

SUMMARY REPORT

Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative
IGC Plus Consultation

Geneva, Switzerland,
2-3 February 2015



Publication: 22 April 2015

Prepared by the MICIC Secretariat and endorsed by the MICIC Working Group.

The material in this document does not reflect the individual or collective views of the members of the MICIC Working Group.

This publication has not undergone professional editing by IOM.



The MICIC Initiatives is co-chaired by the Governments of the Philippines and the United States of America.

Table of Contents

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
II. INTRODUCTION	4
III. PRE-CRISIS PHASE.....	5
IV. EMERGENCY PHASE	12
V. POST CRISIS PHASE	16
VI. CROSS CUTTING THEMES.....	18
VII. ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OUTLOOK AND CONCLUSION.....	19

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout the two-day consultation, a mix of presentations, discussions and working group sessions explored a rich array of pertinent experiences and issues ranging from case studies (such as the 2011 civil unrest in Libya that led to more than 800,000 migrants fleeing the conflict), consular and employer practices, and new technology to migrant micro-insurance schemes. Participants discussed measures that could be taken by different actors during: (1) the pre-crisis phase, focusing on preparedness measures with the potential to reduce the vulnerability of and risks to migrants; (2) the emergency phase, to protect and assist migrants including by evacuating them to safety when needed; and (3) the post-crisis phase, to limit potential longer-term negative impacts on migrants, their families, and home and host communities.

Discussions around the different phases of crises and lessons learned from protecting and assisting migrants caught in crisis situations highlighted the circular nature of responding to crises, and participants reaffirmed the importance of linking preparation, activation of pre-existing systems and plans, provision of timely response, resolution, and solutions, learning and reflection, leading to new preparation.

Practices, considerations, challenges, and lessons relating to all three phases that were canvassed during the two-day consultation are enumerated below.

II. INTRODUCTION

The first formal consultation of the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative (MICIC) was convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2-3 February 2015 for the participating States of the Inter-governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) as well as the Governments of Bangladesh, Japan, Philippines and South Korea. Co-hosted by the United States (MICIC co-chair) and Australia (MICIC working group member and current IGC chair), in collaboration with the Philippines (MICIC co-chair), the IGC-Plus Consultation brought together some 80 participants comprised of government officials from a range of ministries including foreign and consular affairs, disaster management, development cooperation, citizenship and immigration, justice, and military, as well as representatives of the European Commission, international organizations, civil society and the private sector.

The aim of the MICIC consultations is to identify the roles and responsibilities of States (countries of origin, transit, and destination of migrants) as well as between states and non-governmental actors (employers and recruiters, international and non-governmental organizations, diasporas and migrants) in protecting and assisting migrants when armed conflict or a natural disaster strikes the country in which they are residing, either temporarily or permanently and to begin the process of creating an inventory of best practices and tools that could serve as models and can ultimately inform development of voluntary, non-binding guidelines for such situations.

This report presents key findings stemming from the IGC consultation, organized by the three phases noted above—pre-crisis, emergency, and post-crisis – and distills a number of cross-cutting themes that emerged from the deliberations. The report does not purport to represent the views of individual participants or the consultation’s organizers or hosts, but instead reflects broadly the themes, suggestions, and guidance transpiring from the discussions. The background paper to the IGC consultation as well as the full agenda, and the participant’s list are appended to this report.

III. PRE-CRISIS PHASE

Participants stressed that preparation is key to effective crisis response and is a responsibility of every actor. There was resounding consensus on the essential need for preparatory action on multiple levels—international, regional, national and local—by all actors—countries of origin, destination, and transit, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, employers and recruiters, migrants and diaspora as well as donors and the broader international community—in order to mitigate potential risks to migrants in the event of crises. Participants noted that once a crisis occurs, the ability to act immediately and predictably, based on pre-existing partnerships, policies and plans, and simulated, rehearsed and practiced actions can be critical to the safety and protection of migrant populations and provision of timely, tailored and effective assistance to them. Due to the nature of crises and the chaos that may ensue which can often overwhelm capabilities, preparatory action, due diligence and pre-tested action can mean the difference in saving lives and providing effective assistance and protection to migrants. In this context, investing in preparedness is the most cost effective and constructive means of minimizing risks and vulnerabilities in the event of crises.

Practices, considerations, challenges, and lessons relating to the pre-crisis phase that were canvassed during the two-day consultation are enumerated below.

