



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

IOM Submission Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 32/31 on Civil Society Space: Engagement with Civil Society

Introduction

The present report is submitted pursuant to the request from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding Human Rights Council resolution 32/31 on “Civil Society Space”.

Pursuant and upon request of paragraph 18 of the aforementioned resolution, this report will outline: 1) IOM procedures and practices vis-à-vis civil society; 2) Civil society contributions to IOM’s work; and 3) Good practices and challenges in IOM engagement with civil society.

IOM procedures and practices vis-à-vis civil society

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and committed to the principle of promoting humane and orderly migration that benefits migrants and society. The Organization acts together with its partners in the international community to: uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants; encourage social and economic development through migration; assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management; and advance understanding of migration issues. On 19 September 2016, IOM joined the UN system.

IOM engagement with civil society is guided by several key documents: the *IOM Constitution* (1953), the 2010 *Strategy Review* and the 2015 *Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF)* provide a useful framework of reference. Principle 3 of *MiGOF*, “Good migration governance relies on strong partnerships” explains that by their very nature, migration and mobility implicate multiple actors: States and their neighbors, subnational authorities, local communities, migrants and their families, diasporas, employers, unions, as well as inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations whose mandates touch on migration and humanitarian action. IOM’s institutional humanitarian policy, the *Principles for Humanitarian Action*, highlight the significance of IOM partnerships with a range of local, national, regional and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society institutions (including community and women’s groups, local organizations and faith-based groups) specifically within the humanitarian context; and recognizing that these may be well positioned to implement appropriate responses in terms of specialized expertise, geographical access and knowledge of local community structures.

The Preamble of the *IOM Constitution* refers to the “...need to promote the cooperation of States and international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, for research and consultation on migration issues, not only in regard to the migration process but also the specific situation and needs of the migrant as an individual human being...”, adding that “...there should be close cooperation and coordination, on migration and refugee matters...”. Chapter 1, Article 1, paragraph 2 further states: “In carrying out its functions, the Organization shall cooperate closely with international organizations, governmental and non-

governmental, concerned with migration, refugees and human resources in order, inter alia, to facilitate the coordination of international activities in these fields. Such cooperation shall be carried out in the mutual respect of competences of the organizations concerned.”

Furthermore, within the Rules of the IOM Council, Section IV, Rule 10, paragraph 2 states: “Upon their application, international organizations, governmental or non-governmental, concerned with migration, refugees or human resources may be invited by the Council to be represented at its meetings.” IOM Council document on the *Criteria for Admitting Non-Governmental Organizations as Observers to the IOM Council* provides those eligible for observership to participate in IOM’s annual Council sessions. To date, 75 NGOs hold IOM Observer status, constituting over 50 percent of the total number of Observers.

Civil society contributions to IOM’s work

IOM’s work with civil society originally focused on resettlement activities. Over the years, IOM has responded to the continuous evolution in the approach to international migration governance through an expansion of activities and partnership engagement to address many other areas of migration, including research; awareness-raising; advocacy; training and national capacity enhancement; migration assistance, including protection and assistance for vulnerable migrants and assisted voluntary return and reintegration; health provision and other forms of service delivery in humanitarian, early recovery, and development settings.

Within its approach to stakeholder engagement, the UN has identified civil society to comprise non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), academic institutions, diaspora, migrants, and migrant organizations. In addition to the UN’s categories for the composition of civil society, IOM includes in its civil society partners and interlocutors also trade unions/professional organizations; media organizations; and philanthropic foundations. Given the extensive in-country networks of some CSOs and their in depth knowledge of local situations, IOM partners on the basis of joint projects with thousands of organizations across the globe, including NGO consortia¹. It also interacts with CSOs in the areas of advocacy, policy guidance, development and implementation. In crisis response, IOM works with NGOs as implementing partners thereby benefiting from their unique perspective, information, access, capacity and expertise. Programming and thematic consultations with Civil Society are held regularly, both at its headquarters and also regionally and at many of the IOM field offices— allowing for operational adjustments and lessons learnt as well as policy setting, as in the case of IOM’s Humanitarian Policy. On prompting by civil society, in 2016-17 IOM entered a partnership² to develop scenarios depicting possible futures of migration by 2030, “What Future for International Migration and Human Mobility?” in conjunction with a team of professionals from a combination of sectors and geographical areas, and mostly from civil society organizations.

IOM engagement with civil society: good practices and challenges

Efforts to pursue a rights-based approach to programming in all of the Organization’s projects to further the realization of rights of migrants and assist States to meet their obligations has entailed also the active and meaningful participation of civil society

¹ IOM’s first legal agreement with an NGO was with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) in 1984.

² A tripartite initiative with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and the Geneva based NGO Global Future.

throughout the programming stages. IOM currently engages with close to two thousand national and international NGOs in its daily operational activities.

