

NEWS RELEASE



YOUNG PEOPLE WE CARE (YPWC)

..... Informing, Educating, Empowering and Engaging Youth to Change the World!



Civil Society Day

Ghana's Voice at the Civil Society Day of the Global Forum on Migration and Development 9th July, 2007

Ghana was represented at the recently concluded Civil Society Day of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Brussels, Belgium by youth delegate Michael Boampong from Young People We Care, which is a youth led organization that works to inspire youth to become involved in issues that affect them.

Prior to the Civil Society Day, an online multilingual consultative discussion forum was organized by the King Baudouin Foundation and the Global Youth Action Network, a youth led organization. The goal of Civil Society Day was to provide input for the agenda-setting process and to offer expert advice to contribute directly to the debates of the day. Michael emphasizes, "The Final report of the online discussions and the Civil Society Day documents represents a voice of today's global youth and addresses how youth led organizations and other interested can and should be a major force in strategies at address the issue of migration for the derivation of its total beneficial impact on today's global order."

The Report of the GMFD's Civil Society Day--a primary outcome of the Forum--was drafted by a drafting committee of more than 200 civil society representatives who attended the Civil Society Day on 9th July, and other interested people. The Report was presented to these civil society representatives and more importantly to government representatives following governmental discussions on July 10th and 11th.

Some best practices and recommendations which are worthy of engagement by the Government of Ghana, Civil Society Organizations, International Institutions, and especially youth groups, include strategies for enhancing diaspora resources to benefit development. A version of this project has been initiated in the Philippines in the creation of the Philippine Consortium on Migration and Development (Philcomdev). This is a network of migrant and family organizations, NGOs, cooperatives, microfinance organizations, social enterprises, trade unions, as well as networks both in the Philippines and abroad which are involved in the issues of migration and development. Governments are urged to set up consultation processes with all stakeholders (various government departments, civil society organizations, trade unions, employers' organizations, the private sector, academia, migrants' organizations as well as faith-based organizations) at national, regional and international levels prior to the GFMD meeting in Manila. Governments and civil society actors should work together to bring about migrants' rights and economic interests. More public awareness must be created concerning the role of the private sector. For example, information should be provided for people who want to return – for example, what are the opportunities that exist? There should be linkages between the educational sector and the private sector so that the former actually provide skills that are needed.

More importantly, the media should play an important role in portraying positive images of migration and the contribution made by highly skilled migrants.

Workers should be informed about their rights, for example through pre-departure and post-arrival training. Recruitment agencies need to be regulated, as do their sub-contractors. The concept of "portable justice" – ensuring that workers who have returned to their countries of origin still have means to enforce their labour rights if have suffered from exploitation or abuse in countries of destination – should be recognized

Governments of both participating nations and the host nation for the GFMD 2008, the UN and/or private donors should support national, regional, intra-regional civil society consultations, networks and/or platforms that could feed into the global process and additionally facilitate the visa acquisition and the participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Manila.

Taking a step further in policy recommendation, there should be a clear, coherent, transparent, and consultative formulation of development policies at national to international levels should be publicly disseminated so that migrants and civil society are informed and can intervene with the policy. Civil society, migrants, non-state experts (e.g. legal, developmental) can help formulate model policies. Also Migrants should participate in policy formulation through institutional channels of representation/consultation, e.g. advisory committees in governments in which migrants are represented.

Recommendations from Online Discussions place much emphasis on the need for the incorporation of Migration education into the school curriculum as well as an effective media campaign into the development policy and planning in order to let young people in particular be aware of information such as the realities of illegal migration. Secondly, there should be stronger commitment towards developing incentives to encourage recruitment, retention and return of health workers. Thirdly, one participant mentioned that the current Visa acquisition procedure for young people in developing countries does not encourage young people to travel legally and called for this procedure to be revised for youth in particular to travel frequently on legal and temporary migration programmes. Fourthly, CSOs from countries of origin should work together with diaspora organizations so that they can gather information on the conditions in the destination country and include them in their campaigns to raise awareness. Finally, there is the need for the private sector to establish investment opportunities targeting remittances, perhaps by offering higher dividends for investments in foreign currencies.

The organization Young People We Care (YPWC) argued that temporary labour migration should be promoted because it helps eradicate poverty, because the migrants are most likely to be independent entrepreneurs who are no longer dependent on government support. However, for this to be successful, labour migrants need to be able to acquire new skills when they are in the country of destination.

The youth from Young People We Care believe that by taking a holistic approach, it should be possible to formulate migration and development policies that are interlinked and that reinforce each other. This would involve policy and coordination to ensure coherence at all levels. The concept of youth participation is more crucial at all levels and can be more meaningfully realised in structures where youth can be more effectively involved not just in the implementation or consultation on the facets of Youth Migration, but also in significant decision-making capacities. Youth are the largest untapped resources that have much potential just waiting to be unleashed. Programs like the Youth in Migration and Development Project of YPWC have demonstrated the capability of young people.

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