Practices

Countries of Origin

- **Know where migrants are.** Establishing systems/mechanisms to collect information on citizens abroad, including contact details, emergency contacts, and locations. Both formal and informal mechanisms, including using local nongovernmental organizations and local offices of international organizations to map migrant populations, were considered necessary.
- **Educate potential migrants.** Educating and disseminating information to citizens traveling abroad prior to travel on what to do, where to go, and who to contact in the event of a crisis and establishing systems and mechanisms to provide citizens abroad with regular information on impending or actual crises. For example, targeted websites for nationals traveling abroad as well as use of mobile apps, social media and bulletins, can provide critical information to migrants about security conditions overseas, as well as detail particular events and risks, such as crime. Websites that are mobile- and tablet-friendly can be complemented by Facebook, twitter and YouTube channels available at consular post, to use technology effectively for this purpose. In one example, an iPhone app allows people to check country-level travel advice and to subscribe and register. The advice can be countrywide or area-specific. Travelers can also subscribe and receive email updates or get text message updates. Information can be drawn from many sources

including intelligence, as well as the travel advice provided by other countries/governments. Pre-departure orientation for migrant workers, including requesting workers to report to embassies and to organize themselves into networks, groups and communities and to assign coordinators so as to be more easily reachable, are also valuable.

- Crisis alert systems. Establishing crisis monitoring and alert systems dictating different levels of actions by government actors and migrants based on the classification level of the crisis, for example (1) precautionary phase; (2) restriction phase; (3) voluntary repatriation; and (4) evacuation/mandatory repatriation. To complement this, an emergency watch and response center can be established in the capital, including providing recommendations to senior government officials on what to do in light of specific incidents.
- **Rapid Response Mechanisms.** Establishing and building the capacity of rapid response/crisis management teams comprised of crisis management, response, technical, and other pertinent experts with the core objective of protecting lives and ensuring the welfare of citizens abroad, with particular actors poised and ready for deployment in the event of crises. Measures such as the creation of dedicated preparedness and response teams involving high-level cabinet officials and rapid response teams that are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are generally ready to deploy within a few hours were highlighted. A specialized security training program of IOM helps minimize risks in hostile environments and includes exercises and field training. Training of personnel on first aid and emergency responses, in light of lessons learned from 2004 tsunami, has been prioritized by one government and these personnel will be rotated out to postings around the world, so that there is a network around the world that can respond at short notice to crises.
- **Hotlines/Crisis Call Centers.** Establishing 24-hour hotlines/crisis call centers with trained staff/advisors for citizens abroad and family members to call in event of crises.
- **Contingency Planning.** Establishing contingency plans to address the protection and assistance of citizens abroad in the event of crises. These include creation of evacuation plans and guidelines on carrying out evacuations, on making the decision to evacuate and on eligibility of potential evacuees, and identifying evacuation points within unaffected parts of the crisis-affected country, in bordering countries or further afield. One government noted that its evacuation guidelines require safe transportation to the next safe haven location (which may be within the affected country, another country or back home) and that this service is provided on a cost recovery basis. In terms of criteria for evacuating, the following were identified as relevant factors and criteria: a clear threat to health, safety and security of nationals, absence of modes of departure or inability to access ports of departure, that the risks of remaining are greater than the risks associated with evacuation, the Embassy or Consulate has called for evacuation of non-emergency staff, an emergency has been declared, borders have closed, volatility is high and there is no resolution in sight to the crisis, a favorable environment exists to effect evacuation, all efforts are made to inform people, and other like-minded governments have undertaken evacuation. In terms of eligibility, all citizens and non-citizen spouses, dependent children, citizens of specific countries involved in efforts but only if this does not unduly affect other groups, are to be treated equally, including government employees and families, including those with dual citizens. All measures are undertaken to avoid splitting families, and the most vulnerable are given priority. A consular crisis plan is needed in every country in which government has a consular presence, these plans require updating every year, including by identifying border crossings and evacuation points in contingency plans.

- **Outreach/Contact with Community Leaders.** Maintaining a list and contact details of community and other leaders in the country of destination with the ability to contact and reach other citizens abroad effectively creating a network for information dissemination and assistance. Organizing cultural events, for example, can be a useful way of identifying focal points overseas and maintaining contact with citizens abroad. Establishment of overseas worker coordinators, and ensuring updated phone and email contacts for them, can multiply outreach efforts.
- **Standard Operating Procedures.** Creating standard operating procedures and manuals for actors responsible for responding to crises and for assisting and protecting citizens abroad caught in crises. Several governments have begun the process of creating such documents, in light of experiences in previous crises. The MEND (Mass Evacuations in Natural Disasters) Guide developed under IOM's Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster leadership, in collaboration with several other international and non-governmental organizations and governments, was identified as a promising practice in this regard.
- **Consular Partnerships.** Strengthening and enhancing capacity to respond to and protect and assist citizens abroad through partnerships and arrangements with other actors on a wide-range of issues including evacuation, coordination and other service provision, particularly if there is no consular or embassy presence on the ground. Several bilateral and multilateral consular reciprocity arrangements were identified. For example, countries from one region can establish partnerships with countries from another region to provide consular services for one another where they have presence, including formal mechanisms for organizing evacuations, and policies on the use of military assets. Some governments have established MOUs with IOM on evacuation support services, relating to locations where no foreign ministry services exist or where such service capacity is weak.
- **Bilateral Arrangements.** Formalizing arrangements relating to crisis-response and technical and/or financial assistance through MOUs, contracts, or bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreements (as applicable) with international actors and national actors such as intergovernmental organizations, other governments, employers, recruiters, national and local government departments to facilitate a whole of government approach. Several governments noted their arrangements of this sort.
- **Funding Mechanisms.** Establishing funds that provide for the needs of citizens abroad including in the event of crises. Legal assistance, emergency evacuation/repatriation and other funds can be developed at the national or international levels to create predictability in the event of a crisis.
- **Employer Responsibility.** Encouraging employers to coordinate repatriation and assistance to employees in the event of crises and mandating these in contractual arrangements.
- **Insurance.** Encouraging recruitment agencies to purchase insurance for workers or requiring migrants to purchase insurance to cover their own risks. One government requires by law that recruitment agencies purchase insurance for overseas foreign workers. This coverage includes death, disability, repatriation costs, medical evacuation/repatriation, among other things, and there has been a recent push to include 'war risks' in the coverage. The advantage of this system is that there is standardized protection with certainty and a clear understanding of what the coverage includes. Another country has a mandatory insurance scheme which costs \$9 and covers risks but not necessarily 'war risks' yet noted that the level of compliance with this scheme is problematic. Another possibility is requiring overseas workers to purchase membership for in an

