Migration and History

Section 1.3

Topics:

Migration in History
Migration in Recent Times
Developments and Challenges
This Section provides a historical context for the development of migration concepts and policy options. Topic One discusses milestones in world history and prehistory that involve the causes and effects of large scale migration. Topic Two outlines migratory activity and government actions after World War II. Topic Three concludes with a discussion of developments and challenges that affect international cooperation and migration policy making around the world.

**Learning Objectives**

- identify definitions and perspectives that are used to describe and discuss migration
- understand the complexity of migration in a historical context
- improve your ability to apply a variety of concepts to understand migration and history

**Background**

Migration historians agree that migratory flows have been, and continue to be, important vectors of social, economic, and cultural change. Although it is not possible to accurately determine how many persons were “migrants” at any particular point in history, evidence of co-existing sedentary and migratory lifestyles can be found in all periods of world history.

The legal and administrative foundation for modern immigration was developed in the late nineteenth century. The Second World War is often identified as another important watershed in migration history. A large number of people took advantage of migration programmes established by the United States, Canada, Australia, and Argentina. A migration industry developed to administer
heavily subsidized travel schemes and transport logistics and to manage the promotion, recruitment, and selection of migrants.

Social change is an important and lasting impact that migration has had on all countries of destination. Previously homogeneous societies have undergone change and have evolved into complex multicultural societies. In some countries, this has been seen as appropriate and even desirable, while in others it is the subject of much debate.

Today, governments face increasing migration management challenges as migratory behaviour becomes more and more prevalent and globalized. In 1965, there were some 75 million migrants worldwide. By 2002, that number had grown to 175 million. In 1965, only a small number of countries were identified as “countries of destination”. Today, almost every country is the recipient of some migration, and the traditional classification of countries affected by migration into countries of origin, transit, and destination is now largely meaningless since most countries now send migrants, receive migrants, or have migrants pass through their points of entry.

Guiding Questions

1. How has the approach to migration policy development in your setting been influenced by one or more of the historical factors identified in this Section?

2. To what extent are new concepts and models for managing migration needed now or in the near future?

3. What definition of migration is needed to capture the variety and complexity of migration phenomena?
Key Message

Migratory flows have been, and continue to be, important vectors of social, economic, and cultural change. The relationship between migration and history is dynamic. Migration has made history, and history has created the circumstances for varied and complex forms of migration. Migration is part of history, and history is part of migration.

Lessons from migration and history are valuable for migration managers who will address the challenges and opportunities of migration in an increasingly mobile world.

Terms and Concepts

Asylum-seeker
A person whose request or application for asylum has not been finally decided on by a prospective country of refuge

Diaspora
Communities of migrants settled permanently in countries other than those where they were born, but who are aware of their country of origin and continue to maintain links with their country of origin. A diaspora is defined as both a dispersion of people from their original homeland and as the community formed by such a people in other countries. (Greek: scattered abroad, dispersion)

Guest worker
A foreigner who is permitted to work in a country on a temporary basis

Indentured labour
Work under a restrictive contract of employment for a fixed period in a foreign country in exchange for payment of passage, accommodation, and food. Conditions for indentured workers were usually very poor. During the term of indenture (usually between four and seven years), the worker was not allowed to change employer, although the employer could sell the remaining period of indenture, much as a slave could be sold.
Migration
The movement of a person or group of persons from one geographical unit to another across an administrative or political border, who wish to settle definitively or temporarily in a place other than their place of origin.

Pendular movement
Movement from a more or less fixed base to an outpost and back again, or less precisely defined circuits or itineraries in search of food, for example, or to conduct trade.
Topic One

Migration and History

The literature on migration contains general statements including: “Migration is one of the historical forces that have shaped the world”; “Migration has always been a part of human behaviour”; “Migration is a natural phenomenon as old as history itself”. These broad generalizations have some validity, but they are not based on a clear definition of migration, and they do not explain the causes and effects of migration phenomena.

While it is no doubt true that people have always “migrated” in the broadest sense of the word, from one settlement to another, from village to village, and from town to town, it would be a mistake to assume that migration as it is practiced or experienced today is the same as it has been in the past. The word “migration” may conceal many shades and complexities of meaning.

Section 1.1, Terminology, provides more information on terms and typologies used to describe migration.

