

## ACTORS' VOICES

CONFERENCE CYCLE ON MIGRATION FLOWS: CRISIS, RECIPROCITY AND HUMAN SECURITY

### DECLARATION OF VALENCIA

On May 24 and 25, 2012, the Conference Cycle on Migration Flows: Crisis, Reciprocity and Human Security, was held in Valencia, Spain. Participants included representatives from government institutions as well as researchers from the Southern and Northern hemispheres.

The goal of this meeting was to reflect on two aspects of public migration policies in the context of a severe international economic crisis: on the one hand, help demystify some of the most deeply-rooted concepts that criminalize migrants under a discourse of “national security” and, on the other, provide solid arguments that allow us to place human rights at the center of a comprehensive and progressive migration policy.

The principles and proposals derived from this cycle of conferences are contained in the Declaration of Valencia, which outlines the major concepts and approaches shared by an outstanding group of international experts on migration and human mobility.

#### 1. International migration and shared responsibility

Migration in the globalized era challenges us to work toward the construction of a universal citizenship. The recognition of this civilizing proclamation in both its rights and duties constitutes an unavoidable challenge, and demands the design and promotion of progressive and coherent public policies that uphold equality and the fundamental rights of all human beings.

Given this situation, it is essential that we acknowledge the fact that globalization, far from promoting balanced and harmonious development among nations and peoples, has deepened asymmetries between countries and increased social inequality in an extreme manner. Contemporary migration takes place in a context where, unfortunately, the human and labor rights of migrants, as well as those of the bulk of the

native population, have been relegated to the background. This greatly limits the scope and potential of integration policies that transcend the intentions of Governments committed to collective welfare and harmonic social coexistence.

## 2. Interculturality as a process of human coexistence

Only the open promotion of intercultural coexistence between culturally diverse groups and identities—one that goes beyond a mere acknowledgment of and respect for differences—will enable the construction of an open and egalitarian society. In an increasingly globalized world, it is imperative that we look beyond the limitations of nationalism. Only horizontal relationships that help close the gaps of social inequality will avoid hierarchies among cultures, races, ethnic groups, religious groups, and social classes.

## 3.- Migration and uneven development

The phenomenon of migration is inherent to human existence. However, the right to freedom of movement has been suppressed under globalization. The asymmetric free flow of capital and goods is promoted while human flow is restricted and criminalized. This is taking place at a time of deepening social inequalities where there is growing pressure to emigrate, particularly in countries and towns located in the Southern hemisphere. As a corollary and paradoxically, the vulnerability and risks inherent to migration are increasing during an age of remarkable developments in the fields of transport and media. This combination of circumstances has led to the emergence of organized mafias that profit from human trafficking.

We must therefore address the root of this problem rather than merely combat some of its worst effects, such as human trafficking. We must promote—locally, nationally and multilaterally—a solid ethical foundation based on universal, widely shared values that protects and safeguards the dignity of individuals, the foundational element of human security.

## 4.- Migration and citizen rights

Migrants living in an irregular situation are subject to different forms of

exploitation and barred from accessing citizen rights. Migration policies should prioritize the regularization of all those people who are in an irregular administrative situation. In this regard, free residence in spaces of regional integration constitutes a remarkable advancement in the process of recognizing the “expanded citizenship” of individuals and their contributions to human development.

#### 5.- Migrants and their families

Given that the family is one of the pillars of society, the right to form and be part of one must be considered a fundamental right. The improvement of family living conditions and access to reunification must be prioritized, especially when the family has been fragmented as a result of migration. Procedures for family reunification are often the culmination and not the start of a long and winding process that involves the procurement of work and residential permits, as well as the means to provide an adequate livelihood. This is compounded by the false dilemma between integration and transnationalism, a product of prevalent assimilationist approaches that characterize migration policy, particularly in host countries and societies.

#### 6. Second and third generations

Immigrant integration is a continuous process. We must therefore promote a regulatory framework that protects the rights of newly arrived immigrants and prevents inequality and social exclusion among second and third generations.

Children and young people have the right to a future that guarantees equality and no ethnic, racial or religious discrimination based on their parents’ origin or affiliation. If the host society refuses to acknowledge their abilities and bars all prospects of social mobility, then we need to promote public policies that will change this and encourage the common good.

The current welfare of the second and third generations is the mirror that reflects the future of all.

## 7.- Migration and crisis

The economic and civilization crisis that afflicts humanity evidences the failure of the prevailing globalization model. Blaming immigrants for the crisis, regardless of their status, is absurd, unsustainable, and leads to their victimization. Turning migrants into scapegoats for the crisis is not only a senseless but irresponsible attitude that, in exchange for short-term political success, threatens the future of societies and promotes division and sterile interracial and ethnic confrontations, increasing intolerance, alienation and social decay.