overseas welfare fund, for example for \$25 for 2 years, to be accessed in the event of death overseas and the need to repatriate the body.

Countries of Transit

- **Maintaining open borders to allow migrants to flee crises.** IOM, UNHCR and others spoke favorably of Tunisia and Egypt's decisions to keep their borders open during the Libyan crisis.

Countries of Destination

- **Registration upon arrival.** Encouraging migrants to be registered upon arrival in the country of destination. Several governments reported that their laws require all foreigners to be registered upon arrival in their countries, but this does not necessarily mean that all foreigners are registered.

Employers

- **Knowing employees and their families.** Creating detailed databases with critical information on employees (name, contact, copies of passport and visas, dependents, medical needs, emergency contacts, etc.). It is critical to gather and maintain detailed databases and to update them regularly.
- **Call centers.** Establishing call centers with trained and sensitive staff with the capacity to respond to calls from distressed family members and relatives in the event of a crisis.
- **Crisis response teams.** Establishing crisis response teams at country or headquarters levels or both with trained experts—for example, in the fields of communication, health, human resources, etc.—pooled in to teams as and when required.
- **Know your partners.** Identify relevant stakeholders, including, for example, airline companies, hotels, and others that will be needed in the event of a crisis, and build connections and relationships with them during peace times, so that the relationships are already established and can easily be activated in the event of a crisis.
- **Contingency Planning.** Preparing detailed and specific contingency plans. It is important to identify primary and secondary evacuation points, local hotels, and transport, etc., in the event, for example, the primary evacuation point, such as an airport, is shut down.
- **Leadership.** Establishing leadership structures and communication trees can often mean the difference between timely or delayed action.
- **Test contingency plans.** Regular testing of emergency and contingency plans, including communication trees.
- **Contingency pay mechanisms.** Establish flexible payroll and cash assistance systems to be used in the event of a crisis to ensure employees are paid in a timely manner.

- **Emergency communications.** Establish satellite phone and Internet capabilities as power is often lost during crises.
- **Security and financial capacity.** Establish a cadre of security personnel and ensure financial capacity for crisis response.

International Community (International Organizations, Donors, other States, etc.)

- **Transit Country Support.** Providing transit countries that maintain open borders in the context of crises with support including with respect to humanitarian border management. IOM mentioned the importance of this practice, highlighting it in the context of the crisis in Libya.

Considerations, Challenges and Lessons

- **Data needs.** There is a need to consider better ways of obtaining data on citizens abroad and reaching them quickly in the context of crises. Only a small proportion of citizens who travel abroad register through existing registration measures. How can social media and new technologies facilitate better data on, and communication with, citizens travelling abroad? In this context, the importance of citizens traveling abroad connecting with the embassy or consular outpost in the destination country once they arrive was highlighted. Persons traveling in irregular status or becoming irregular once in the country of destination are especially difficult to capture. What can be done to reach and connect with them?
- **Create tools for migrants to empower themselves.** Need to create mechanisms and tools that allow citizens abroad to help themselves in the event of a crisis. This is the main principle underlying the consular assistance policy of some governments. In this context, the home government can encourage the purchase of travel insurance before traveling abroad, registration, and sign up to twitter feeds, sign up to travel circulars, and downloading apps that provide timely updates.
- **Establish back-up communications tools.** While it was widely recognized that advances in communications technologies make it far easier to communicate efficiently with and provide information to large numbers of citizens abroad, relying on cell and web-based forms of communication can have limitations, particularly when crises result in power failures. Having satellite and alternative communication capabilities can be imperative for an effective response. Web-based and other forms of online communication can also create risks and harm, where employees and other actors post messages with inaccurate information, or publicize security-sensitive information. One country suggested the use of mobile communications units (e.g., vans/cars/airplane banners) to convey messages, particularly in instances where electronic communications are not feasible.
- **Liability issues.** Are there liability implications for the provision of emergency and crisis-related information to citizens abroad?
- **Access in conflict situations.** In the context of conflicts, the ability to communicate and negotiate with all parties to the conflict regarding the safety and welfare of citizens abroad caught in the crisis is critical.