Important Points

1 “Migration” is a term that has been used to describe the movement of people in very different contexts and situations, including invasion, conquest, displacement under force of arms, flight from natural disaster, mercantile outreach, colonial settlement, and even slavery. The more familiar and modern understanding of migration, as the movement of individuals or families usually for economic or social purposes, has come to the foreground in contemporary usage.

2 The generic term “migration” covers a wide range of behaviours that may or may not be relevant to the concept of migration as it is understood today by most people, or as it is defined in national laws and regulations. Generic references to migration often refer as much to permanent population relocations as to nomadic habits of existence built around periodic shifts in places of residence. Nomadic habits may be “pendular” movements (typically of a seasonal nature) from a more or less fixed base to an outpost and back again, or less precisely defined circuits or itineraries, for example, to search for food or to conduct trade.
Saying that migration is an age-old form of behaviour is not the same as saying that in the past most human beings were migrants. It is probably impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy how many persons were “migrants” at any point in history and how many were not. The reality is probably that sedentary and migratory lifestyles have always co-existed as options, and people have chosen between them.

The term “natural” when applied to migration is problematic. On the one hand, it suggests “voluntary”, or “rational”, and therefore rules out all forms of forced migration. On the other hand, “natural migration” may be taken to imply, quite misleadingly, that those who decide not to move are somehow making an “unnatural” or “irrational” choice. To say that “Migration is a natural phenomenon as old as history itself” raises more questions rather than answers.

What You Need To Know About...

Prehistoric Migration

There is wide agreement among historians and anthropologists that major climatic shifts would have provided the impetus for large-scale migratory flows. While we do not know exactly how prehistoric populations moved over the earth’s surface, in Europe, for instance, there would have been movement southward to escape the spread of ice sheets during periods of glaciation, and reverse migration northward after the glaciers melted.

Evidence of early mass migrations has been found virtually all over the world. It is believed, for instance, that both North and South America received migrants from Asia, in several successive waves via a land bridge across what is now the Bering Strait. Early myths and legends in many parts of the world often refer not only to ancestors who came from afar, but also to the push factors (e.g. natural disasters) that led them to leave their place of origin, or the pull factors (e.g. the lure of adventure) that beckoned them on. In either case, reference is often made to the knowledge they came with or the skills they brought to their new locations.
Language similarities in a large number of countries in Asia and Europe point to the gradual dispersal across vast distances of people of common stock who shared a common original Indo-European language.

Significant population movements were seaborne, as in the case of Australian aborigines, who travelled from South Asia through South East Asia before reaching the Australian mainland.

South East Asia is also seen as the point of departure of two other, long-distance, migratory flows, one of which went west and can be traced to Madagascar, while the second went east until it reached the islands of the Pacific.

What You Need To Know About...

Conquests, Invasions, and Population Transfers

No nation on earth can claim to have remained unchanged, or even to have always lived in the same place. Recorded history, from the very earliest times, attests to the prevalence of population movements. To study the early history of Western Europe, for example, is to follow flows and counter flows of tribes - East from the steppes of Central Asia, South from the Baltic regions, then giving rise to ever more complex population exchanges in response to survival needs, or demographic change, political circumstances, or military strategy.

In many cases, migration was a consequence of military conquests.

The Mongol empire, for example, started with the conquest of China. Then, as it grew westward, it paved the way for vast migratory movements reaching deeply into Afghanistan, Persia, Asia Minor, Syria, and much of Eastern Europe. A few centuries later, the creation of another mighty empire, the Ottoman, was accompanied by other large migration flows from Central Asia, through Asia Minor, culminating in the capture of Constantinople.

Such large population shifts were not restricted to Asia or Europe. In Africa, the Bantus are known to have left their original home in Central Africa and spread out west and then further on right to the tip of Southern Africa.
All of these population transfers helped shape the modern world by producing profound and lasting changes in lifestyle, language and culture, social and economic structures, and political and administrative systems.

What You Need To Know About...

The Age of Exploration and Colonial Migration

Migration historians agree that a crucial turning point in the history of migration occurred about 500 years ago with the voyages undertaken by European explorers that led initially to the discovery of “new worlds” such as the Americas and Asia, and then on to the development of colonial endeavours.

The most important factors influencing transoceanic migration were mercantile and strategic. All major European economic and political powers competed for access to supplies of much sought after commodities and control of strategic locations.

