centers for migrants to provide information and other services free of charge, including free translation services in 60 languages. It also went into partnership with academic and research centers to have the most updated and reliable information about migrants, also for use of politicians. To raise public awareness and assist public institutions in dealing with multi-diversity, Portugal has a pool of trainers specializing on inter-and-multi cultural diversity. They use TV, radio and Facebook and work closely with the journalists. They have organized seminars for journalists and developed a toolkit on diversity and glossary on migration for them. Communication awards are also given on an annual basis.
21. As a small island of migrants from Africa, France, UK, India and China, Mauritius has a multi-ethnic population, explained **Mrs. Rajahbalee-Cader**. It has a strong legislative framework on migration, including circular labour migration programs with a number of destination countries which, however, has led to brain drain. Migrants filled in the gaps in the Mauritian labour market, and will be even more needed as the local population continues to age and decrease. Mauritian diaspora, on the other hand, send remittances that boost economic growth and build capacity. With the help of IOM, Mauritius is working on a national immigration policy. It has set up a national working group on migration and development under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office. Communication about migrants and migration is a serious consideration for the government, which is held accountable for migrants' situation in the National Assembly. The government has its own portal on migration, uses communication tools such as brochures and movie clips, and undertakes outreach programs aimed at sensitizing specific target groups. Plans to establish resource centers for migrants, including a documentation center, are being implemented with the help of IOM and the civil society.
22. In her presentation, **Ambassador E. Åkerman Börje** underlined the long tradition of Swedish society that is characterized by collectiveness, openness and dialogue with concerned partners in policy-making. The Minister for Migration established a "migration network" that brings together in a regular and informal setting the civil society, government agencies, trade unions, employer organizations, faith-based organizations, diaspora organizations, the Red Cross, think-tanks for inputs and suggestions on migration policies. The new Swedish Government since September 2014 has decided to increase resources for schools and universities to spread knowledge and develop research programs in migration field. Other concrete initiatives on improving communication about migrants include awareness-raising campaigns such as the so-called "living history forum," the "Tolerance project," the "Diversity barometer" and in-depth interviews of migrants themselves to help Sweden tell the story about immigration in the country.
23. **Mr. C. Autheman** explained that Panos Europe is a non-governmental organization working on media and migration, particularly in the African region. He emphasized the complexity of the issue of migration and the challenge of working with the media. One problem is the use of language, as one term may mean different things for different individuals and organizations. In this regard, Panos helped produce a Media Glossary in cooperation with 8 international organizations. He cited as a good practice the Order of Journalist in Italy, which encourages the use of proper terminology. Panos has an ongoing project in the Middle East with Switzerland that aims to promote understanding of migration. He underlined the significant role of social partners and the private sector in communicating effectively about migration. He offered the various tools and mechanisms that Panos has developed through the years in terms of promoting better communication about migration.

**24.** After the panel presentation, the Chair called on **Ms. Kathleen Newland**, Director of the Migrants, Migration, and Development Program, Migration Policy Institute (MPI) to give an account of the highlights of the proceedings. Ms Newland recalled the different programs and policies and evidence-based facts cited by the speakers who represented both government and non-state perspectives. She highlighted especially how public pronouncement can help change public perceptions and myths, and the need for governments to play a leadership role in improving communications about migrants and migration.

## **Concluding Session**

**25.** In the concluding session many delegates wanted to intervene; however there was not sufficient time to accommodate all of them. One delegate opined that the voice of migrants was not heard during the meeting, and that migrants remain as hostages to instrumentalisation of the media. Another delegate expressed concern about the increasing deaths at seas, and wanted the international community to take drastic measures to address the problem. More countries shared about their own initiatives in combating discrimination, promoting integration of migrants, and improving public perceptions. These include the development of media guide, avoiding incendiary languages, use of integration indicators, face-to-face interaction between migrants and local population, language programs to facilitate migrants' integration, publication of migrant handbooks, fostering access to public institutions particularly health care systems, improving public education about the human rights of migrants, establishment of monitoring systems, facilitating family reunification, and opening more legal avenues for migration. Partnership with the civil society, private sector, the media and other social partners, as well as political leadership, are essential to make these initiatives succeed. In the end, it was suggested that in view of the continuing challenges of discrimination and negative portrayals of migrants, the GFMD should continue discussing the issue of improving public perception of migrants and migration.