- **Open communications and partnerships.** Establishing open lines of communication, networks, relationships, partnerships, and contingency arrangements with a range of actors can be crucial to meeting out timely protection and assistance to migrants caught in crises. This applies not only to governments but also to other international and local actors involved in providing protection and assistance to migrants.
- **Establish standing arrangements.** Pre-negotiating chartering or hiring arrangements with companies chartering and hiring out planes and ships can save money and time.
- **Legislate to protect citizens abroad.** Mandating under law the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of citizens abroad can provide the impetus for better protection. In some countries, assisting overseas citizens is mandated by law.
- **Integrate migrants in IASC humanitarian response.** Migrants are not integrated into the IASC humanitarian response system in the same way that other vulnerable populations, such as internally displaced persons, are integrated. Protection and assistance to migrants in the context of crises needs to be mainstreamed into this system.
- **Timely engagement.** Not all relevant actors are always involved or involved at the right time in responding to crises. Systems should be created that allow for all necessary actors to become involved in a timely manner.
- **Focus on vulnerability, cooperation, burden and responsibility sharing.** Contingency planning should be undertaken with a focus on vulnerability, cooperation, and burden and responsibility sharing with a broad, inclusive and comprehensive approach to solutions that involve destination, transit, and origin countries, international organizations, and the broader international community.
- **National level coordination.** At the national and inter-ministerial levels, ensuring relationships are established and strengthened and cooperation and coordination policies are put in place in peace times, allows for a more effective and efficient response once a crisis unfolds.
- **Establish partnerships between embassies and private sector employers.** Encouraging open communication and contact between private sector actors that employ citizens abroad and the embassy in a given country has the potential to facilitate more effective protection and assistance to citizens abroad.
- **Use the expertise and tools of international organizations.** Further thinking is needed on how best to use the expertise of international organizations and integrate this expertise and role in government-led efforts. In doing so, particular thought needs to be given to what is missing on the ground in terms of emergency response and where the gaps are. In this context, it is important to work out ways of better utilizing tools and best practices developed by international organizations as well as technical expertise in protecting and assisting migrants. For example, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix and ability to identify patterns of movements; Humanitarian Border Management response; the Migration Crisis Operational Framework; counter trafficking response in emergencies; training capabilities; predictive analytics; and the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) as well as the MEND Guide were all cited as directly relevant tools. UNHCR's Guidelines on Temporary Protection and Stay Arrangements, the Handbook on Emergencies and particularly material on third country nationals, and its ongoing dialogue with IOM on Third Country Nationals, were also mentioned in this regard, among others.

- **Empower local companies to assist and protect migrants.** Developing the role of local companies operating in countries of destination to assist employees from third countries can lead to greater capacity and better protection of migrants. These types of arrangements have been used to better protect employees, including those from third countries, in recent crises.
- **Enhance the use of micro-insurance.** On the back of an informative presentation by EA Consultants, participants discussed the potential role for formal (micro) insurance. What role could insurance play as an effective risk mitigation strategy? How insurable are the risks migrants face that are related to crisis? What are the roles for individual vs. meso-level insurance?¹ How could micro-insurance be made affordable, accessible and simple for migrants? Models have the potential to cover risks in the country of origin (shocks to families and dependents), in the country of destination (where crisis strikes) or hybrid (cover risks on both sides of the border). Main challenges to effectively reaching migrants relate to: (1) inadequate products, usability, costs, and coverage as well as timely conversion; (2) limited or ineffective delivery channels; and (3) legal, regulatory, and political barriers. Do governments, employers, or recruitments agencies have a role in and a means of supporting, mandating, or incentivizing private insurance purchase?² Could migrants in irregular status benefit from insurance schemes? Could all migrants enforce rights in domestic legal systems? There is a need to further explore ways to make insurance for migrants affordable. Could, for example, an airport tax on travelers be used as an insurance fund for migrants in crises?
- **Implement international labor standards.** International labor standards that govern the work situations are applicable to countries of origin, transit and destination. In countries of destination, often labor laws are not linked or coherent with migration policies. Abuses and vulnerabilities are exacerbated because these standards are not respected. Upholding these standards and ensuring integrity throughout the recruitment process and employment of migrant workers, as well as the enforcement of standards, can ultimately lead to better protection for migrants if they are caught in crises. Addressing these aspects can reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience leading to better preparedness and accordingly governance of this area should be enhanced, as highlighted by the International Organization of Employers, IOM and ILO.