A number of factors combined to create the appropriate conditions for what was to become an unprecedented flow of transoceanic migration:

- the gathering of detailed and reliable geographical knowledge
- the production of accurate maps
- the introduction of new technology, including navigational instruments, and larger, safer, and faster seagoing vessels – first under sail, later powered by steam.

Large numbers of men and women went to the Americas, then Asia and Africa as migrants/settlers. Some of these people had already moved from one country to another within Europe. Convicts, soldiers, farmers, traders, artisans, administrators, and priests migrated and served ever growing trading, mining, and agricultural enterprises.

As production needs increased in the new colonies, labour shortages were met through the development of an entirely new kind of international migration: the slave trade. Some researchers consider modern labour migration to have started at that point. The first slave ships sailed from Africa to the West Indies in the mid-Sixteenth Century, and over the next two centuries, some 15 million slaves were transported to the Americas, with others going to the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. During that period, slave labour was crucial to the cultivation of agricultural products such as cotton, tobacco, and sugar, as well as to the mining of precious metals. The slave trade was organized along a triangular pattern. Chartered ships would carry manufactured goods – especially guns – to “facto-
ries” or fortified trading places along the coast, where they would be exchanged for slaves abducted by local traders. The slaves would then be taken and sold to colonial settlements in North or South America, not infrequently with loss of life on the way. The cash from the sales would then be used to purchase agricultural products for the trip home.

Following the abolition of the slave trade in the mid-nineteenth century, another system of labour migration emerged—contractual/contracted labour. In theory, indentured labourers were workers who had accepted a contract to work for a specific period of time overseas. In practice, their condition was not far removed from that of a slave, and sometimes may have been worse. Wages were meagre, work discipline harshly enforced, and general living standards very poor.

Example

Indentured labourers – better known in Asia as coolies – came mostly from India and China, but smaller numbers were drawn from Pacific Islands to work in Australian sugar cane plantations. They went to many and scattered destinations in the West Indies, Africa, North America, islands in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia, to work in plantations, to build road and railways, and to provide domestic service. It is estimated that during the century following the official end of slavery, over 30 million such workers were taken abroad from the Indian sub-continent. About 24 million eventually returned home. The others stayed on as settlers, and their descendants make up a significant proportion of the contemporary Indian diaspora in the West Indies and the Caribbean.

What You Need To Know About...

The Industrial Revolution and Its Impact

The emergence of new industrial technologies, the mechanization of means of production, and the consolidation of industrial activity, all contributed to the displacement of large numbers of people. The practice of indenture was gradually discontinued from the end of the nineteenth century, but the wealth accumulated in Western Europe through colonial exploitation was to provide the foundation for an industrial revolution that would, in turn, create the impetus for a period of renewed and intense migratory activity. Instant fortunes were rarely achieved, but a wide range of opportunities for economic improvement was available on farms and cattle ranches, on road and railway construction sites, or in fast-growing industrial complexes. Agricultural workers and tradespersons found in migration, if not a solution to their predicament, then at least a hope for one.

The numbers involved were huge. Between 1846 and 1890, around 17 million left Europe for the New
World. Of these, by far the largest number came from the British Isles.

**Example**

This was partly because Britain was one of the first countries to feel the impact of the industrial revolution, and also because large numbers left Ireland following the potato famine of 1845-47. The German territories also provided large numbers of migrants in this period – around 3.5 million impelled by rural poverty and periodic crop failures.

The peak of migration was around the turn of the century. Over the whole period—1846 to 1939—well over 50 million people had left Europe. Major destinations were United States (38 million); Canada (7 million); Argentina (7 million); Brazil (4.6 million); Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (2.5 million).

Over the same period, there was considerable migration within Europe.

**Example**

Even while large numbers were leaving Europe, others were arriving in search of work or asylum. While a majority of Irish migrants went to the USA or Australia, some 700,000 went next door to England, Wales, or Scotland to find employment in the factories or construction. Between 1875 and 1914, 120,000 Jews fled the pogroms of Russia and found asylum in Britain.

Significant migrant inflows, notably from Poland and Ukraine were recorded in Germany, where they worked as agricultural workers to take the place of local farmhands who had found more remunerative employment in the heavy industries of the Ruhr valley. Many of these migrants worked under strictly enforced time-limited contracts, precursors to a later generation of guest workers.

