



*Curia Generalizia Agostiniana — Augustinians International*

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## INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION: DIASPORA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

International Conference Center Geneva (CICG) 18-19 June 2013

### **Migrants in Crisis**

NGO Committee on Migration is a coalition of nongovernmental organizations around the world working on migration and its related issues. It is a member of the conference of NGOs at the United Nations (CONGO-UN). We are grateful to International Organization for Migration (IOM) for inviting us and for making it possible for us to be here. We want also to join other colleagues in congratulating Ambassador William Swing on his reappointment as the director of IOM. We appreciate IOM's lead role in migration issues especially in creating space for the participation of all stakeholders and for convening this conference. We thank the Chair for the opportunity to speak.

The inclusion of diaspora/migrants at risk or in crisis situations into the larger migration and development discourse is both timely and of paramount importance especially from the human rights perspective. Experiences in Libya and now Syria, as well as those of natural disasters, such as Sandy storm in New York are indicative of how tenuous migrants, especially the undocumented, are in those situations.

This topic is dear and at the center of civil society's engagement in the conversation. It features prominently in the group's submission to 2013 UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development. A civil society proposal at this Dialogue for a negotiated outcome in the form of a five year action plan framed around a maximum of eight important issues seeks, under migrant rights and protection, that the international community and countries establish mechanisms to address the assistance and protection needs of migrants stranded in distress, including migrants in transit.

We appreciate the evolving nature of the discourse and request that discussants embrace with openness the emerging dimensions of the phenomenon. Today attention focuses on the particular occasions of humanitarian crisis, which we refer to as external crisis. Migrants also endure another type of crisis, one that is internal in nature and emanating from within as consequences of their situations. The internal is as important as the external and shouldn't be left out of the dialogue. Crisis or risky situations also are experienced by migrants en route to their destination, calling for their rescue and attention. In the above mentioned civil society proposal for negotiated outcome, migrants in crisis include those "trapped in situations of war, conflict or disaster (natural or man---made) but with the same logic and urgency with respect to migrant victims of violence or trauma in transit. This should include specific attention to egregious gaps in protection and assistance for migrant women who are raped, and the

thousands of children that are unaccompanied and abused along the major migration corridors in every region of the world” (CSO Action Plan 2013).

It will take a mutual and collaborative effort of all stakeholders and actors involved in migration management to achieve an effective and efficient response to migrants in crisis situations. Thus we embrace the Philippines’ three “P” model of approaching this issue, namely preparedness, political will and partnership and we emphasize the partnership aspect.

Two suggestions for practical actions in times of crisis are made here. We suggest that government should not be left to shoulder all the financial responsibility of the project - rescue and resettlement of migrant victims of crisis. We believe that businesses, the first beneficiaries of the services of migrants, should play significant role as a matter of responsibility and not charity in this case. The modalities of achieving this should be worked out in such a mutual manner involving all stakeholders. We believe that the relationship between migrants and their consulates or embassies before the time of crisis matters a lot. In the morning session of this conference the case was made for trust as key factor in this relationship. While it might be easier for help to reach migrants with regular status during crisis, it is very difficult and sometimes almost impossible for irregular migrant to seek help either with their consulate or host country for fear of their fate afterwards.

We want to once again reiterate that civil society organizations are not competitors but collaborators with government. Our common goal is the good and welfare of all people on the move.

Thank you

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For: NGO Committee on Migration