



**United Nations Educational, Scientific,
and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Chairmanship
Summary Report
Chair: July– December 2011
Acting Chair: January – May 2012**

Introduction

UNESCO's work on migration is rooted in the Organization's mandate to promote international peace and mutual respect. The Organization emphasizes the human face of migration by addressing the social implications of the movement and displacement of people in its fields of competence, paying increasing attention to the perspectives of the most disadvantaged groups.

UNESCO's Director-General, Mrs. Irina Bokova, chaired the GMG from July to December 2011, and continued as its interim Chair from January to May 2012. During this period, UNESCO worked on three fronts. From a thematic viewpoint, increased visibility was given to migration and environmental change. The GMG made important progress in deepening the interrelation between the movements and displacement of peoples as a result of environmental degradation. At the institutional level, UNESCO's Chair saw the launching of a thorough review of the GMG aimed at increasing coherence and programmatic synergies. Its outcomes are expected to shape the vision and functioning of the Group for the years to come. Finally, a key consideration throughout UNESCO's Chair was the preservation of the continuity of work of the GMG thus ensuring solid linkages with the preceding Chair of UNICEF. This involved in particular the continuation of work on data and research and the mainstreaming of migration in the global agenda for sustainable development. It also pursued research on understanding the flow and features of youth migration.

In addition, UNESCO convened two Principals' meetings: on 15 November 2011 in Paris and on 12 April 2012 in Geneva. The latter was the first to be attended by the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. It also organized several working level meetings and ensured the coordination of the daily work of the GMG, convening teleconferences and coordinating the preparation of working documents. UNESCO attended on behalf of the GMG the fifth meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) held on 1-2 December 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Beyond the work directly connected to the GMG, UNESCO pursued its partnership with the Max Planck Institute for the publication of two issues of the electronic journal *Diversities*.¹ The journal aims at providing a platform for international, interdisciplinary and policy-related social science research in the fields of migration, multicultural policies and human rights. The issues published in

¹ The electronic journal *Diversities* succeeded in 2010 the *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* that was published by UNESCO since 1998. All issues of *Diversities* can be accessed by clicking on the following link:
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/resources/periodicals/diversities/about-diversities/>

2011 and 2012 were dedicated to *Language and Superdiversities* and to *Skilled Migration and Brain Drain* respectively.

I. Thematic focus: Migration and Climate Change

The relationship between environmental change and migration is an emerging issue on the global policy agenda. The GMG worked during UNESCO's Chair to explore the linkages between environment, human settlement and population movement. The issues underlying environmentally-induced migration are multidimensional, including gender, economic and human development, urbanism, housing, public health, employment, education at large and particularly the issue of recognition of diplomas, as well as governance questions. In addition, the population movements associated with global environmental change are often taking place in a context marked by conflict, underdevelopment, inequalities within and among countries, human rights abuses, such as human trafficking and other forms of exploitation, outdated legal frameworks and the lack of solidarity between states. Increased displacements and resettlement of migrants linked to environmental change, including climate change, will have real impacts on all members of society, both in urban and rural settings, whether in the country of origin, destination or transit.

In July 2011, UNESCO published a book entitled "Migration and Climate Change" in cooperation with Cambridge University Press.² This publication addresses the misconceptions associated with environmental change, including climate change. Authors draw upon empirical evidence of case studies from countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil and Nepal to highlight major concerns, in particular deterioration in the enjoyment of human rights, and provide recommendations for policy-makers at local, national and international levels. The book is considered the first authoritative UN report on the subject.

At the fall 2011 Principals' meeting, the GMG members endorsed a *Joint Statement on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration* that was presented by UNESCO's Director-General.³ The Statement was ground-breaking as it was the first common position on this issue adopted at the level of the United Nations. It recognizes that migration and displacement resulting from environmental degradation and climate change are a global challenge that requires international action. It forwards clear recommendations: to strengthen human rights and improve the livelihoods of those affected; to assist the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in integrating climate change and migration into national development strategies; and to address the normative gaps that exist for the protection of those affected. The Statement has been widely distributed in relevant international fora and conferences.

Climate change and its impact on migration was the main focus of the message conveyed by UNESCO on behalf of the GMG at the fifth meeting of the GFMD (Geneva, 1-2 December 2011).⁴ At the occasion of the GFMD meeting, UNESCO also participated in a side event organized by the United Kingdom Government Office for Science on "Migration and Global Environmental Change".