The foundation for modern immigration legal and administrative frameworks was laid during this period. The first United States general immigration statute was passed by Congress in 1882 and reflected a clear desire to identify with as high a degree of precision as possible those who could and those who could not enter the country. Criteria for entry were spelled out and the Act specifically prohibited the entry of convicts, insane persons, and persons likely to become public charges. Australia and Canada promulgated similar legislation.
Apply What You Have Learned

1. When were modern administrative and legal frameworks for immigration introduced in your setting?

2. How did the industrial revolution affect your State or its predecessors?

3. What role did the slave trade play in the history of migration in your setting?

4. What events in history caused the most significant migration(s) in your setting?

5. What definition of migration would you recommend for migration management today?
Migration in Recent Times

The period between the two World Wars was one of reduced international migrations. This was due, in part to economic stagnation, and in part to the general climate of uncertainty and insecurity. In the depression of the 1930s, migrant workers were seen as competitors for scarce jobs, and levels of hostility toward them rose. Governments of destination countries responded by introducing legislation authorizing tighter control of entry procedures, restricting employment possibilities for foreigners, and introducing strict penalties against the employment of irregular migrants.

The Second World War is often identified as another important watershed in migration history. The devastation created in Europe by the war contributed directly or indirectly to the displacement within the continent of between 1 and 2 million persons. Many of these people were refugees who had been victims of persecution or had had to flee persecution. Some found a new place of residence in Europe. Immediately after the Second World War, for example, the British Government offered work permits to 90,000 workers from refugee camps in various locations. Others moved to Belgium, France, and the Netherlands.

One lasting impact that migration has had on all countries of destination everywhere has been social change, as previously homogeneous societies have undergone change and have evolved into complex multicultural societies. In certain countries, this has been seen as appropriate and even desirable, while in others it is the subject of much debate.

Important Points

1. A very large proportion of people displaced by World War II took advantage of the migration programmes established by the United States, Canada, Australia, and Argentina. These countries saw migration as an appropriate way to enlarge their population bases and to generally increase their workforce capabilities at a time when these countries wished to take full advantage of the post-war economic boom. “Populate or perish” was one of the slogans commonly used by migration programme proponents to launch major infrastructure development projects, for example, dams, hydroelectric plants, and irrigation systems.
A “migration industry” developed to support aspects of the migration process to these countries, including promotion, recruitment and selection, administration of heavily subsidized travel schemes, and transport logistics. Large reception centres were built, and training programmes were established to facilitate initial settlement and adaptation to new life and work surroundings.

For at least two decades after the end of the war, these large-scale immigration programmes relied almost exclusively on the willingness of Europeans to detach themselves from their war-affected surroundings and start new lives abroad. Legislation and programme criteria were specifically formulated to enable migration from Europe and to restrict migration from other parts of the world.

By the mid-1960s, the numbers of applicants for immigration began to fall, and selection criteria were gradually adjusted to allow applications to be received from non-European countries.

By the mid-1970s, migration programme objectives had been adjusted to focus less on the ethnic origin of the applicants and more on their qualifications, skills, and work experience.

Both the demographic makeup and the social composition of the receiving societies were substantially transformed. It is also certain that lifestyles and values underwent significant change. On the economic side, positions are more nuanced, but the weight of opinion inclines toward the view that countries of destination benefited from economic growth, and that countries of origin were helped as much by the migration of surplus labour as by the remittances they sent back. There has been much subsequent debate about the net impact of these migratory flows on the economic and social fabric of the countries concerned.

Section 2.3, Migration and Development, and Section 2.4, Migration and Trade, provide greater detail on this debate.

What You Need To Know About...

*The Emergence of Modern Temporary Migration Issues*

The highly industrialized countries of Western Europe turned to temporary labour to a lesser or greater extent between 1945 and 1973. European economies, after a sluggish start, found their way back to solid economic growth. The first consequence of that was a slowing down of the flow of emigrants out of Europe and toward the traditional countries of destination, and encouragement
of active relocation within the European region of workers seeking to take advantage of rapid job creation in countries such as Germany, France, Belgium, and Switzerland.

Some workers were recruited under the terms of formal bilateral agreements; many others moved spontaneously.

Guest workers, as they came to be known, were subject to fairly strict entry, residential, and employment conditions. Lengths of stay, job changing, and family reunion were closely regulated, although concessions were introduced in time. The prevailing policy objective was to meet labour market needs, especially in the unskilled or semi-skilled sectors, and it was considered that this was best achieved by labour contracted to work for a defined period, followed by return home. Permanent migration was not considered desirable or even necessary.

