

- ↳ MHI Congrès Mundial  
Moviments Humans  
i Immigració
- ↳ MHI Congreso Mundial  
Movimientos Humanos  
e Inmigración
- ↳ MHI World Congress  
Human Movements  
and Immigration



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**IEMed.**

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“But Man is not a tree – he has no roots; he has feet, he walks. Since the time of *homo erectus* he has moved about in search of pastures, more benign climates, or places where he can seek shelter from inclement weather and the brutality of his fellow men. Space invites movement, and is inscribed in a sphere much vaster and in continuous expansion.”

Juan Goytisolo  
Opening session

## Conclusion HMI Congress

This Congress on HMI has brought together people from all over the world who share a common vision of making human mobility a true vehicle for the full development of the human potential and for constructing a progressive and fairer world. Over the last three days we have explored the vast complexities of the migration phenomena from all possible perspectives – from the multitude of human motivations behind decisions of individuals to participate in migration to those of the larger communities they join or they leave behind, from how new migrants affect our values and cultures to how they pose dilemmas for those who strive to maintain social cohesion, from the way film and media shape our attitudes to migration to how development can give people the real option of staying at home. The following are our views on the challenges facing the international community in managing this complex phenomenon, and our reflections on how migration can be a positive force for peace, prosperity and greater understanding rather than a source of tension and conflict among peoples.

**1· Migration as a growing phenomenon.** As we enter the 21st Century we see the processes of globalization contributing to the intensification of the cross-border movements of people. On the one hand we see the increasing movements of those with skills and education because human capital is ultimately the driving force of globalization. On the other hand we see the dislocation of people from traditional livelihoods as destabilizing structural changes are an unavoidable consequence of globalization. The convergence of incomes that we expected from the march of globalization has yet to touch the lives of people in the world's least developed nations. In fact over the past half century the wide gulf that divided the rich and the poor countries have widened even



further, generating in their wake stronger stimuli for people to uproot themselves to find a better life elsewhere.

**2. Demographic complementarities** At the same time we are aware that in the not too distant future we will be seeing a very significant shift in the world's demography. Many regions are inexorably headed towards an important demographic transition which will profoundly change their societies and economies over the next few decades. The global population will be growing much less faster than it does today and the relative weight of each continent in the distribution of populations will be significantly altered. There are enough differences however among regions to allow for complementarities as some with ageing and shrinking workforces can still turn to the others with youthful populations.

**3. Complexity of causes** The conditions as well as the human motivations that lead to mass migration are many and complex. While many are rooted in differences in economic opportunities, others are caused by injustice, persecution and violation of human rights, violent conflict, and deterioration of the environment. Millions are being dislocated by the failure of the international community to prevent the escalating level of violence of political conflicts. We need to devote much more resources to preventing conflicts from spiralling into chaos and forcing the mass flows of refugees, and a more equitable sharing of burdens and responsibilities.

**4. Avoid undesired effects.** Are our ways of managing migration helping us create the societies that we want? Can we accept a situation where men and women have to risk drowning in the oceans or be victimized by human smugglers and traffickers in order to do the work that our people no longer want? Can we be content that an increasing number in our communities are forced to work and live in the shadows of irregularity because of the way they came into our midst?

Today's movements include an increasing proportion of women taking advantage of opportunities for largely informal work in more affluent societies. Among their ranks are young women forced by criminal syndicates to go into prostitution. The vast majority suffer from the multiple disadvantages of being migrants and being women in the labour market. Because women in all societies play a critical role in the socialization of their children, migration raises important questions on how the phenomenon weakens families and eventually the whole society.

A way must be found to make human movements a positive experience for all. This must surely start with the recognition that conditions of life must be improved everywhere so that people who move do so not out of desperation and necessity but out of desire and free will. The challenge of managing migration is therefore nothing less than the challenge of spreading development.

**5. Rethinking concepts.** If migration is to contribute to economic progress, social cohesion, and justice and peace in the 21st century there is a need to re-examine the way we think about migration. Human societies have evolved from tribes to towns, from states to unions of states. Should we continue categorizing people solely on the basis of nationality or citizenship when more and more societies are creating individuals and groups with multiple national and cultural



identities? How relevant still are our ways of regulating movement in a world of global production chains and supranational enterprises, where knowledge industries not locked in space are becoming the main engines for growth of the global economy?

