



Population Policies and Migration Department
League of Arab States

Arab Declaration on International Migration

**Activating the Role of Migration in National Development
and Arab Regional Integration**

*Population Policies and Migration Department / Social Affairs Division
League of Arab States*

22A Taha Hussein st., Zamalek- Cairo

Tel. 202 27354306

Fax. 202 27351422

email. Migration@poplas.org

www.poplas.org

This declaration was adopted by the League of Arab States, Social-Economic Council in its general assembly (78) in 2006 at ministerial level. The declaration called on Arab Countries to follow the Arab Declaration for International Migration context.

(Resolution 1664- G.A 78- 4/9/2006)

We, the representatives and experts of Arab States, meeting at the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States on July 17 – 18, 2006, for deliberation and guidance to the adoption of this draft declaration, recalling and reconfirming commitment to the resolutions approved by Arab leaders and Arab specialized organizations concerned with migration issues, including

- the Agreement on Arab Economic Unity issued by the Arab Economic Council, June 1957;
- the Arab Economic Council Resolution No. 77 (March 1965) on the Freedom of Movement, Residence and Labor, as stipulated in the Agreement on Arab Economic Unity;
- the Arab Economic Council Resolution No. 784 (1978) on the Freedom of Movement of Technical Manpower among Arab States;
- the Declaration of Principles on the Movement of Arab Manpower among Arab States;
- both Arab Agreements issued by the Arab Labor Organization Nos. 1 (1966) and 4 (1975) on the Movement of Arab Manpower; the Arab Agreement No. 14 (1981) on the Arab Worker's Right to Social Insurance when Moving for Employment in an Arab Country; and
- the Arab Agreements Nos. 3 (1971) on the Minimum Level of Social Insurance, 8 (1977) relating to Trade Union Freedoms and Rights, 9 (1977) on Vocational Guidance and Training and 15 (1983) on Wage Determination and Protection;
- the 2004 Arab Charter on Human Rights, the 2001 Cairo Declaration on Childhood, the 1994 Arab Declaration on Family Rights and the 1993 Arab Charter on Child Rights;
- the Declaration of Principles on Facilitating the Movement of Arab Manpower (February 2005);

And referring to the relevant applicable international conventions, particularly:

- conventions issued by the International Labor Organization, particularly Convention No. 97 of 1949; Convention No. 143 of 1975 as well as the recommendations issued by the same Organization, particularly Nos. 86 on Migration for Employment and 151 on Migrant Workers and The United Nations Secretary-General Report of May 2006 on International Migration;
- international legal instruments, particularly International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Family Members, which came into force in July 2003;
- the conventions and recommendations relating to human rights in general and relevant to migrant workers' rights, particularly the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Woman, the 1984 International Convention Against Torture and other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the 1989 International Convention of Child Rights, the Protocol on the Prevention, Suppression and Punishment for the Trafficking of Persons, particularly Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol), the 2000 Protocol against the Trafficking of Immigrants by Land, Sea and Air (Trafficking Protocol), and both Protocols attached to the Convention on the Elimination of Transnational Organized Crime;
- Resolutions by conferences and international declarations, particularly those by the Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), mainly Chapter X on International Migration, the Conferences on Women and their Action Plans (Beijing, 1995) and the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995);

- **Confirming** the statement in The United Nations Declaration on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) regarding requesting to heads of states and governments to take measures to ensure respect and protection of the immigrants, migrant workers and their family members' human rights,
- **Considering** that addressing migration issues and their implications requires a holistic approach linking immigration to development, partnership and cooperation dimensions to tackle the structural causes of intense migration, including poverty, discrimination and disparities in rates of welfare, economic growth and political and social stability among nations,
- **Recognizing** that labor migration has developmental benefits for both States of origin and States of destination, that it in the same time poses several challenges and that continuing dialogue and effective partnership among both States of origin and States of destination provide the best means to augment benefits and address weaknesses,
- **Acknowledging** the growing magnitude of the migrant trafficking criminal networks and their gravity on migrants and the security among nations,
- **Considering** that the growing volume of females among migrants requires the integration of the gender dimension into all international policies and procedures concerned with international migration,