² More information on the book *Migration and Climate Change* is available on the following web-page:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/sv11/news/migration_and_climate_change_a_unesco_publication_on_one_of_the_greatest_challenges_facing_our_time/

³ The text of the *Joint Statement on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration* can be found on the following address:

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/GMG_statement.pdf

⁴ More information on UNESCO's participation in the GFMD of December 2011 in its capacity of GMG Chair is available on:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/taking_action_on_migration_and_development/

II. Institutional Advancements

a. Internal GMG review process

While the GMG has made significant progress since its establishment in 2006, it faced challenges both with regard to its structure, in particular regarding its secretariat, as well as to its functioning in view of the evolving international priorities and processes. Against this background and mindful of the upcoming preparations for the second High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, to be held during the 68th session of the General Assembly in October 2013, the Principals' meeting of spring 2012 agreed to undertake a review of the GMG.

A GMG working level meeting, on 29 May 2012, decided on a three-stage process. The first phase consisted of summarizing by means of a questionnaire the GMG's major achievements, challenges and recommendations for action. This phase was completed during UNESCO's chairmanship with 14 out of 16 GMG agencies responding to the questionnaire. The second provided an overview of existing interagency coordination mechanisms on other cross-cutting issues. During the third phase, recommendations reflecting the information gathered in the first two phases and joint positions of the GMG agencies were formulated and endorsed by the Principals at their fall 2012 meeting. The last two phases were coordinated by UNODC with the active involvement of UNESCO as member of the troika in its capacity of outgoing Chair.

b. Evolution of the GMG-GFMD relationship

As Chair of GMG, UNESCO acted as a focal point to channel requests for GMG's support to the 2011 GFMD. At the fall 2011 meeting, the Principals extensively discussed the proposal made by Mr. Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Migration, to establish a permanent GMG Secretariat supporting the GFMD. On that occasion, ways to strengthen the GMG's involvement in the GFMD were also discussed. UNICEF circulated among all GMG members an internal discussion paper about future steps for the GMG, which included proposals to integrate and coordinate GMG and GFMD activities towards the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. The GFMD consolidated assessment paper of September 2012 welcomed a closer cooperation at a formal and informal level. Following that, the Principals agreed in November 2012 to pursue discussions on possible collaboration alternatives at the working level during the GMG retreat held in February 2013.

III. Ensuring the Continuity of the Work of GMG

a. Mainstreaming migration into national development strategies

The issue was put forward by a working group co-chaired by UNDP and IOM. Among others, it contributed to the organization of an event on migration mainstreaming in the context of the 2011 GFMD process (Moldova, 12-13 October) with participation from governments, civil society and representatives of the GMG. Following a survey conducted among the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) the working group developed a *Guidance and Tools Package* for UNCTs.⁵ The GMG Handbook on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning has been used as a key tool for these processes.

⁵ The Package is available at : <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/en/migration-guidance-and-tools-package-for-united-nations-country-teams>

b. Data and research

One of the most important objectives of the GMG is to improve data collection and quantitative evidence in the field of migration, as this is crucial to designing and implementing effective programmes. Following earlier initiatives, this agenda was advanced through a working group on data and research chaired by UNDESA which continued its work under UNESCO Chair. The group coordinated its activities with the GFMD Ad-hoc Working Group on Policy Coherence, Data, and Research.

c. Youth, adolescents and migration

Under UNESCO Chair, the GMG pursued work on a Thematic Report on “Youth, Migration and Human Rights.” This report, spearheaded by UNICEF, focuses on the opportunities and challenges posed by international migration for youth and adolescents in countries of origin, transit and destination. Applying a multidimensional approach, inputs from almost all GMG members, as well as academic and civil society partners, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Migrants, and OECD have been incorporated. Human rights and gender are addressed as cross-cutting considerations throughout the report.

UNESCO contributed a chapter about the recognition of diplomas and its interactions with migration. The paper first looks into the trends of student mobility. It further provides an overview of the existing framework on quality provisions and credentials recognition of cross-border education, looking particularly at UNESCO’s work relating to the six regional conventions on the recognition of studies and qualifications, and outlines good collaboration practices and current challenges in student mobility. UNESCO also took an active part in the elaboration of a chapter on civic and political participation. The publication will be finalized and play an important role in the run-up to the 2013 High-Level Dialogue.