¹ Meso-level in broad and general terms refers to group cover to an aggregator such as an employer, recruitment agency, or local government.

² EA Consultants reported that the Knights of Columbus insurance (a private insurer licensed in the United States and Mexico) allows Mexican migrants in the U.S. to purchase life and accident insurance for both themselves and their families at home and to address risks on both sides of the border.

IV. EMERGENCY PHASE

Once a crisis unfolds, participants noted that the humanitarian imperative should drive the initial response. Saving lives, and creating the mechanisms and structures to ensure safety and security and provide humanitarian assistance is critical. In order to do this, participants observed that clear, pre-established decision-making structures with the authority to make timely decisions are essential. These structures, as well as pre-existing policies and plans and other measures established during the preparatory phase should be activated in a timely manner. When carrying out emergency responses, a good reference point to keep in mind is how to create the lowest possible risk of harm.

Practices, considerations, challenges, and lessons relating to the emergency phase that were canvassed during the two-day consultation are enumerated below.

Practices

Countries of Origin

- **Keep embassies and consulates open.** Ensuring embassies and consular outposts remain open for as long as possible during crises.
- **Ensure embassy capacity to act as first responders.** Creating the necessary capacity for embassies in host countries, and in particular consular offices, to act as first responders.
- **Share information on crises, safety, and security widely.** Ensuring advice on crises, safety, and security that is provided to diplomatic and consular staff in a given country is also shared with other citizens abroad in that country.
- **Provide temporary identity and travel documentation.** Providing temporary travel and/or identity documentation for affected migrants, for example, to replace IDs for nationals who fled without their identity and/or travel documents.
- **Evacuate to safe temporary locations as an interim step.** Evacuation to holding centers or outposts in unaffected parts of the country experiencing the crisis or in other countries as a midway point to subsequent evacuation to the country of origin. For example, during the Lebanon crisis in 2006, citizens of several countries were evacuated to holding centers in Cyprus and Turkey and then subsequently on to their home countries.
- **Evacuate your own and the citizens of others.** Evacuation of citizens of other countries together with own citizens on the request of countries of origin. Several governments noted that their vessels had capacity to assist persons in need and, therefore, at the request of other countries of origin, they evacuated nationals of other countries.
- **Convene regular response coordination meetings.** Regular (e.g. daily) meetings on humanitarian response coordination between relevant national and/or governmental actors. For example, inter-departmental task forces might meet once a day, typically in the morning, in the event of a crisis,

with all stakeholders that have some stake in the response at the table so that there is a coordinated response. Establish a clear decision-making structure to ensure the most efficient response.

- **Use innovative financing tools such as loans to assist.** Obtaining loans from donors to carry out emergency assistance such as evacuation where capacity and resources are limited. Bangladesh's innovative action in obtaining a loan from the World Bank to assist migrants in the context of the Libyan crisis was raised by a number of participants.
- **Help citizens abroad along with their third-country national employees.** Provision of assistance to employees hired by citizens abroad, for example providing assistance to domestic workers hired by citizens overseas. Over 1000 foreign workers hired by one country's companies were evacuated from Libya.
- **Advise companies under domestic jurisdiction to assist foreign employees overseas.** Advice to domestic companies operating in the country of destination to assist foreign employees.
- **Deploy consular assistance teams to hot spots.** Deploying consular assistance teams to major transit airports to assist returning citizens as well as other migrants evacuating together with citizens.
- **Coordinate evacuation flights.** Platform for coordinating evacuation and flights. The European Commission noted that there is a coordinated system for EU Member States and that during the Libyan crisis flights organized by certain EU Member States also evacuated citizens of other EU Member States.

Countries of Destination

- **Coordinate humanitarian response.** Regular (e.g. daily) meetings on humanitarian response coordination between relevant national and/or governmental actors.
- **Information dissemination.** Mechanisms for effective information dissemination to affected migrants and other actors seeking to protect and assist them, such as web-based news releases; daily briefings for the diplomatic corps; national radio network broadcasts in multiple languages; and briefings for foreign business communities, among others.
- **Facilitation of rescue and voluntary return arrangements for foreign nationals.** Collaboration in search efforts with diplomatic corps police and local governments was cited, as was dispatch of officials with foreign language capabilities to affected areas.
- **Visa facilitation.** Issuance of visas for families and humanitarian workers to assist victims and easing of re-entry permits for affected migrants, including students and foreign workers.

Employers and Recruiters

- **Establish contact and safety.** Confirming location and safety of employees and dependents and activating pre-existing plans and policies including communication trees.
- **Link to governments.** Staying abreast of information being released from embassies and maintain

coordination with relevant embassies.

- **Focus on needs.** Addressing needs of employees (e.g. medical) in evacuation and other receiving countries.
- **Safety first.** Evacuate preemptively where possible rather than waiting until a crisis presents serious threats to employees. Employees can easily be re-established if the crisis subsides, but safety comes first.

