

DECLARATION

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

“THE FAMILY OF THE MIGRANT WORKER”.

“The strength of a nation lies within the integrity of its families”.

The International Colloquium “The Family of the Migrant Worker”, celebrated within the National Migration Week 2009 at *Centro Cultural Tlatelolco* in Mexico City, Mexico, on 21st and 22nd October 2009 approved the following

Declaration:

In solidarity with the families of migrants, we reaffirm that “the family is the natural and fundamental unit of society, and that it has the right to be protected by society and the State” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16, paragraph 3), that “migrant workers and their families require appropriate international protection” (International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Families, Preamble) and that “children, for their lack of physical and mental maturity need special care and protection” (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Preamble).

The issues of migration have to be addressed from a family perspective, not only from the migrant perspective as an individual.

States should assume their responsibility regarding migrants and their families through the design and adoption of laws, public policies, and programs that contribute to the preservation of family unity and the promotion of quality of life by:

- Acknowledging the benefits of economic development and social progress that migration produces for the country of origin as well as for the country of destination.
- Promoting bilateral and multilateral cooperation for identifying and duly assisting the needs of migrants and their families with the aim of their reunification and the integral human development of each of their members.
- Promoting mutual respect, which presupposes the recognition of the differences in race, language, culture, and religion, in order to allow harmonious coexistence and the preservation of the specific characteristics of each community.
- Supporting actions aimed at securing family unity, eliminating regulations that obstruct the circulation of migrants insofar as facilitating their entry and return.
- Creating synergy among the different sectors that fight for achieving legal, safe, and orderly migration in order to avoid greater vulnerability of illegal immigrants.
- Establishing a favorable climate of fraternity and solidarity for migrants and their families in order to eradicate their marginalization, family disintegration, and antisocial consequences.
- Providing education and health services for migrants' families that favor conditions of the dignity of life, the functionality of the family, and respect for the right of migrant parents to educate their children according to their beliefs.

The different members of society must, in turn, assume a responsible approach of solidarity toward migrants and their families, through actions such as:

- Reporting abuse and demanding respect for the rights of migrants in accordance with international human right treaties and work conventions.
- Taking concrete measures to eliminate labor exploitation of migrant children to ensure their personal and emotional development, their education, their health, and time to play.
- Applying the full extent of the law to eradicate the commercial sexual exploitation of children, human trafficking, and cyber crime against migrants and their families.
- Promoting scientific research on migration and its consequences on the family.
- Creating awareness in the media on issues relating to the families of migrant workers.
- Promoting new communication technologies and cyber culture to strengthen links and family unity in migrant families to mitigate the pain of separation and loneliness faced by their members.
- Taking advantage of and supporting initiatives of humanitarian work performed by civil society organizations, religious institutions, and social networks in favor of migrants and their families.

In the case of Mexico, as host of the International Colloquium “The Family of the Migrant Worker”, we respectfully suggest the following proposals be taken into consideration:

- Requesting that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs manifest our inconformity before the Government of the United States for the illegal raids performed against our fellow citizens by migration authorities in the US.

- Demanding respect for the human rights of migrants and transmigrants in Mexico as a country of origin, transit, destination, and return.
- Supporting existing programs for guaranteeing the return of repatriated migrants to their places of origin with dignity, justice, and in an orderly fashion.
- Respecting and promoting family reintegration in the control and migratory verification operations in Mexico.
- Coordinating programs with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Treasury in order to guarantee the safe return migrants' belongings, documents and assets during the process of their custody and expulsion by the US authorities.
- Generating agreements with commercial banks to guarantee that checks issued by foreign authorities may be cashed by repatriated immigrant at a fair rate of commission.
- Assisting immigrants and families, victims of crime, abuse, accidents, violence, with due respect of their human rights.
- Urging state and municipal governments to take vigorous measures against abuses incurred by any authority against migrants and transmigrants in Mexico.
- Applying the full extent of the law to criminal bands that steal, extort, kidnap, violate, or assassinate migrants or transmigrants in Mexico.
- Guaranteeing the right to the registration of birth of children born in Mexico to transmigrant parents in order to reduce and eradicate the problem of nationality of newborns.

- Congratulating the National Migration Institute for the Infant Protection Officers (OPIS) program, responsible for overseeing the best interest of migrant children.
- Seeking the collaboration of OPIS in national school programs with the goal of preventing the phenomenon of unaccompanied migrant children.
- Requesting the support of government institutions in the implementation of programs that strengthen the functionality of separated migrant families.
- Continuing the work of inter-institutional and inter-ministerial collaboration in order to help migrants and their families, especially in areas of health and education.
- Working on social programs that allow children and teenagers to consciously evaluate the options of migrating or staying in their place of origin.
- Promoting productive investment strategies in order to create employment opportunities stimulate economic growth, social progress, quality of life, and the functionality of the family in Mexico, in order to reduce the phenomenon of migration, and promote the return of migrants to their country of origin.

Adopted on 22nd October 2009 in Mexico City, Mexico.

(This Declaration may not necessarily reflect the views of individual speakers and delegates.)