The increased interest in migration and consequent expansion of the number and types of CSOs working in the area has led to an increasing number of CSOs eager to engage in various ways. This poses both challenges and opportunities for IOM. Given their specific capacities, outreach and knowledge of local realities, CSOs are often a key partner in IOM's work to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management; to advance understanding of migration issues; to encourage social and economic development through migration; and to uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants,. At times, a limited understanding of migration and/or limited technical, managerial, or administrative capacities can mean that a disproportionate amount of time is spent on capacity development for CSOs, rather than on joint delivery of shared objectives. Yet appropriate and considered investment in key partnerships can have catalytic impact on both local and global understandings of migration and the rights of migrants.

One example of a good practice is IOM's sustained investment in building capacity of local service-providing CSOs to identify and/or assist victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants, as well as returnees. This, over several decades, has resulted in a global network of competent partners. The presence of this network has significant impact on the lives of migrants, as it increases both the quality and the quantity of services available to them.

In the context of **migration health**, IOM engages with civil society in project design, development and implementation across regions. It supports civil society key role in advocating and promoting migration health in global dialogues and platforms. For instance, several CSOs³ participated in the second Global Consultation on Migrant Health, organized by IOM, WHO and the Government of Sri Lanka in Colombo on 21-23 February 2017, to engage in cross sectoral policy-level dialogue and to enable an environment for change. IOM included civil society in a number of side events it co-organized on the margins of the 2017 consultations on the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) on mainstreaming migration health within the GCM.

On resettlement, IOM works closely with local authorities including municipalities, service providers, employers and civil society to build the capacity of receiving communities and help them prepare for the arrival of new migrant populations, including refugees.

In the case of **diaspora or transnational communities**, IOM has formulated a comprehensive strategic approach centered on 3Es for action – engage, enable, and empower – to maximize the transnational exchange of diaspora resources. An approach that focuses on these 3Es for action can contribute to (i) a better understanding of the role of diaspora and diaspora-related programming in the migration-development nexus; (ii) a more diverse range of programmes aimed at developing better the variety of resources that transnational communities can mobilize; and (iii) greater synergies between diaspora policies developed by governments. In the context of the Global Compact for Migration, IOM recently launched the “iDiaspora platform”, an online forum for diaspora communities to contribute their opinions to the intergovernmental process to develop the compact.

³ NGOs, academic institutions and migrant organizations

In the area of **migration, environment and climate change**, IOM works with the academic sector on research and evidence to inform policies addressing challenges associated with human mobility in the context of environmental and climate change and disasters⁴. The Atlas of Environmental Migration reflects IOM's work with the Hugo Observatory: Environment, Migration and Politics, Sciences Po Paris and other research institutes and academic experts.

IOM also engages with civil society partners to support government capacity building, policy development and implementation of pilot activities to address the links between migration, environment and climate change.

As part of its efforts to promote the inclusion of human mobility considerations into key global policy processes such as the UNFCCC negotiations and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, IOM has partnered with civil society on joint advocacy⁵. IOM has also partnered with the Mary Robinson Foundation and other civil society actors working on human rights, climate change and migration to support OHCHR in promoting this issue at the Human Rights Council in the lead up to the resolution 35/20 on Human Rights and Climate Change, and in subsequent expert meetings and intersessional panels.

In addition to joint project implementation either as partners or implementing on behalf of one another, IOM has invested in expanding civil society understanding of how IOM functions, and the importance of collaborating in areas of mutual interest and of policy dialogue. **Consultations** with civil society organizations are pursued twice yearly, respectively with NGOs in the humanitarian sector specifically on humanitarian issues and the other with the wider categorization of CSOs on issues of migration governance. The 2016 migration governance consultations took place in Geneva on 4 November on the theme *Post-19 September 2016 Summit for Refugees and Migrants*.

The IOM-NGO Humanitarian Consultations aim to contribute to better protection and assistance of crisis affected people and displaced populations. As a founding member of the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP), IOM has endorsed the [Principles of Partnership \(PoP\)](#). These aim to ensure equality, transparency, result-oriented approaches, responsibility and complementarity across humanitarian partnerships and are foundational in all humanitarian partnerships, helping to leverage the value of diversity and complementarity.

In its role of Secretariat of the **Migrants in Countries in Crisis** (MICIC) Initiative, IOM has advocated for the consistent inclusion of civil society in the MICIC broad consultative process. Since 2014 CSOs have participated in each of the six MICIC regional consultations with the submission of consolidated inputs, formulated during regional civil society MICIC consultations. Moreover, IOM organized a dedicated MICIC consultation with International NGOs and other CSOs. Civil society remains a key IOM partner in the dissemination of the outcome document of the MICIC Initiative and in the implementation of MICIC Capacity Building activities globally.