**26.** The second GFMD 2014-2015 thematic meeting was closed at 17h30.

Prepared by the GFMD Support Unit.

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**ANNEX I<sup>5</sup>**

**Session I: Promoting evidence-based communication about the benefits of migration**

**Greece**

Within the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals, Greece has financed a series of projects with a view to fighting against myths, discrimination and negative stereotyping of migrants. These efforts included targeted seminars for journalists and people working in the media in order to provide a “politically correct” way to address migration issues, awareness raising campaigns in the schools through interactive methods for pupils and their parents in order to fight against racism and intolerance, and intercultural seminars for the public sector. Seminars for migrants as well as radio programs for migrants themselves have been also put in place to make themselves heard and to give them a chance to express their views on issues of interest.

**Costa Rica**

The new Costa Rican immigration law was adopted in 2010, focusing on migration and development through cultural, economic and health programs rather than security. The National Council of Migration coordinated this strategy with a broad range of stakeholders involved (six different ministries, the Social security account and the Tourism institute) together with the civil society. Then, a migration policy was passed in 2013 with an integrative approach to ensure that the migrants can contribute to the development of the country and that it has a sustainable policy. Costa Rica being a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, this comprehensive migration policy was implemented at different levels: migrants’ regularization, integration and development (through employment, health, education and protection) and protection of human rights and vulnerable people as refugees, asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking.

Costa Rica also created the National Observatory for Integration and the Department for Integration and Human Development. Specific programs have been set up with the civil society and the migrants themselves to understand the reality of migration in Costa Rica, via communication campaigns in the radio, TV and press. Among them, the *1+1 Hacemos Costa Rica* video campaign was launched to try to counter differences and to emphasize rather that jointly, 1 Costa Rican national + 1 Foreigner make a single nation together. Institutional programs have also been implemented that promotes the participation of migrants in municipal and neighborhood management, development associations or “roads of integration”.

In Latin America, Costa Rica is the 2<sup>nd</sup> host country for refugees, which makes the integration of this population a real challenge. In partnership with the UNHCR, Costa Rica carried out specific measures, notably inter-sectorial alliances between the public and private sector, to integrate the population of refugees and asylum seekers and to promote their access to employment. The program, “Vivir la Integration campaign,” involves more than 60 companies that can offer work to refugees.

Costa Rica also set up the Upala model, an integrated approach to human mobility in a cross- border context (Nicaragua/ Costa Rica) that looks at the binational identities of migrants and their communities. The strategy

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<sup>5</sup> This Annex provides an overview of the national policies, programs and other initiatives that governments have shared during the 2<sup>nd</sup> GFMD Thematic Meeting on “The role of communications in promoting widespread recognition of the benefits of migration, improving public perceptions of migrants, combating discrimination, and promoting integration” held on 29 April 2015.

aims to interact with nationals and foreigners within various systems such as the health system to make sure that their local needs are taken into account. Actions among the employers in this agricultural area are also carried out to ascertain that they provide good conditions and that the workers are regularized.

In 2014, Costa Rica set up a National Policy on racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

## **Switzerland**

To improve public perceptions of migrants and migration, the Swiss government works at the international level by supporting research and dialogues on migration and development and at the country level through programmes and projects supported by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, particularly by the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency. At the national level, the Swiss government acts at 3 levels: a) sharing information; b) raising awareness and combatting prejudices; and c) facilitating interaction between residents and migrants.

The Swiss government has developed a new participatory communication approach, which has been applied in opening a center for asylum seekers. The idea is to include all concerned stakeholders --- local authorities, asylum seekers, and the residents – in an open exchange. So far, the results have been promising, in the sense that discussions have become less emotional and more pragmatic at the local level. There is much less opposition from the local population, residents have started their own initiative to get in contact with asylum seekers.

Switzerland has been moving from a mainly fact-oriented discourse to a broader cultural discourse in order to address fears and concerns about immigration. Collecting testimonies from residents, asylum seekers and local authorities that can be used as advocacy tools at the national level and sharing these stories to put a human face on migrants' experiences are some of the activities being undertaken. However, this new approach has also brought new challenges that need to be carefully analyzed such as the tension between transparency and privacy and data protection of asylum seekers.