Integration within the workforce was an accepted objective, but broader social integration was not. Seasonal work regimes were adhered to wherever it was possible. In the end, however, it proved impossible to prevent all guest workers from achieving residential status and/or reunion with their spouses and dependents, and the question of worker integration within the host community became a sensitive political issue.

Section 2.6, Migration and Labour, provides greater detail on the issues relating to labour migration. Section 2.5, Migration and Family, provides greater detail on the issues relating to family and family reunification.

What You Need To Know About...

The Emergence of Modern Refugee Protection Concerns

Refugees are not migrants in the usual sense because they move through compulsion, not on the basis of meaningful choice, and their immediate objective is to seek protection, not a migration outcome.

Refugees may also move within a broader mixed flow that includes both forced and voluntary movements. There are very few viable legal channels for regular migration, and persons who are not refugees are seeking to enter countries of their choice through the asylum channel because it is often the only entrance possibility effectively open to them.

The line between migrant and asylum-seeker progressively blurs in the public mind, just as does the distinction between migration control and refugee protection in the policies of states. The dilemma
for governments is all the more intense as migratory behaviour becomes more and more prevalent and globalized.

Section 3.5, *Refugee Protection*, discusses the identification and treatment of refugees in more detail.

### Apply What You Have Learned

1. How multicultural has your country become as a result of migration?

2. What lasting social changes has migration introduced in your setting?

3. What post World War II developments affected migration to and/or from your country?

4. How did the shift to skills as a criterion for admission to receiving countries affect trade and development in your State and region?

5. How has the management of temporary labour migration changed in your setting over the past fifty years? Ten years?

6. How can the distinction between migrant and asylum-seeker be maintained in migration policy?
Developments and Challenges

Migration issues, which were traditionally dealt with by States on a national or bilateral basis up to the end of the First World War, increasingly required a multilateral approach as the twentieth century advanced. During the 1920s and the 1930s, the League of Nations became a forum of choice for the discussion, design, and implementation of action to find durable solutions for those left displaced at the end of the First World War. In 1938, before the Second World War broke out, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) was set up with the objective of assisting the “persecuted minorities” escaping from Germany and Austria and to provide them with resettlement opportunities. It was followed by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), an organization created ad hoc to offer relief and rehabilitation services in areas devastated by war, and to care for the victims of war, especially displaced persons.

On 15 December 1946, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization (IRO), established as a non-permanent specialized agency of the United Nations to tackle the problem of refugees and displaced persons from all angles, identifying, registering, and classifying the people concerned, providing lasting solutions and delivering care and assistance.

IRO placement operations took one of three main forms: migration organized under government selection schemes; individual sponsorship (by acquaintances or private organizations in the receiving country); or placement with an employer whose needs matched the migrant’s qualifications. Working in close cooperation with governments, the IRO was successful in relocating many thousands of people.

The IRO was replaced in 1951 by UNHCR, a new organization with specific responsibility for refugee protection. That same year, an international conference—the Migration Conference—was held in Brussels, attended by representatives from 28 governments and many observers. One of its key recommendations was the establishment of an international mechanism to facilitate migratory movements out of Europe. This led to the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration (ICEM), which later became the International Committee on Migration, and finally, under a revised 1989 Constitution, the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Today, all governments are showing a willingness to acknowledge migration as an unavoidable feature of our contemporary world and to agree on the necessity of international cooperation to manage it effectively.
Important Points

1. The oil crisis of 1974 and the global economic recession that followed had a considerable impact on migration policies by lessening the demand for migrants in receiving countries that were no longer experiencing economic expansion. As a response to rapidly increasing unemployment rates, most Western European States brought their guest worker programmes to an end, while the US, Australia, and Canada adopted stricter and more restrictive migration selection procedures that placed more weight on employability and the ability to adapt readily to new social and working environments.

2. Migration in the world was also affected by a succession of major refugee and humanitarian flows in the closing decades of the twentieth century. In Asia, for example, there was the “boat people” outflow from Vietnam; and there were other mass movements of persons in search of protection in many other parts of the world. The list includes Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Central and Western Africa, Central America, the Middle East, and the Balkans. One major issue to arise from these situations was the so-called nexus between migration and refugee protection, one that continues to feed much debate and controversy.