⁴ For example, within the EU-funded project "Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy" (2014-2017) IOM worked with a consortium of research partners to conduct national assessments in six pilot countries on the links between climate change, migration and adaptation, so as to better understand people's vulnerabilities and resilience.

⁵ Including the Mary Robinson Foundation, CARE International, IDMC/NRC, Alaska Institute for Justice, Refugees International, RAED, Action contre la faim among others.

CSOs have been a regular constituent of IOM's **International Dialogue on Migration (IDM)**⁶ events, both as participants and as panelists. Over the last 5 years, 464 CSO representatives have participated in IDM events, 70 among them also as speakers.

For the first time, CSO representatives were also invited to take part in a panel on partnerships during the most recent **Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Consultative Processes on Migration (GRCP 7)**, hosted by IOM on 10-11 October in Geneva and focusing on the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) follow up and review process.

Upon the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution of 6 April 2017 on *Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (A/71/L.58, or the Modalities Resolution)*, IOM has embarked on a unique exercise to facilitate civil society's capacities to independently engage in all phases of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) process by taking on contract an IOM – CSO Liaison on the GCM. The Modalities Resolution paragraphs 6 and 7 stress the importance of considering input from all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and “emphasizes the importance of contributions that take into account different realities, and therefore encourages effective contributions from and the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, at all stages of the preparatory process and at the conference itself, including by the sharing of best practices and concrete policies.....”. Recognizing that adequately capturing the varying realities of each region and the diverse perspectives from a diverse range of civil society organizations, as well as ensuring effective civil society contributions will be a challenge, through the IOM – CSO Liaison and donor funding, IOM is supporting regional civil society networks in organizing seven Regional Civil Society Consultations (RCSCs). The RCSCs provide CSOs with the opportunity to consolidate civil society inputs by region, as key contributions for the ‘Consultation’ phase of the GCM. The RCSCs support the effort of making the voices of local and regional civil society organizations (particularly those of migrants, diaspora, and grassroots communities) heard at the global level. To preserve the independent character of the CSO discussions and their outcomes, IOM has neither interfered in the agenda setting nor the selection of participants to these consultations. IOM has also secured funding for civil society to convene their own, independent stocktaking meeting prior to the GCM Stocktaking Meeting in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico at the beginning of December. IOM is funding also the participation of civil society regional focal points to the GCM informal thematic sessions and UN Regional Commissions regional consultations and will continue to support their participation in the process during the GCM stocktaking and negotiations phase.

Additionally, IOM is extending policy and technical expertise to the consultative process by providing a framework and a space for leading experts in the migration field to provide innovative ideas to the GCM preparations. In convening the [Migration Research Leaders Syndicate](#), IOM invited academic and applied researchers from all over the world to draw on the latest thinking from a range of disciplines and comparative perspectives so as to inform the GCM with evidence-based, rigorous and innovative insights on some of the most complex challenges for international migration management. Syndicate members have contributed in two main ways: suggesting their top three reads for policymakers and writing short technical

⁶ The International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) is IOM's principal forum for dialogue on migration policy. It was created in 2001 to provide a forum for Member States and Observers to identify and discuss major issues and challenges in the field of international migration, to contribute to a better understanding of migration and to strengthen cooperation on migration issues between governments and with other actors.

papers in which they articulate, and posing effective ways to resolve, policy conundrums posing obstacles to safe, orderly and regular migration.

IOM is engaging civil society actors to participate in the **UN ‘Together’ campaign** through the expansion of its [I am a Migrant](#) campaign promoting diversity and inclusion of migrants in society. A mobile app has been developed for CSOs and others which is currently in beta testing. It aims to facilitate CSO participation in the UN mandated ‘Together’ initiative and will be launched in NY on International Migrant Day, 18 December 2017. The app builds on the success of the crowdsourced [I am a Migrant](#) campaign -- which promotes diversity and inclusion of migrants in society -- and is itself a direct outgrowth of a CSO initiative in the U.K.. The Together app is designed to cross- fertilize the burgeoning CSO- driven global movement for tolerance of migrants especially through volunteerism. By highlighting actions and stories of migrants social it aims to change the prevailing anti-migrant narrative in the public sphere.

The app enables easy sharing of personal testimonies of migration, tolerance and diversity. It also enables CSOs to build a wider support base by highlighting the countless positive activities and actions that are taken support of migrants.

IOM also partners with Inter Press Service (IPS), an international news agency with an association of over 350 journalists that covers issues such as development, gender, environment, and human rights. IOM and IPS work together to raise public awareness internationally on migration issues and to provide substantive information on IOM and IPS’ work with emphasis on countering xenophobia against migrants. They are also building the capacity of journalists and broadcasters to report more effectively on international migration issues, sharing stories of migrants from across the globe.