## **Ecuador**

Respecting guarantees of the human rights of migrants including their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights is very important and is recognized in the Constitution and the legal framework of Ecuador. The Constitution recognizes the free movement of all peoples of the planet. As a country of origin, destination, transit and return for migrants, Ecuador has the largest refugee population of Latin America. Promoting the rights of migrants is an essential public policy. Since 2007, the government set out a series of communication campaigns aimed at integrating the migrant and refugee population within the Ecuadorian society and fighting xenophobia and discrimination. In 2008, the government of Ecuador launched the campaign, " Todos Somos Migrantes (We are all migrants)" to raise awareness about the importance of migrants for development and cultural diversity, to promote the principle of universal citizenship and the right of all human beings to migrate, and to foster harmonious coexistence and integration of migrants, particularly the refugee population. In 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched the campaign "Todos Somos Migrantes" among children and during lessons in schools and in the provinces, where the largest concentration of migrants can be found.

## **Eritrea**

Eritrea has taken it as one of its priority policy to raise awareness through its mass media not only about the dangers and losses of the perilous journeys, but also about the potential to more positively use resources spent on those sad journeys.



## Philippines

As a major country of origin, promoting evidence based communications about the benefits of migration remains a challenge for Philippines as it seems that failure stories of migrant workers easily get more media attention than the success stories. One of the ways to address this which the Philippines has taken is the institutionalization of the recognition programs that inform the public about the achievements, contributions and exemplary outstanding of Filipino workers or OFW based on a set-up of objective criteria.

To this end, the Philippines launched several awards:

1) *The Bagong Bayani Awards* is a worldwide search for the Philippines outstanding and exemplary Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW). It seeks to recognize and pay tribute to the OFWs for their significant efforts in fostering goodwill among peoples of the world, enhancing and promoting the image of the Filipino as a competent, responsible and dignified worker, and for greatly contributing to the growth and well-being of the company and to the socio-economic development of their communities.

2) *The Most Outstanding OFW Family Award of the year.*

This is an annual event recognizing OFW families who have overcome the social risks that are associated with overseas migration, and have demonstrated the evidence of success in keeping positive family values and family unity despite physical separation.

3) *The International Employers Awards (IEA)* honors foreign employers, principals, and companies who have promoted the employment of OFWs and advanced their interest and welfare, creating a positive environment for the Filipino workers.

## Portugal

It was only in the mid- 90s and because of the favorable economic situation that Portugal started to receive migrants, especially non-Portuguese speakers. A state cabinet was created in 1996 with the main mission of promoting the integration of immigrants and intercultural dialogue. It became a public institute in 2007, the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, which was later changed in 2014 to become the High Commission for Migration. With its support, several services have been put in place:

The National Immigrant Support Center started in 2004 in Lisbon, a one-stop shop where immigrants can go for help. Several ministries are represented in this centre. There are now around 80 local immigrant support centres all over the country. An SOS immigrant telephone line has been established, with translation services free of charge and available in around 60 languages.

The High Commission for Migration has dedicated particular attention to the conception, implementation and evaluation of public immigration policies on the basis of essential strategic cooperation with academy and research centers and through the creation of the Immigration Observatory in 2003. Every month or two, conferences and seminars are organized to spread away all the information included in the reports and dedicated among others to politicians. The collection “Immigration in numbers” has thus been developed and seeks to contribute to a continuous monitoring of immigrants’ integration in the country.

In order to raise public awareness about the integration of immigrants and promote a better understanding of diversity, a pool of trainers has been set up who promote, under request of institutions, a set of actions of information and awareness-raising in the fields of citizenship and inter-culturality. Every public institution (school, hospital, police station) finding difficulties in dealing with inter-culturality can ask for these workshops.

Between 2010 and 2014, around 10 seminars on “Media, Immigration and Diversity” have been organized in schools for journalists, reaching more than 300 of them. The idea was to give them information about the High Commission and the services it provides. It is also an opportunity to create proximity with the journalists and raise their interest. Following these workshops, a toolkit about diversity from the Fundamental Right Agency (FRA) has been translated into Portuguese and delivered to the journalists, as well as a Glossary about Migration from the IOM. A list of immigrant experts has also been prepared, which journalists can consult when writing articles to receive more diversified information and points of view. Diversity in TV scripts has also been encouraged.

Portugal has received some international recognition about its integration policy. In particular, Portugal has been acclaimed as the 2<sup>nd</sup> best country for integration based on the migrant integration policy index.