3. The traditional classification of countries affected by migration into countries of origin, transit, and destination is now largely meaningless since most countries now send migrants, receive migrants, or have migrants pass through their points of entry. Governments face new challenges as migratory behaviour becomes more and more prevalent and globalized. In 1965, there was an estimated 75 million migrants worldwide. By 2002, that number had grown to 175 million. Whereas in 1965 there were only a small number of countries identified as “countries of destination”, almost every country is now the recipient of some migration.

4. There are more types of migration, including labour migration, both skilled and unskilled, family reunification, and migration for purposes of business or research. Increasingly also, a diversity of patterns and strategies of movement are used, ranging across short-term relocation, longer term temporary assignments, permanent migration, and even multi-stage circular migration back to the point of origin.

5. Many developments affect migratory activity:
   - Long-standing political barriers to travel have broken down, for example, following the collapse of the Soviet Union.
   - Cheap and accessible means of international transport have been developed.
   - Real-time networks of global electronic person to person communication have been created, for example telephone and internet systems.
   - The media has developed universal reach and scope, touching and reporting on every part
of the globe.

- Individual and family identities have been re-defined across continents, and trans-nationalism, the identification of oneself as belonging to two or more different countries or cultures, has emerged.
- Economic disparities have emerged between developed and developing countries.
- Demographic imbalances have emerged between developed and developing countries, with the former having populations that are decreasing in size and growing older, and the latter having populations increasing in size and growing younger.
- Global markets have developed for certain categories of workers, especially highly skilled professionals.
- Smuggling and trafficking networks have developed to service a fast-growing irregular migration industry.

There is a willingness on the part of all governments to acknowledge migration as an unavoidable feature of our contemporary world and to agree that international cooperation is required to manage it effectively. The search for effective modes of cooperation has been going on actively.

In 1994 in Cairo, the international community sought for the first time to develop a comprehensive blueprint for handling migration. Chapter X of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development mapped out a series of policy orientations covering inter alia the rights of migrants, the development of orderly migration programmes, the prevention of trafficking in migrants, the reduction of the causes of unwanted migration, the promotion of the development potential of migration, and the need for cooperation between countries in successfully managing migration. The report contained a recommendation for the holding of an international conference on international migration, but in the years that followed, UN members States were unable to come to a consensus on whether it should be convened and, if so, what agenda it should address.

Regional consultative processes (RCPs) emerged in many parts of the world. Acknowledging that migration is not a phenomenon that can be managed effectively at the national level alone, governments began to consider ways and means to identify issues and problems of common concern. From this base, they could go on to map out possible common responses. Virtually all of these consultative processes operate on an informal and non-binding basis, but they have enabled participating countries to considerably improve levels of information exchange and, in many cases, have contributed to the harmonization of policy approaches.

Section 1.7, International Cooperation, provides greater detail on mechanisms for international cooperation.
There is, as yet, no comprehensive normative framework in the field of migration although there are many elements of international law that are applicable to it.

Section 1.6, *International Migration Law*, discusses international migration law and the role of international conventions and agreements in developing a migration policy.

What You Need To Know About...

**International Initiatives**

In recent years, several initiatives have been launched to improve global understanding and cooperation in international migration.

The International Dialogue on Migration was launched by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2001 to enhance understanding of migration issues and strengthen international dialogue and cooperation. This mechanism encourages exploration of the links between international migration and other sectors, such as trade, labour, development, and health by bringing stakeholders together through the IOM Council and inter-sessional workshops on topics of special interest.

The Berne Initiative, launched in 2001, is a States’ owned consultative process to stimulate an exchange of views and promote mutual understanding of different migration realities and interests. In July 2003 at the “Berne Initiative Consultations”, government and independent experts from all regions of the world came together for the first time to lay the ground for the development of a framework of common understandings and effective practices for migration management. “The International Agenda for Migration Management” is planned for the second International Symposium on Migration at the end of 2004.

The Global Commission on International Migration commenced its work early in 2004. Created as an independent body with the encouragement of the UN Secretary General, its major objective will be to raise awareness of migration especially in relation to the positive contributions migrants can make to society.
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Concluding Remarks

This Section provides a historical overview of migration. The history of migration is also a study of migration in history. Perspectives and definitions influence how the story of migration is told. Today’s migration challenges proceed from developments that affect all governments.

Resources

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Endnotes

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