

Promoting better regional cooperation towards smart and humane migration

across the Mediterranean

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Session II: Promote sensible political and societal discourse around migration

UNESCO Key Messages

- Societal and political discourses should uphold the inherent dignity of all human beings and be rooted in the universally accepted values and principles of human rights, including equality and gender equality. To that end, efforts should be deployed to improve public perceptions of migrants and refugees which are too often influenced by persisting and new stereotypes and prejudices. A greater public awareness about the predicaments migrants and their families are confronted with throughout their journey as well as about the contributions they make or could possibly make to countries of origin and destination could be effective antidotes. Such efforts could be promoted through a partnership of the private sector, labour unions, the media, educational institutions and migrants themselves, based on the latest available evidence and highlighting the rights and responsibilities of both migrants and non-migrants.
 - Parliaments could play a leading role in organizing advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, hosting discussion forums to inform public opinion.
 - Parliaments could empower independent authorities (ombudspersons offices, national human rights institutions, etc.) to monitor the manifestation of discriminatory acts and deal with individual complaints.
- A comprehensive approach is direly needed, involving all concerned actors from all parts of the spectrum. In this context, migrants should be considered not as mere beneficiaries of interventions, whether at the policy or the programmatic levels, but as partners who should be involved in and be able to contribute to the whole process. Only then, can we be certain that responses will truly address the complexity of the migration phenomenon and in an comprehensive way paying due attention to the real challenges that the protagonists are confronted with.
 - Parliaments could set an example in this respect by acknowledging, in the course of different responsibilities and processes, representatives of migrant communities as legitimate interlocutors.
- Empowering cities is for several reasons a key strategy for combating discriminatory discourses and promoting a culture of living together. Firstly, statistics show that human mobility, whether internal or international, affect cities as front liners. About 50 per cent of international migrants reside in ten highly urbanized, high-income countries while almost all of the growth in the world's population over the next few decades, another 2.5 billion, is expected to be in urban areas in low- and middle-income countries. City authorities are well-positioned to take action with regard to migration challenges.

Because of their proximity, they can undertake more efficiently and more effectively remedial action. In addition, city authorities bear through decentralization processes specific responsibilities across their fields of competence that are complementary to those of the central government. Finally, cities have much to gain in development, growth, resilience and sustainability from the integration and inclusion of migrants in the urban fabric.

- Parliaments could help rationalize the division of labour and increase coordination and coherence between central, regional and local governments.
- The collection of appropriately disaggregated and reliable data is a fundamental step towards evidence-based policy-making and action to address the impacts of migration on individuals, communities and societies. The effort should include population censuses and administrative data sources as well as dedicated surveys for assessing how migration influences social and economic development. The use of measurable targets and indicators for monitoring the protection of migrants and violations of their rights should be promoted. An important aspect of information gathering should be the identification this includes the sharing of experiences and notably of good practices at different levels. To respond to this challenge, dedicated capacity-building should be provided to assist countries in improving the collection and use of migration data.
 - Parliaments could promote the adoption of appropriate data collection frameworks and mechanisms, mobilizing all appropriate actors.