## **Mauritius**

Migration has created positive impacts in Mauritius. Foreign workers meet labour shortages, especially in the manufacturing sector, and tend to be more productive than nationals, thus boosting economic growth and capacity due to scarcity of skilled manpower in certain specialized sectors. The Mauritian diaspora, on the other hand, strengthen also the economy through the remittances they send.

Migrant workers enjoy the same rights and conditions of employment as natives and regular inspections are carried out by the Migrant Workers' Unit at the Ministry of Labour to ensure compliance with the law. Facing some current challenges (ageing population, declining fertility rate, increasing emigration of women, increasing number of unemployed graduates and foreigners, leveraging the diaspora), Mauritius sees the need to develop a migration policy to mainstream migration into national development planning. A National Working Group on Migration and Development has been set up since 2015 under the chairpersonship of the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office as well as a Migration Policy Unit and subcommittees to look at Research and Statistics, Education and Migration, Labour Mobility and Social Integration.

Living among a multi- ethnic population, migrants generally do not face difficulties to integrate themselves and the government is held accountable for migrant issues in the National Assembly. Nevertheless, there have been some isolated cases of social unrest with migrant labour in some areas where unemployment is high and some foreigners who were granted residence permit have created gated communities. To settle the problem, one of the results that came from an IOM workshop in 2014 has been to foster well managed labour migration to meet labour market needs and ensure quality training and skills development opportunities for sustained economic and democratic growth while ensuring that the rights of labour migrants are saved.

A communication strategy to fight discrimination and promote migrants' integration has been drawn up which targets four programs:

*a)- Communication Programme for Inward, Outward and internal migrants:*

Communication tools such as brochures, movie clips, a portal on migration and migration issues will have to be prepared for the relevant target groups. The Migration Policy Unit may require external assistance from the IOM to build up the capacity of the unit as well as to benefit from existing communication materials which may already be available.

*b)- Outreach Programme targeting the Mauritian population*

The Migration Policy Unit will organize a sensitization campaign for specific target groups (as per goals set).

*c)- Resource Centre on Migration*

To be able to manage well the migration process, it is important that resources on migration are available and to create a one stop migration unit. As information/data already exist in different institutions, an inventory of resources will be made available so that the Migration Policy Unit may guide stakeholders to the relevant institutions. This will also help to identify the resource gaps. Therefore, the following tasks will be required: identify resources to share at the level of various stakeholders, access to source documents, statistics and relevant reports provided also to the general public, development of a documentation centre and an online one on migration issues targeting both inward and outward migrants

*d)- Civil Society Partnership*

The involvement of Civil Society is essential to cushion any potential negative social impact that migration may have. Trade unions and private sector have already been involved in the workshop in 2014 but their involvement together with NGOs is required to support the projects, build capacity on M&D issues and develop joint actions on specific themes or regions.

## **Sweden**

The Swedish Minister for migration has created since many years back the "Swedish migration network" that meets on regular basis in an informal setting and is chaired by the Minister for Migration. He invites actors that are involved in the migration field (e.g., civil society, government agencies, trade unions, employer organizations, faith based organizations, diaspora organizations, the Red Cross, think tanks, etc.) who can give

inputs and put forward criticisms and suggestions or share their own experiences. This makes very open and informal discussions on topics like reforms on circular migration and development or labor immigration. The OECD published an evaluation on this one that has been discussed in this group and some criticisms were addressed to the government.

Preparations for the UNHLD in 2013 and 2006 have been held in this group, as well as the possible ways of integrating migration in the Post-2015 Agenda. Similar networks for asylum issues exist but they are kept apart.

Since September 2014, Sweden has a new government that has decided to especially focus on increasing the resources for schools and universities to spread knowledge and develop research programs in the field of migration. The new government also identified the need to increase funding for activities carried out by civil society in the field of immigration. The dialogue with the civil society on this issue is part of the integration measures and is something new to the Swedish society that relied on the state or the local authorities. Now the society realizes the possibility to have both which are mutually complementary and will increase the resources in the society for these kinds of measures.

