

UNESCO and UNU organize the conference

The Human Face of Migration: Historical Perspectives, Testimonies and Policy Considerations

Thursday, 15 June 2017
3 to 6 p.m., Room XII, UNESCO HQ

BACKGROUND

For the majority of the 244 million international migrants worldwide in 2015, including some 21 million refugees, migration was a necessity not an option. The circumstances underlying their movement generate additional challenges to their inclusion in every aspect of life in receiving societies.

Developing appropriate policy frameworks at the local, national and global levels requires a better understanding of the implications of human mobility for its protagonists. Listening to their stories not only reveals the human face of this global phenomenon but also contributes, through a ‘cathartic’ experience, to delegitimize established prejudices and stereotypes and create the enabling conditions for empathy and mutual respect. Equally important is the understanding of the root causes of migration and displacement, which can be obtained through a careful analysis of historical contexts and processes. This knowledge, combined with the experiences and lessons learned of the broad array of actors working on migration – from local governments and governmental entities to academia, civil society organizations and the world of arts – has the potential of informing global agendas towards the full realization of human rights by all migrants and refugees, irrespective of their gender, identity or status.

The conference that UNESCO and UNU jointly organize (Thursday, 15 June 2017, 3 to 6 pm, Room XII) coincides with the development of the global compact on migration mandated by the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants (UN General Assembly, September 2016). This process will likely result in 2018 into a solid and robust framework, containing specific and actionable commitments on behalf of UN Member States that enjoy also the support of all concerned stakeholders. A key role in this respect is played by the Global Migration Group (GMG), a 22-member interagency platform promoting greater cooperation and coherence, where UNU, the 2017 GMG Chair, and UNESCO collaborate closely.

Ongoing work by UNU and by UNESCO, notably the *Welcoming Cities for Refugees and Migrants* initiative that was launched in 2016 with the Marianna V. Vardinoyannis Foundation and the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR, will serve as reference points and provide illustrative examples.

The conference will be opened by UNESCO's Director General and the Rector of the UNU. It will also feature representatives of governments, city authorities, the academia, civil society organizations, artists and philanthropists well-known for their commitment to human rights and respect for diversity.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

15.00 – Opening

Opening remarks:

- Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO
- David Malone, Rector of the United Nations University (UNU)

Keynote address:

- Daniel Rondeau, Representative of the UNU to UNESCO
- Marianna V. Vardinoyannis, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador

15.20 – Panel 1: The human face of migration: historical perspectives and testimonies

Moderator:

Parvati Nair, Director, United Nations University Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility

Speakers:

- David Abulafia, Professor at Cambridge University
- Pietro Bartolo, Medical doctor in Lampedusa, philanthropist
- Gilles Pecout, Rector of Paris, Historian, Professor at the Ecole Normale Supérieure
- Albina du Boisrouvray, Founder of the NGO FXB
- Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, sociologist and member of the French MOST National Committee

16.40 – The human face of migration: local insights and global policy implications

Moderator:

Golda El-Khoury, Chief, Inclusion and Rights Section, UNESCO

Speakers:

- Yann Arthus-Bertrand, Photographer
- Father Najeeb Michael, engaged in humanitarian work in refugee camps and the preservation of cultural heritage in Iraq
- H.E. Eleonora Mitrofanova, former Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the Russian Federation to UNESCO
- Susanne Asche, Head of Cultural Affairs Department, City of Karlsruhe

17. 57 – Closing remarks by Daniel Rondeau