Considerations, Challenges and Lessons

- **Data.** Lack of adequate and accurate data on citizens abroad (by countries of origin) or migrants (by countries of destination) was highlighted as a key challenge by a number of participants including international organizations that had been involved in protecting and assisting migrants in crises. This is particularly true for irregular migrants who may enter through unofficial channels and evade registering with their home and/or host country government to avoid detection.
- **Documentation.** Many migrants may not have access to documentation necessary to facilitate movements. This may be for a range of reasons, such as employer confiscation, loss, lack of documentation. Mechanisms that allow governments and IOs to provide temporary documentation are crucial.
- **Identifying differentiated needs.** Effective mechanisms that enable the identification of differentiated needs of specific categories of migrants are essential to ensure responses and solutions are attuned to protection and assistance needs and the dignity and rights of affected migrants are respected. Given the mixed profiles of migrants caught in the context of crises, speed and predictability can be critical to reducing protection and assistance risks. Identification of migrants who are invisible and speedy referrals is essential. UNHCR indicated that in the context of the Libyan crisis, moving people away from borders who were identified as needing protection enabled greater security for these populations and helped to decongest the border.
- **Domestic workers can be particularly vulnerable.** During the conflict in Lebanon in 2006, domestic workers faced multiple issues—some were unable to access necessary documentation, some were sent home without wages, others were locked in their houses by employers and restricted from leaving, and others did not know how to reach their embassies, etc. Language barriers and lack of or limited access to information and services can be particularly acute for this population. In this context, it is critical to educate citizens abroad about not only on what they should do in the event of a crisis, but also on the needs and responsibilities towards any domestic workers that they may employ.
- **Over communicate** rather than under communicate during crises with migrants and between crisis-response personnel and other relevant authorities.
- **Collaboration** with other actors in responding to crises can create valuable synergies and lead to greater assistance and protection to affected migrants. For example, UNHCR and IOM reported on joint advocacy and resource mobilization in the context of the Libyan crisis and screening and referrals at borders.
- **Resettlement as a protection tool.** Resettlement can be a useful tool for improving protection conditions. Implementing solutions at the same time as a crisis is ongoing can create

opportunities for dialogue and good faith efforts to find other creative solutions.

- **Retain flexibility to address changing needs.** Protection and assistance mechanisms are context dependent and can also vary as a crisis progresses. For example, UNHCR discussed a shift from camp-based to urban-based programs as the need for livelihoods and freedom of movement increased during the Libyan crisis in the bordering countries of Tunisia and Egypt.
- **Managing expectations.** Managing the expectations of bordering countries and other pertinent actors affected by a crisis in a destination country is necessary to create avenues for continued dialogue.
- **International organizations and civil society fill gaps.** International organizations and civil society entities are crucial for providing assistance and protection to migrants who do not benefit from assistance and protection from their countries of origin. Engaging with international organizations with an established presence in relevant countries of destination and/or a network of local collaborators is essential. Caritas Lebanon reported on the crucial role it played in assisting Sri Lankan domestic workers and supporting the Sri Lankan embassy to assist workers caught in the crisis in Lebanon in 2006, noting that the embassy's under-resourced staff were overwhelmed by the needs of its citizens.
- **Non-traditional actors can play valuable roles in crisis response.** These include grass roots networks, multi-lingual communicators, language teachers, expat associations and communities, local radio, etc. Unions, employers, and workers associations as well as syndicates of workers and employees are also relevant in these efforts.
- **Consular assistance** is an area where there has been much innovation and this is necessary as State budgets for foreign affairs are decreasing. How can consular responses be better leveraged?
- **Anticipate onward movements.** Potential for onward movement from bordering countries and evacuation points should be considered and addressed so that migrants' risks and vulnerabilities are not exacerbated.
- **Utilizing excess capacity.** How could excess evacuation and other forms of assistance capacity, i.e. additional spaces on chartered airplanes, be allocated to the protection of migrants requiring assistance? Information on capacity is often provided through embassies on an ad hoc basis, and there are often no criteria for selecting how to allocate. Could a central mechanism be set up to address excess capacity in the event of a crisis, for example through an IOM-established and administered central repository of requests from governments for evacuation of their nationals?

V. POST CRISIS PHASE

Participants acknowledged that even after a crisis abates, a range of post-crisis needs persists—for migrants, their families, countries of origin, and countries of destination, among others. Among these challenges are issues around reintegration (for migrants and countries of origin), impacts of loss of remittances (for migrants, their families, and countries of origin), impacts of loss of labor in countries of destination (such as health care workers who may be crucial to crisis and post-crisis responses), and the need to create opportunities for remigration that do not expose migrants to further vulnerabilities. These require attuned responses. Participants noted that development actors have a particularly important role to play during the post-crisis phase, but should also be involved at the preparatory stage to strategize and plan for these possibilities. More generally, participants appreciated that it was vital to dedicate time and resources to reflection and learning and implementing changes to existing systems and policies, so that future responses to the protection and assistance of migrants caught in crises do not repeat previously experienced limitations or difficulties. In this context, scenario planning, simulations, and testing were identified as useful tools.