- **Stressing** the positive effects, on both States of origin and States of destination, of migration by persons of all nationalities, whether moving to, among or out of the Arab region countries; stressing also the importance of facilitating the movement of labor among Arab countries in accordance with their respective needs, in order to serve regional integration and to enhance their competitiveness,
- **Valuing** the efforts by Arab States in enhancing their own policies on international migration and in strengthening data and information collection and migration management institutions and in encouraging dialogue, consultation and data and information sharing among States of origin, States of destination and States of transit for labor,
- **Valuing** the significant efforts by the United Nations, its specialized agencies as well as international organizations concerned with migration, referring in this respect the high-level dialogue on international immigration and development to be conducted in the course of the 61st General Assembly Session, confirming the Secretary-General's report issued in this respect in May 2006, with the object of identifying appropriate ways and means to maximize the developmental benefits and minimize the negative impact of migration,
- **Recognizing** the negative impact of the migration of rare competencies on development efforts and the achievement of MDGs in the developing countries, particularly the impact of migration by workers in vital sectors such as health, education and research and development,

- **Admitting** that family reunion and guarantee of the rights of migrant would facilitate interaction and integration of migrants with States of destination and raise their productivity and contribution to development,
- **Recognizing** that lack of data curtails the possibility of developing thorough and effective policies managing and augmenting benefits of migration,
- **Appreciating** the positive contribution of Arab migrations, in different countries within and outside the Arab region, in pushing forward economic development and in deepening constructive civilization and cultural interaction between Arab peoples and societies of migration,
- **Appreciating** the efforts and initiatives by the General Secretariat and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States in achieving communication and interaction with Arab communities and migrants of Arab origin in countries of migration, through organizing conferences and symposia for building bridges between Arab communities and Arab migrants on the one hand and their communities and institutions so as to yield mutual benefit on different economic, cultural and human levels and promote awareness of various joint issues and interests,
- **Welcoming** in particular the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in furthering interest in migration-related questions and the related protection of migrants' human rights and enhancing their social, cultural and health conditions :

- 1- **Reconfirm** the several positive contributions of labor migration to development in both States of origin and States of destination and call for further recognition by the media on both the Arab and international levels of the positive role of migrant in such a way as to improve the image of migrant, curb racism and xenophobia and reinforce interaction and integration of migrants with communities of destination.
- 2- **Call on** Member-States and specialized bodies in Arab labor-exporting and labor-receiving States to strengthen policies geared to maximize benefits from migration in the interest of development, to promote welfare and curb poverty, to improve family conditions, to enhance Arab regional cooperation and integration and to curb negative implications of migration, all within a framework of continuing dialogue and effective partnership.
- 3- **Confirm** the need for States to adopt workable policies and measures to facilitate remittances by migrants and increase their returns, by taking actions to curb transfer transmission costs and increase speed of transmission under safe conditions in both States of origin and States of destination and for transfer-receiving States to activate their contribution to development projects to curb poverty and improve local community conditions.
- 4- **Urge** Arab States for further coordination and consultation through institutional processes in line with the practice in other regions, sharing information and providing necessary training and rehabilitation, with the object of facilitating the movement

of labor among Arab countries to meet the needs of both States of origin and States of destination, coordinating among various bodies, standardizing policies and programmes and drafting comprehensive and clear-cut national policies.

5- **Call on** Arab States to adopt necessary procedures and measures to benefit from national competencies through enhancing scientific research and its institutions and motivating competencies and innovators in such a way as to ensure their stability and curb brain drain. This can be also made through establishing and reinforcing relationship networks with migrant competencies and their institutions and engaging them in development efforts and in transferring and resettling knowledge. We stress the need for concerted efforts between both States of origin and States of destination for competencies to find means necessary to ensure the stability of competencies needed by developing countries, particularly those working in vital sectors such as health, education and research and development and to offset existing shortage.