Sweden has used a lot of resources in terms of communication to try to explain to the newcomers in Sweden what is Sweden and who are the Swedes. Among the various concrete examples that Sweden launched are:

1. A campaign for awareness-raising about migrants in schools, called "living history forum".
2. Research programs, such as the "Tolerance project" that has developed successful methods for decreasing racism and increasing tolerance to be implemented also in the primary school level.
3. The "diversity barometer" tool has existed since 2005. It is a huge opinion poll that is carried out every year by an academic institution, the result of which is widely publicized in major news media in the country, to be able to frame the situation for immigrants and promote integration in society. The last poll's findings showed that there is a relatively positive view of immigration and immigrants in Sweden, and that women have more often positive experiences of meeting immigrants compared to men. People with university education have also a more positive experience of ethnic diversity and the younger population has more contacts with immigrants and had generally more positive views.
4. In-depth interview of immigrants in municipalities from North to South are also being conducted to find out their experience since coming to Sweden. The aim is to help Sweden tell the story about immigration in the country and really show the multitudes of reasons why new migrants come to Sweden.

## **Russia**

Russia is the second largest country in the world by the number of international migrants received. According to the World Bank, its system of remittances for migrants is one of the cheapest and most accessible in the world. Remittance outflows from Russia are in second place after USA<sup>6</sup>. Such remittances influence the GDP of receiving countries. Monies sent by migrants become a major source of foreign currency in countries of origin, make their economy more flexible and resilient, help overcome poverty, and provide opportunity for education, healthcare and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, migrants coming to work to Russia greatly contribute to its economy and positively influence the development of its infrastructure.

The Russian Federation pays special attention to the integration and adaptation of migrants, including through education programs to study the Russian language and to learn more about the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Russia. There are more than 300 educational centers for migrants, more than 100 of them are opened by NGO or religious organizations and due to the support of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, they are functioning free of charge.

The Federal Migration Service of Russia provides consultation on issues of foreign migration and Russian migration legislation. The information is disseminated through internet and by publication of various data including special handbooks for migrants. The Russian authorities regularly have meetings with representatives

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<sup>6</sup> In 2014, personal remittances from Russia amounted to 25, 5 billion US dollars. Average cost of sending 200 USD from Russia is 1, 6%. In the first half of 2014, more than 2,8 billion USD were sent from Russia to Uzbekistan, to Tadjikistan about 1,5 billion.

of diaspora and religious associations which, in turn, spread relevant information among migrants and help them to establish themselves in Russia.

## **Spain**

In Spain, there is an audio visual law establishing that hate and discrimination cannot be used in the audio-visual media. Integration indicators have also been developed to measure integration. Regarding the role played by the media, Spain has published a media guide which includes recommendations such as looking at the type of migration and avoiding terms which create a false sense of alarm about migrants and/or migration.

## **Thailand**

The ministry of labour of Thailand works closely with social partners to improve integration and strengthen legal protection for migrants such as through the Project with the Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion or "HomeNet Thailand" to develop and strengthen networks of domestic workers in the country, many of whom are migrants. In Thailand, both regular and irregular migrants have access to the universal healthcare system and are provided with basic social services under the Thai law, including free education in public schools.

## **Mexico**

In Mexico, a series of policies have been implemented to improve the perceptions of migrants who are transiting in the country, so that they can arrive safely at their destination and build confidence and trust with the local communities. A project, financed by the Human Security fund, has just been concluded in the Southern border of Mexico, where there are major concentrations of migrants coming in with the aim of reaching the northern border to the US, and where there is a lack confidence and trust in the local communities. Hundreds of migrants wait to take the famous train called "the Beast," which is the equivalent of boats full of migrants in the Mediterranean seas. Awareness-raising in the communities where they arrive, with the support of the civil society and through methodology organized and designed by international organizations is thus essential. Successful experiences have been led in Oaxaca, Tabasco and Chiapas with this model. It has just been evaluated and it is considered successful and can be replicated elsewhere.

## **Tunisia**

Since 2011, Tunisia has become a host and transit country for migrants. Thousands of Libyans, Syrians and migrants from sub-Saharan countries live in Tunisia. A State Secretariat for Migration and Social Integration has been established in 2011 and a National Observatory for Migration has been set-up in 2014, thanks to the effective cooperation of the civil society and workers and employers' trade unions. The Secretariat has specialized in statistics and in studies on migration and economic development.

A new law has also been adopted, creating a new National Council for Tunisians Abroad, where associations and civil society organizations will be represented in the drawing up of future programs on the situation of Tunisians abroad and overall development programs.