Practices

Country of Origin

- **Obtaining loans from donors to address reintegration challenges where capacity and resources are limited.** For example, Bangladesh applied for and received a concessional International Development Assistance (IDA) loan from the World Bank, and, through a tripartite agreement with IOM, was able to reimburse IOM for the costs of evacuating 10,000 Bangladeshi nationals and IOM was able to disburse small transitional safety net funding individually to more than 36,000 Bangladeshis returning from Libya. These cash grants were used to pay off migration-related debts (i.e. the upfront costs paid to recruiters and others to migrate), as well as for immediate household needs, such as for education, healthcare, and housing.

All Stakeholders

- **Address residual needs:** This can include individual needs such as longer-term medical needs of employees/affected populations, or more collective needs such as those relating to residual populations in transit countries, and others.

Employers

- **Auditing of crisis management systems.** This type of action paves the way for better preparation for future crises.

Development Actors and Donors

- **Addressing return and reintegration challenges.** It was suggested that the above-mentioned Bangladesh experience be reviewed with a view to identifying where, when, and how it might be

replicated by other countries, including identifying the types of criteria that would need to be met to make this a viable option for further World Bank and/or regional development bank funding. In addition, further review of the outcomes for the Bangladeshi returnees over time would help to better understand the utility, and identify potential modifications to better address the needs and impacts in future large scale migrant return situations. The European Commission also called attention to a program launched by the EC in Ethiopia in the context of mass repatriations of Ethiopians from Saudi Arabia in 2013.

Considerations, Challenges and Lessons

- **Support transit countries.** Once a crisis has abated, and migrants remain in transit countries that kept their borders open during the crisis on the basis of humanitarian imperative and international calls, the international community should determine ways to process and find solutions for remaining migrants to acknowledge and address the good faith efforts of transit countries.
- **Address development implications.** How can the development implication of migrants caught in crisis situations be better addressed? For example, what are the implications of mass returns to a country of origin, or reduction in remittance transfers? Many of the migrant workers that returned in the context of the Libyan crisis had been sending remittances to their families in countries of origin and helping to support them. There are also impacts on countries of destination, such as when the migrants who leave in the context of crises are doctors and nurses who played a significant role in supplementing the health system of the country experiencing the crisis. What needs to be done to better prepare for these types of implications? What role do donors have?
- **Explore insurance possibilities.** Could insurance cover reintegration assistance? This is an area where funding is often difficult to find. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that insurance companies often take time to process claims and this may impact their ability to address reintegration challenges in a timely manner.
- **Engage diaspora capacities.** What role do diaspora have in protecting and assisting migrants? How can their capacities and capabilities be better utilized?
- **Engage development actors.** Development funding structures need to be attuned to post-crisis and long-term implications stemming from migrants caught in countries in crisis.

VI. CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Preparation is relevant to all actors at multiple levels, from individual migrant preparation (e.g. education and awareness raising, briefings and trainings, personal insurance prior to migrating) to collection of data and records (e.g. on citizens abroad, migrants in countries of destination, and on crisis situations) to the capacity and capability of governments and other actors (e.g. rapid responses, contingency plans, stakeholder mapping, MEND Guide) to donors (e.g. instituting mechanisms that attenuate the development implications stemming from migrants caught in countries in crises). The extent and comprehensiveness of preparatory action pervades and impacts the effectiveness of responses through all phases of a crisis and should underpin and drive all subsequent crisis responses.

Timely, clear, targeted **communication** is a key ingredient in all phases of a crisis, and similar to preparatory action, influences the extent and comprehensiveness of responses to migrants. Mechanisms and systems should be put in place so that the ability to ensure communication between all relevant actors—whether affected migrants or personnel and authorities responsible for making decisions—are not compromised in the event of a crisis. While modern communications technology makes it far easier to reach large numbers of people instantaneously, back up measures need to be anticipated and put in place for contingencies where power, phone and internet lines are down, for example through satellite systems and local generators.

There is extensive scope and opportunities for, and many benefits to be realized from, **cooperation and coordination** efforts between and among all actors at local, national, regional and international levels. For example, joint action can mobilize greater resources and make better use of scarce resources such as military assets, planes, ships, and consular services, thereby enabling broader scope for protecting affected migrants. The examples of shared consular services and shared platforms, such as the common evacuation portal proposed by IOM, can help leverage faster and more comprehensive assistance and protection to those in need.

New **technologies and innovation** in existing practices have the potential to facilitate better protection and assistance to migrants caught in countries in crises, through for example, improved means of communication. In this context, efforts should be undertaken to determine cost effective and more flexible ways of harnessing opportunities presented by new technologies towards the protection of migrants.