6- **Urge** all labor-receiving States to enhance human rights and fundamental freedoms of all immigrants, to protect migrants' rights against illegitimate actions or acts of violence, particularly those of racial discrimination and crimes committed by individuals and groups motivated by racism or xenophobia.

7- **Urge** relevant States to upgrade and enhance national laws and legislation and re-adjust them as far as possible to international covenants and conventions, to adopt necessary

and effective procedures and measures and to further coordination to combat and eliminate all forms of human trading and trafficking of immigrants and to protect victims of trading, particularly women and children vulnerable to forced labor (corvee) or sexual or commercial exploitation and to take measures necessary for protection against criminal networks.

8- **Call on** relevant States and organizations to enhance cooperation, coordination and information sharing in order to curb illegal migration and enhance dialogue and partnership for facilitating legal, safe and organized movement of persons among States.

9- **Call on** the international community to work closely for putting an end to Israeli occupation based on just peace, preventing its continuing attacks against the Palestinian people, confronting Palestinian forced emigration and guaranteeing the rights of Palestinian émigrés/refugees.

10- **Call on** Arab States, all institutions and forces of peace both within Arab countries and on the international arena to intensify and mobilize their efforts to settle disputes by peaceful means, so as to ensure the stability of the peoples of the region and to curb streams of forced migration.

11- **Call upon** the concerned governments to accede to the international conventions related to refugees, and to set up national legislations that ensure the rights and duties of refugees and asylum countries, and recognize the fundamental difference between migrants and refugees who have specific

distinctive rights and needs, with the possibility for these countries to gain from their potential in the development construction when granted enough opportunity, taking into consideration the non application of any measures that may prevent the refugees from enjoying international protection when curbing the irregular movements.

12- **Urge** all States of origin and States of destination to mainstream the dimensions of gender and protection of women, girls and migrant families into the migration-related policies and reinforce coordination among States in this connection, to facilitate migrants' family reunion, in order to reinforce migrant's contribution to development and to enhance the protection of female migrants against all forms of violence, discrimination, trading and exploitation.

13- **Call on** all States to promote awareness of the health dimensions, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS and to guarantee health and social services for all migrants.

14- **Call** States to reinforce research efforts to collect and analyze data, to establish and ensure the continuing updating of databases on various dimensions of migration, ensuring transparency and easy access; thus enabling the development of thorough and effective policies, tight management of migration and its increased benefits, calling United Nations specialized agencies and related international organizations to help establish such databases.

15- **Invite** States to continue, reinforce and deepen the Arab-European Dialogue so as to boost safe legal migration, to enhance and expand benefits of migration as well as its developmental returns in both exporting and receiving States, to curb negative media coverage on migration , to rectify the image of Arab migrant, to recognize the constructive roles of migration and migrants and to intensify cooperation and partnership to address the negative implications of migration in the Mediterranean and to effectively counter migrant trafficking networks.

16- **Invite** Arab States, international organizations concerned and donor organizations to support the “Arab Migration Observatory” programme at the League of Arab States Demographic Policy and Migration Department, in such a way as to reinforce research and study efforts, to ensure the availability of precise and up-to-date data on various dimensions of migration, to enhance dialogue and consultation opportunities and training and rehabilitation activities on the regional level and to ensure wide-scale dissemination of data and information on various dimensions of international migration.

17- **Invite** Arab governments to adopt national development policies and to intensify meaningful programmes and projects, foremost of which are political, democratic, economic and social reform programmes to curb poverty and unemployment and to consequently alleviate migration pressure and counter illegal migration.

18- **Look forward** to reinforcing efforts by the League of Arab States geared to unify visions and policies on the Arab arena and to standardize legislation and laws concerned with international migration, with the object of supporting and activating the role of migration in the Arab economic integration and in the rise of an “Arab Labor Market”; thus enhancing the economic competitiveness of Member-States, taking into consideration their discrepancies and bilateral and international obligations.