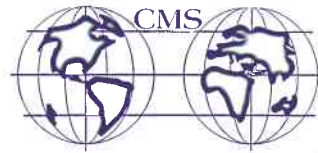




IOM International Organization for Migration



CENTER FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

Jan. 21, 2010

**CONFERENCE ON IRREGULAR MIGRATION  
LEGAL AND POLICY PERSPECTIVES  
21-22 January 2010 – Millennium UN Plaza Hotel, New York**

**OPENING REMARKS**

René Manenti  
Executive Director  
Center for Migration Studies

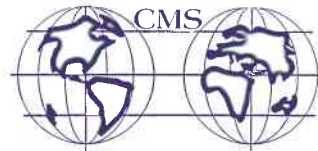
Ms. Helen Clark, (name of speaker for William Swing) Mr. Joseph Chamie, distinguished Guests and speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all of you to this Conference on Irregular Migration, Legal and Policy Perspectives. The Conference is the result of the excellent collaboration between the highly regarded International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Center for Migration Studies (CMS). In 2008, the two organizations successfully collaborated in convening a similar event to discuss the nexus between international migration and development.

The Center for Migration Studies was founded in 1964. Its primary goal has always been to undertake and support research on the different facets of international migration. CMS carries out its mission mainly in three ways. It circulates books and monographs and publishes the



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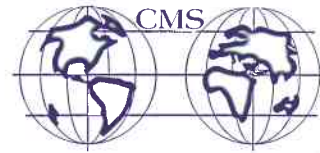
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*International Migration Review*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal issued quarterly. CMS also organizes conferences and forums on international migration, like the Conference we are beginning today. CMS also maintains an archive located in Staten Island that collects and makes available documentation on the experiences of people in the move.

All of us know quite well that international migration is an increasingly critical issue in the world today. The international community, regional groups, individual nations, researchers, non-governmental organizations as well as many other parties are struggling with the question of how best to manage the many dimensions of international migration.

This year, the focus of this Conference is on *Irregular Migration*. Currently, irregular migration constitutes by all means a relevant topic that sparks a vast array of opinions and ideas in the public arena. Together with IOM, CMS decided to accept the challenge of addressing such a controversial and sensitive issue in order to bring to the forefront an issue that governments and organizations sometimes tend to shy away from directly addressing because of its complexity and complications.

This Conference intends to enter the debate on irregular migration with a specific goal, namely, to provide a forum whereby the many dimensions of such a phenomenon are addressed and discussed in the best comprehensive and rational way. Irregular migration engages, and often puzzles, our minds when we attempt to grasp its root causes and try to extricate its demographic, social, economic, environmental and legal facets and implications. However, we cannot overlook the fact that such an issue does not solely constitute a question of numeric stocks and flows,



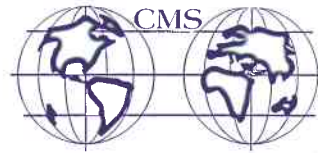
accompanied by social, legal, environmental and economic concerns. Irregular migration is made up of individual human beings: men, women, and children who many times face difficulties and exploitation. Reverend Rigoni, one of the speakers at this Conference, along with many other “good Samaritans” who have spent their lives in assisting the needy, can narrate many poignant stories on the various struggles and sufferings of irregular immigrants. The human rights component represents an essential aspect that this Conference will also address. The challenge here is to bring together at the same table the rights of nation states and their citizens with the rights of irregular immigrants. For instance, national security and human rights need to find a middle ground and not to oppose each other.

During the sessions of today and tomorrow, this Conference will provide opportunities for us to critically review the implications of these and other related topics. Our focus is on legal and policy perspectives and we wish to have this Conference be a dialogue. We have invited speakers with experience and expertise who will help us undertake this challenging journey. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to them for taking time out from their busy schedules to participate and contribute to this Conference.

Also at this point, I would like to thank Dearfield Associates, the Campania Region of Italy, the IOM, the Pfizer Corporation, and the Scalabrinian Lay Groups of Rhode Island and Venezuela for their important financial contributions to the convening of this Conference. Also at this time, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the Scalabrini International Migration Network for its valuable collaboration in various projects concerning international migration.



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Last but not least, my personal gratefulness goes to Mr. Luca Dall'Oglio, Mrs. Amy Muedin and the IOM staff for the work done to organize the 2010 Conference in collaboration with Mr. Joseph Chamie, Mrs. Winnie Ner and myself. In addition, during these two days, some volunteers will be helping us to make sure that everything runs smoothly and I wish to express my appreciation to them.

Finally, I wish to thank all of you for attending and participating in this Conference on *Irregular Migration*.