

Resolution of the National Forum on Migration and Peace

Montreal, Canada, November 23, 2016

CONVENED BY

the ***Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN)*** a non-governmental international organization committed to the protection of the dignity and human rights of people on the move, and the promotion of a culture of peaceful coexistence between migrants and local communities, and its Montreal partner, the ***Scalabrini Centre of Montreal for Refugees and Immigrants***:

WITH THE SUPPORT OF:

The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, HCR Representative in Canada, the Diocese of Montreal, and the Canada Council for Refugees (CCR).

AWARE OF AND CONSIDERING THAT:

- Human trafficking leading to sexual exploitation and forced labour is a form of slavery that requires shared responsibility of both the country of origin and destination of this crime;
- Social instability, inequality, natural disasters, armed conflicts, lack of a political culture of individual and collective responsibility in seeking the common good, and institutional weakness are some of the main root causes of forced migration, both globally and in the Americas; and the current process of globalization, the deepening social inequalities, and the economic imbalances among countries are factors contributing to forced migration and human trafficking, the movement of men, women and children who, because of their extreme poverty and need of a livelihood, are forced to leave their homes and places of origin;
- Forced migrants are more vulnerable during the current global migration crisis with waves of irregular migration and the increasing number of smugglers who threaten their safety, seizing the opportunity to make money off of the situation;
- Closing borders policies are creating more problems than solutions on migration policies and increasing human trafficking, as the victims feel they have no other option to cross borders;
- Cyclical work is sometimes at the priority of countries of destination in order to supply an internal demand, but it doesn't allow immigrants to establish themselves and thrive in those countries

- Diversity is a richness for the society, and the inclusive approach to migration, as well as tools for the migrant to integrate, are good for all involved, rejecting all forms of discrimination, especially against minorities and the most persecuted groups;
- Multinational companies, especially those coming from developed countries, explore local communities and workers with less than ideal work conditions, contributing to the maintenance of the status quo.

WE DECLARE THAT:

- In the current climate of suspicion against migrants, not only are there violations of human, political, economic (including employment), social and cultural rights, but also a denial of the significant and positive contributions migrants make to the host economies and societies;
- Migrants have to be aware of their right at the port of entry to avoid being exploited, and governments, as well as organizations, have to provide the tools to make sure everyone is informed, according to their status in the country;
- Countries of origin have become exporters of human capital, thereby jeopardizing, in the long run, their own development, even though migration may lift millions of families out of poverty through remittance of money from migrant workers, thus enhancing opportunities for future generations and providing the possibility of improving their wellbeing;
- Rejection of violence and discrimination on the countries of origin is the most efficient way to fight forced migration. The arms trading in Central America fuels the continuous violence, an underlying cause of irregular migration;
- It is not through walls and anti-immigration policies that we can move towards effective dynamisms for building true connections between migration, human and sustainable development and peaceful existence, but through the establishment of means for the recognition and protection of the rights of every person;
- Although there has been significant progress at the policy level of the protection and defense of migrant rights in the framework of regional and international instruments, the conventions have not been ratified or applied by any of the major receiving countries;
- Trafficked people suffer continuous violence when entering a country, with the difficulties in separating migration and trafficking, and are often criminalized for crossing the border or for being labeled sex or irregular workers;

- Although violence drives people to migrate, peace allows them to thrive and enrich their communities. Countries are dependent on each other, and that should generate collaboration, not exploitation.

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:

- Protect those most vulnerable victims of human trafficking, such as women and children, and work with government authorities and lawmakers on prioritizing the victim's safety and general well being, punishing only the traffickers, rather than the survivors;
- Make people aware of the traumas being suffered by trafficked people and forced migrants, in order for them to adapt to society and to help them heal and recover;
- Promote development programs, including employment and job creation programs, both in the sending and receiving countries, in order to maximize the positive impact of international migration and solve the underlying problems that cause both forced migration and human trafficking, such as: economic vulnerability, social inequalities, marginalization, exclusion and criminality;
- Unify our efforts to integrate human security and integral development in national security policies, including the recognition and protection of all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights, while promoting peaceful coexistence, in recognition of the prime role of migration in the comprehensive development of sending and receiving societies, thus avoiding the criminalization of migrants as a way of regulating immigration flows;
- Support countries of destination to ratify international conventions and treaties on migration, especially the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members their Families;
- Promoting the establishment of means for trafficked people to remain in the country they want to, in order to recover and reestablish their lives, as well as overcome the traumas suffered in a way for them to thrive;
- Take punishment of the migrant out of the means when dealing with irregular immigration or workers; as well as intergovernmental relations, where punishment of other countries often becomes punishment of its people;
- Revise the visa that ties temporary workers to just one employer, as it makes them unable to move freely when problems are encountered, and makes them vulnerable tying their status to one company;
- Take measures to eradicate systemic racism in both the countries of origin and countries of destination. Systemic racism, discrimination and persecution make people vulnerable to human trafficking and irregular migration;

- Pressure countries to respect international treaties and human rights, putting human dignity and life above capital gains.