



**‘Forced Migration and Development’ – Dinner and reflection
12 October 2009, European Parliament
Co-organised by JRS–Europe, ICMC, Misereor and UNHCR
Hosted by Mrs. Barbara Lochbihler MEP**

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

On Monday, 12 October 2009, the Jesuit Refugee Service-Europe, the International Catholic Migration Commission, Misereor and the UNHCR hosted a dinner reflection at the European Parliament on the topic of **forced migration and development**. The evening served as an opportunity for stakeholders from government and civil society to come together to consider perspectives, ideas and concrete actions on how forced migration can impact development, and *vice-versa*. Specifically, the co-organisers and speakers identified four major points of action that host and donor governments should undertake:

1. **Host governments should guarantee freedom of movement for refugees and other forced migrants so they can engage in social and economic opportunities.** Even on an experimental basis, host governments should develop policy that facilitates forced migrants’ access to and from the marketplace. The governments of Uganda and Ecuador have facilitated such access by prioritising freedom of movement for the forcibly displaced, and by integrating their development potential into national development strategies. Despite the existence of challenges that can make this difficult to achieve, it is clear that host governments need to utilise the capabilities of forced migrant populations if they want to raise the entire country’s level of development.
2. **The European Commission and Parliament should establish new budget lines that would provide hosting countries with additional development assistance for refugees.** The Commission and Parliament should implement development assistance for refugees that add value to existing programmes and budget lines; in turn, host governments should merge additional assistance into national development strategies that would benefit both refugees and country nationals. Additional development assistance can be invested in *education* and *vocational training* opportunities, both of which can serve as long-term indicators needed for successful development initiatives and elements of protection for refugees and forced migrants.
3. **Donor and host governments must address the inter-linkages between forced migration and development at the annual Global Forum on Migration and Development.** The GFMD has indeed shown promise in terms of bringing governments together to exchange perspectives and ideas within a bi- and multi-lateral framework. But the plight of the forcibly displaced – numbering at 42 million worldwide – continues to go unaddressed. Governments must raise both the challenges and opportunities for development that comes with hosting large populations of forcibly displaced migrants. Similarly, donor governments must acknowledge that withholding additional development assistance for refugees may exacerbate tensions that already exist in hosting countries, and may lead to further displacement within Southern states and even onto Northern states.
4. **The European Commission and Parliament, together with Civil Society organisations, should actively encourage and implement research initiatives that examine forced migration’s impact on development and vice versa.** The European Parliament should undertake this activity within the framework of the EU-ACP joint parliamentary delegation, since some of the African, Caribbean and Pacific states host large populations of forcibly displaced migrants. As a leading donor of humanitarian and development aid, the European Union could benefit from this endeavour: development programmes could be optimised and institutional policy gaps can be identified and remedied. Moreover, such research initiatives should explore how development actors can integrate their assistance and resources with other organisations that focus on refugee and forced migrant protection.

EVENT PARTICIPANTS

- The host, Ms Barbara Lochbihler (MEP, Greens/EFA);
- The Ambassadors of Uganda and Sudan, and the embassies of Ecuador, Kenya and Mexico;
- European Commission officials from the directorates of Development (DEV) and Justice, Freedom and Security (JLS), the Europe Aid Cooperation Office (AIDCO), and the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO);
- Officials from the Permanent Representations of Austria and Romania to the European Union;
- The Europe Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- A political advisor to the Green/EFA political group in the European Parliament;
- The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE);
- The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration, Pax Christi International and policy institutions such as the European Policy Centre and Bruegel;
- Development organisations ALBOAN and Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World);
- Church-based organisations such as the Churches' Commission on Migrants in Europe (CCME), Caritas Europa, the Jesuit European Office (OC�PE), the Spanish Jesuit Migration Service and Jesuit European Migration Desk, in addition to the Jesuit Refugee Service and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC);
- A journalist from the *Wall Street Journal Europe*.

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. John Bingham of ICMC opened the evening by recounting recent developments from the migration and development discourse. He emphasized the importance of including refugees and other forced migrants within the mainstream discussion, while reminding guests that large gaps still remain in the manner that academic and governmental stakeholders regard the inter-linkage between forced migration and development. **Ms. Annabelle Roig of UNHCR** followed Mr. Bingham's presentation by reiterating UNHCR's support for the development potential of forced migrants, and how their development potential could serve as an antidote to situations of protracted displacement in host countries. Ms. Roig reminded guests of the urgent needs of urban refugees and forced migrants, and argued that UNHCR's new policy on forced displacement in urban settings could go towards utilising the development potential of forced migrants for the benefit of host and origin countries.