Finally, different groups of migrants present with **varying vulnerabilities** and needs requiring sensitive and tailored responses during all phases of a crisis. This underlying reality and considerations of family unity should be borne in mind in seeking to protect and assist migrants caught in crises. Some populations, such as irregular migrant workers, domestic workers, victims of trafficking, and stateless populations, can become particularly imperceptible due to their status and difficulties in locating them as well as their potential reticence in seeking help. Generally, as indicated in the reports of IOM's International Dialogue on Migration on this subject in 2012, the more vulnerable a migrant is before a crisis hits—either due to factors related to the migratory experience, such as his or her legal status, conditions of employment, resort to smugglers or exploitation by traffickers or employers, or due to inherent characteristics of vulnerability, such as age, gender, health status, or disability—the more

vulnerable he or she will be when a crisis hits. Therefore, safe, legal, orderly and humane migration, through authorized legal channels, with adequate preparation and with recourse to due process of law, is the best means to reduce the vulnerabilities of migrants when situations of crisis hit. At the same time, respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of migrants can also alleviate their vulnerabilities and risks in the context of crises.

VII. ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OUTLOOK AND CONCLUSION

This first substantive consultation of the MICIC Initiative canvassed a wide range of views and experiences and identified numerous promising practices and issues for further consideration. Other questions and issues that were highlighted during the consultation to keep in mind include the following:

- How can consular functions be more effectively leveraged at each phase of crises to protect and assist migrants caught in crises?
- Is there a role for some form of centralized coordination mechanism/portal that could: (1) facilitate the processing of multiple requests (e.g. on evacuations, assistance needed) received through multiple channels (capital, embassy, consular authorities in affected country as well as non-governmental actors); (2) provide real time updates by supporting migrants and concerned governments in receiving more up to date information; (3) timely exchange of information for location of migrants in need of assistance? This would essentially be a mechanism that allows for the coordination and transfer of different aspects of information and thereby lead to more effective and efficient provision of assistance and protection.
- As a general proposition, participants stressed the need to integrate migrant-specific needs and vulnerabilities, and measures to address them, in existing planning and cooperation tools, rather than to create parallel tracks, wherever possible. For example, ensuring that migrants and their specific vulnerabilities and needs are factored into Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management plans, policies and programmes at national, regional and global levels would ensure more sustainable protection and assistance for migrants than creating separate, migrant-specific plans.
- What should be done to tap the expertise of and integrate this work into existing inter-governmental consultation and cooperation mechanisms, such as the Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs), the work of the Regional Economic Commissions, the Global Forum on Migration and Development and other relevant fora?
- Over the course of the MICIC initiative, there is a need to better understand the specific and different needs that may arise in the context of different types of crises (i.e., natural disasters as opposed to a conflict) as well as the layers of vulnerability of different migrants (e.g., expats working for a large multinational company who migrated through authorized legal channels compared to smuggled or trafficked migrant domestic or lower skilled workers working without legal authorization). The focus of much of the international community's humanitarian efforts will likely be on the most vulnerable.

- Addressing these issues falls into both the development and humanitarian spheres. How can donor funding be more effective, for example in helping to build capacity and establish systems for better preparedness in both countries of origin and destination? What can donors do to harness technology and innovate?
- How can ‘whole of society’ approaches best be developed and ensure that the protection and assistance needs of migrants caught in crises are addressed through each of the three phases?
- What can be done to create greater certainty in funding for protecting migrants in countries in crisis, such as through mechanisms like IOM’s Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism (MEFM)?
- As the MICIC Initiative involves humanitarian, consular, development, and other issues and actors, how to best ensure that all relevant actors are engaged?
- How can hot spots for crises be better mapped, particularly as more and more evidence on disasters and environmental change and/or the effects of climate change exist and hotspots for conflict, arguably, could also be predicted?
- In thinking through the critical role that employers and recruitment agencies can play, it is important to keep in mind that they are not a homogeneous group. Guidelines should account for smaller employers with much more limited capacities than larger multinational corporations. What can be expected of them? As much employment today is done through temporary agencies, not recruiters, questions about accountability arise. It is also important to note that some employers are the only organization in critical areas (e.g. mining).
- The question of mandates and method of intervention of various international organizations (e.g., IOM, UNHCR, ICRC, etc.) raises the question of how to best build synergies and streamline responses to enhance predictability.

The MICIC Initiative will now move into the dedicated regional consultation phase, with six regional consultations planned and funded by the European Commission to take place over the course of the next 15 months. These regional consultations, plus dedicated stakeholder consultations, will further develop the inventory of considerations and effective practices.

Contact: micicsecretariat@iom.int / www.micicinitiative.iom.int

MICIC Save Lives
Increase Protection
Decrease Vulnerability
Improve Response
MIGRANTS IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS INITIATIVE