We are also entering a century that seems to recognize the precedence of individual human rights over those of states. Together with the irrelevance of distance to modern communications all these suggest that we need new concepts to comprehend the demands of modern economies and societies for freer movement of people across national borders, more flexible categories for entitlement to membership and concomitant social protection. We believe this will allow migration to play again the important role it has played in the past in dynamizing societies and economies, and in fostering a faster convergence of standards of life across regions.

**6. Common enrichment.** Whatever may be propelling human movements history teaches us that migration enriches cultures and societies. A society is lifeless without constant flows and exchanges of artists and scholars, merchants and labourers, even of adventurers and tricksters. Their movements bring new tastes and lifestyles, philosophies and ideas. The migrants themselves are key actors in introducing change in traditional societies. Migrants who have experienced living in free societies have always been the main purveyors of democratic principles and freedoms when they return. Migration and the existence of trans-national families and communities create the bridges that hasten progressive social change in origin countries.

Migrants are likewise the economic lifeline to many families and communities. Workers' remittances received by developing countries are already a large and stable source of external finance for developing countries. They are also personal flows, well targeted to the needs of the recipients. Increasing remittance flows by strengthening financial infrastructures, together with enhancement of investment climates, will have a significant impact on global poverty and development.

We are convinced that enhancing the cross-border mobility of labour will redound to significant benefits for all. For this reason we welcome all initiatives for enlarging regional labour markets that allow people to move from areas where development potential is low to where they can be more productive.

**7. Integration and social cohesion** Host societies face the challenge of having to promote social cohesion amidst growing diversity. This implies on the one hand respect for the values of the host societies and on the other, recognizing and valuing cultural and religious pluralism. It implies achieving more equality which will be difficult to attain without negotiating for more social assistance to those who face greater difficulties than others because of language and other cultural differences, ill health, or lack of skills. There is a need for building the social infrastructures and political institutions that promote non-discrimination and which entitle minorities and the migrants themselves to participation in their social integration. The returns to investing in social integration are very significant. Migrants and migrant communities represent substantial social capital. They are resourceful in building on their knowledge, linkages and networks to create businesses and self-sustaining communities.



**8. Learning to live together.** Social integration or learning to live together has been made difficult by the negative images with which human mobility has been linked. Correcting such images will require concerted efforts from all sectors especially the mass media and start with education of the youth to cultivate positive attitudes towards those of a different cultural or ethnic origin. Attitudes develop early and are more difficult to change later in life. Urban and family environments which stress the values of justice and which stimulate dialogue should be promoted. Cities have a special role to play since work opportunities tend to be concentrated in urban centres and since they provide citizenship spaces. Migrant communities too have a responsibility to help in tutoring or moulding public opinion.

**9. Negotiation-based policies.** States must find the right tools and strategies for promoting the forms of migration that best serve their interests, for protecting the basic rights of the migrants and contributing to the development of their countries of origin. There are no simple solutions, no perfect policy paradigms. Since there are diverse and often conflicting interests and stakes in migration the processes for negotiating policies must be made more transparent. Migration policies are bound to fail if there is lack of coherence with those in other spheres like trade, investments and social integration. There is an especially acute need for social dialogue in drawing up migration policies since policies built on fragile social consensus tend not to have clear objectives and are very prone to manipulation for short-term political gain. Policy cannot be insensitive to the complexity of human condition and yet must be seen to protect the interests of host societies. Policies will be ineffective where they ignore the logic of the labour market and the limits to regulation.

**10. International cooperation.** Managing migration requires not only creative thinking since it is constantly evolving but also cooperation at the international level. There is a need to build a coalition of interests not only within but also between and among countries to establish more orderly forms of migration, and to generate the political will to share responsibility over its management. Unfortunately understandable security concerns in the wake of September 11 have led in many instances to a retreat to undue reliance on migration controls.

We believe that human mobility is a global public good the production and consumption of which needs a multilateral system of rules and principles if it is to contribute to a fairer and more just world. The United Nations and other international and other inter-governmental organizations have a critical role to play in formulating and promoting such mutually acceptable principles for a multilateral framework for managing migration.

We share a common vision of a more integrated world where men and women move, not because they are forced by hunger or despair, by denial of their human rights, or because of threats to their lives, but because by moving they are able to express the full range of their creativity and reach the full potential of their humanity.

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