Following this thematic introduction, the co-organisers offered participants two concrete examples of forced migration and development. **Fr. John Guiney SJ, former director of the JRS East Africa office**, presented two cases from Kenya and Uganda. Through the provision of small-scale loans, JRS in Nairobi helped refugees and other forced migrants to establish their own businesses. Refugees were able to market hand-made products and goods in a business managed by JRS called *Mikono Shop*, providing refugees with a valuable income source and outlet for their productivity. In Adjumani, Uganda, JRS successfully managed and implemented primary and secondary school education for over 30,000 forcibly displaced Sudanese migrants. The success of this programme fostered peaceful relations between Ugandan nationals and Sudanese forced migrants, while empowering the latter to productively engage in the local economy and society. Fr Guiney stressed that one major factor leading to the success was the political willingness of the local government to support the integration of refugees in the receiving society.

Fr. Alberto Plaza SJ, former director of JRS in Liberia, offered participants an example of how vocational training and education could be utilised to link the skills and capacities of forced migrants with the urgent development needs found in Liberia after the civil war. While seeking protection in neighbouring countries, forcibly displaced Liberians received training in carpentry, masonry and computer science. These skills and capacities were actively put to use when forcibly displaced Liberians were eventually able to return home; for those who had to remain longer in the neighbouring countries, their skills were used to benefit the host society. Additionally, JRS initiated a large-scale teacher-training programme that boosted the educational development of forcibly displaced Liberians. Through this JRS

witnessed how education could serve as a foundation to peace and the socio-economic development of societies in post-conflict.

Dr. Alexander Betts of Oxford University built upon the JRS case studies in Liberia, Kenya and Uganda by situating them within a larger regional and global context. Dr. Betts reinforced Ms. Roig's earlier presentation by focusing on protracted refugee situations. Confinement to camps, settlements or urban areas means that forcibly displaced migrants in these situations face high barriers to supporting their livelihoods. Furthermore, their inability to participate in the local society and economy means that host countries miss out on valuable opportunities for national development. As an alternative, Dr. Betts argued that donor states should offer additional Targeted Development Assistance (TDA) for refugees in order to aid countries that host large populations of forced migrants, and to enhance forced migrants' access to protection and durable solutions. As an illustration Dr. Betts described the successful use of TDA for Guatemalan refugees seeking protection in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula in the 1990s. These initiatives improved refugees' level of self-sufficiency and their integration into the local economy and society. Dr. Betts urged donor states to create new budget lines that would add to the development assistance they already provide, and to offer such assistance in a way that would integrate the needs of citizens and refugees. In order to maximise such assistance, he argued that host countries must offer self-sufficiency and local integration opportunities to forced migrants within their borders.

LESSONS LEARNED

In the final presentation of the evening, **Mr. Philip Amaral of JRS-Europe** argued that the JRS case examples demonstrate, albeit on a small scale, that forced migrants can positively contribute to the development of their countries of origin, and also to the countries that host them. But in order to do so forced migrants must be able to live and work under certain conditions that can maximise their development potential. These conditions include:

- **Rights** to work, self-employment, education, movement and self-determination, and
- **Safety** for forced migrants and their families from conflict and danger, and a safe environment for them to live and work in.

There is a wider potential for maximising the development capabilities of forced migrants. Donor countries should invest in socio-economic outlets that could utilise their development potential, such as roads, schools, health clinics and electricity grids. Such investments must be holistic, in that they should serve the needs of both host country nationals and forced migrants.

The case studies also show that **education and vocational training** empower forced migrants to concretely participate in the development of host countries, and also countries of origin upon their return. Both are considered as one of the first tools of protection in a refugee camp, and they lend a sense of purpose and direction that is essential for the implementation of long-term development initiatives. In particular, JRS experiences show that the development of a refugee hosting area can be achieved through an integrated school system to which additional resources are allocated in collaboration with organisations responsible for refugee protection.

The forcibly displaced present unique challenges to governments in host countries and in countries of origin, particularly because the causes of displacement indicate a wider scope of economic, social and political unrest that governments must address. People must feel safe and secure before they are able to take part in any development-related activity, and they must be able to enjoy basic rights. According to Mr. Amaral, doing this requires that donor and host countries take small, yet affirmative, steps to address the inter-linkages between forced migration and development. Furthermore, civil society organisations that work with refugee and forced migrant populations should recognise these inter-linkages by inviting development perspectives to the table, and by advocating for the peace-building potential of long-term development strategies.



For more information on the conclusions of this event, or on the role of forced migration and development, contact:

Philip Amaral - *Policy and Advocacy Officer*

Jesuit Refugee Service, European Regional Office
Rue du Progrès 333/2; 1030 Brussels, BELGIUM

europa.advocacy@jrs.net; T: +32 2 250 32 20; F: +32 2 250 32 29