

**Opening Remarks by Dr. Mourad Wahba,
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*Launch Seminar
Mediterranean edition
OSCE-IOM-ILO Handbook on Effective Labour Migration Policies,
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Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to introduce this *Mediterranean edition of the OSCE-IOM-ILO Handbook on Labour Migration Policies*, both in the name of ILO, and on behalf of the entire United Nations family in Morocco.

Indeed, migration has become one of the key challenges for development, for social cohesion, and for international cooperation in today's world. Thus it has naturally become increasingly central to the agenda of the United Nations and to its numerous specialized agencies whose concerns are touched by migration. As example of this concern, the High Level Dialogue at last year's UN General Assembly focused on migration and development. Labour migration was the topic of the General Discussion at the International Labour Conference in 2004.

The close links between migration and economic, social and cultural development, cannot be overemphasized. Migrant workers and their families are actors in development, in both destination and origin countries. They contribute skills, labour, knowledge and initiative to the progress of host countries. They likewise contribute through their remittances, investments and

the return of talent, to improving human capital and local economies in their respective home countries.

ILO figures show that migration today is essentially about work, about production of the world's goods and services –and thus the reproduction of capital. Of the 191 million people living outside their countries of birth or citizenship, some 90 to 95 million of this number are economically active—employed, self-employed or otherwise engaged in remunerative activity. Engaged in the world of work.

Migration is central to the global agendas of employment creation, decent work and social dialogue. Mobility of workers is essential to globalization's future possibilities to assure access to labour, distribution of income and wealth, and economic productivity worldwide. Contradictions deriving from “security” driven restrictions on labour mobility, protection and organizing may lead to deteriorated security and conditions from some migrant workers and their families. Certainly, as ILO studies have documented, high rates of labour market discrimination against migrant workers marginalizes them and undermines social cohesion.

Enhancing the development contributions of migration is a policy imperative for governments of origin and destination countries alike. The very supply and demand pressures driving international labour mobility need to be acknowledged and addressed if labour migration is to be effectively regulated. This is especially important to the extent that supply side migration pressures result from the absence of adequate employment opportunities and decent work in countries of origin. Meanwhile, deteriorating environmental conditions due to unsustainable land-use, climate change and other factors are reducing the resource base on which agrarian communities depend for their livelihoods, thus forcing people to migrate to survive.

Promotion of the rule of law and of respect for diversity are the starting points for assuring economic development, democratic societies and social cohesion in the long run. Achieving these in the context of migration are responsibilities where governments and social partners have especially crucial roles to play.

Migration policy and practice can only be viable and effective when they are based on a firm foundation of legal norms, and thus operate under the rule of law. The necessary framework for national law on migration is amply laid in the two ILO conventions on migration, the ILO Migration for Employment Convention of 1949 (No. 97) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No.143) together with the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families. These three instruments comprise an international charter on migration providing a broad normative framework covering treatment of migrants and inter-State cooperation on regulating migration.

Accommodating migration in the context of economic development, diversity and social change requires adhering to basic international human rights standards. It also requires addressing labour market needs and composition, ensuring decent work opportunities for all, enacting legislation and measure to combat discrimination and promote integration, and implementing accompanying measures.

That is precisely what this Handbook is about, providing the standards, guidelines and practical models of how to regulate labour migration in the day to day practice of governments, social partners and other stakeholders.

dimension of labour migration and the requisite policies needed in countries of origin and destination.

The content of this handbook requires much more time than the two short days of this seminar, but this event is a starting point for dialogue across this region.

In conclusion, I commend this Handbook to you as a comprehensive, timely and essential tool for your work to ensure that migration serves and benefits home countries, host countries and migrants themselves.