



**THE HOLY SEE**  
**2011 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**  
*Working Session 11: Humanitarian issues and other commitments I.*  
*Migrant workers, the integration of legal migrants*  
Msgr. Florian Kolfhaus  
**Monday, October 3, 2011**

Mister Chairman,

1. In his Message for the 97<sup>th</sup> World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2011), Pope Benedict XVI said that we should continue our efforts “to increase in the world justice and charity, pillars on which to build an authentic and lasting peace.... *We all belong to “one human family”, one family of brothers and sisters in societies that are becoming ever more multiethnic and intercultural, where also people of various religions are urged to take part in dialogue, so that a serene and fruitful coexistence with respect for legitimate differences may be found. .... Moreover, the phenomenon of globalization itself, characteristic of our epoch, is not only a social and economic process, but also entails “humanity itself [that] is becoming increasingly interconnected”, crossing geographical and cultural boundaries. In this regard, the Church does not cease to recall that the deep sense of this epochal process and its fundamental ethical criterion are given by the unity of the human family and its development towards what is good. All, therefore, belong to one family, migrants and the local populations that welcome them, and all have the same right to enjoy the goods of the earth whose destination is universal ... It is here that solidarity and sharing are founded”.*

The universal common good includes the whole family of peoples, beyond every nationalistic egoism. The right to emigrate must be considered in this context. The Church recognizes this right in every human person, in its dual aspect of the possibility to leave one’s country and the possibility to enter another country to look for better conditions of life. At the same time, States have the right to regulate migration flows and to defend their own borders, always guaranteeing the respect due to the dignity of each and every human person. Immigrants, moreover, have the duty to integrate into the host country, respecting its laws and its national identity. The challenge is to combine the welcome due to every human being, especially when in need, with a reckoning of what is necessary for both the local inhabitants and the new arrivals to live a dignified and peaceful life.

Mister Chairman,

2. Migrants constitute cultural and economic “bridges” between countries and this goes in the direction of forming “one human family”. In this regard, my Delegation would like to reiterate that in order to create favourable conditions for integration of migrants and members of their families into host societies, their rights must be respected and a positive climate for their reception must be fostered. At the same time, States should spare no effort in sending a clear message that migrants and their families will always be protected, and that their inalienable and fundamental rights and freedoms will always be guaranteed. Furthermore, the public perception of migrants needs to be improved. Today, there can be no doubt that migrants contribute significantly to the development of the host country, that often they give more than they receive. In this regard, not only do political leaders have an important role to play through their speeches, but also the media can contribute to ameliorating the situation by offering objective and dispassionate coverage.

3. The educational effort should aim to form men and women capable of brotherly relationships and, at the social, political and institutional levels, so that understanding and reciprocal esteem among peoples and cultures may increase. Education, indeed, can play a major role. Migrants, aware of their rights, can be more secure in offering their services and talents and the receiving community, well-informed and respectful of these rights, will feel freer and safer in extending its solidarity in order to build together a common future. Particularly at school and at university the culture of the new generations is formed: their capacity to see humanity as “one human family” largely depends on these institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The commitment of the Catholic Church in favour of migrants is pursued at various levels, from parish, faith communities and diocesan structures to the national offices of Conferences of Bishops to the international levels where cooperation with others organisations and institutions is sought. This commitment is realized in considering, on one side, migration in relation to poverty, suffering and discomfort, and therefore requiring the action of first aid to meet the numerous and constant emergencies, and, on the other side, in seeing migrants as a resource and investment, and thus requiring to be accompanied in order to be progressively adjusted to the new social and cultural environment and reach their full integration. The numerous educational institutions of the Catholic Church are deeply engaged in this field. The Holy See works actively together with governmental institutions or volunteers at national and international levels, that offer their resources and expertises to care for migrants. The Catholic Church keeps offering her contribution in the complex and vast phenomenon of human mobility, by willingly valuing migrants, within the ecclesial community and society, as an important element for mutual enrichment and the construction of the “one human family”, in a fruitful intercultural exchange of gifts.

Thank you, Mister Chairman.