

# CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

## CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

### CONCEPT PAPER

**Theme:** The Migration – Development Nexus

**Date:** 26 February 2018 (Arrival) to 2 March 2018 (Departure)

**Venue:** Cresta Lodge Hotel, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Number of participants:** 300

#### 1.0 Background

The movement of people on the planet is at an all time high, creating new challenges for both sending and receiving countries. According to the International Organisation for Migration IOM (2015) the number of people residing in a country other than their country of birth has reached record levels, totaling 244 million in 2015, up by 41 per cent since 2000. This vast movement of people on the planet is largely unplanned and unregulated, opening the door to human trafficking to which many migrants fall prey. The African continent in particular is subject to huge disruptions of local populations that have contributed to the crisis that has developed in receiving countries in Europe and elsewhere.

Given this reality, the conference seeks to analyse the impact of migration on development and social cohesion on the African continent with special emphasis on Southern Africa. It aims to provide an ethical and human rights framework for considering this phenomenon in its varying aspects. Given the linkage between sending and receiving countries, the conference invites us to view migration through the lens of the “common good”, one of the main principles of the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

With a view to gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and also offering suggestions for mitigating the impact, the conference will interrogate some of the following questions: How does this movement speak to the failure of development policies to provide adequately for the basic needs of their populations? Why are there so many violent conflicts on the African continent that force whole families to leave their homes for an uncertain future elsewhere? What impact does climate change have on the movement of people? Do women and children face unique problems throughout the

migration process? What policies and procedures can be put in place to discourage migration, to assist migrants, and to resettle those who return to their countries of origin?

The conference will also examine attitudes towards migrants and refugees with an emphasis on the African concept of 'Ubuntu' and will look at various policies that have been adopted by receiving countries to integrate newcomers into their societies and to provide for their welfare. It will also explore the ambivalent relationship between the consequent 'brain drain' and the financial benefits of remittances from those who have left their countries of origin. Recent events in Zimbabwe offer the possibility of the eventual return of thousands of young people who now reside in South Africa, in the region or overseas. The conference will explore the implications of a rapid reverse movement of people that could prove destabilizing if not handled with insight and sensitivity.

Recognizing that human mobility has long been a feature of African societies, the conference will explore the interplay between this historical dimension and more recent driving factors for migration. The role of women in achieving local sustainable development will also be considered.

Refugees experience multifaceted challenges such as difficulties they face before departure, when seeking asylum, after the recognition of their status and even when they return to their home countries. The conference will examine the roles of the different agencies and organizations that are involved in assisting them, locally and internationally, and will explore a variety of options to support refugees and asylum seekers. The conference will also advocate for an interdisciplinary approach to this critical issue and will examine the international conventions that apply as well as the moral and legal obligations of both the receiving and sending countries.

Finally, given the urgency of the issue and its relevance to Southern Africa, the conference will put forward recommendations for eliminating the causes of migration; for adopting policies and procedures that treat people on the move with respect and understanding; and for collaboration between the various actors involved in migration issues.

## **2.0 Main Objective**

The conference will examine the reality of migration on the African continent and its impact on development in Southern Africa with a view to influencing policies that serve the common good and that promote dialog and collaboration between sending and receiving countries.

## **3.0 Specific Objectives**

- To provide accurate information, as well as an ethical perspective, on the current migration crisis with special emphasis on the impact on development in the Southern African region;
- To strengthen the unity of different actors on migration issues and development;

- To examine the drivers of forced migration including conflicts, climate change, unemployment and failures of governance, with a view to correcting or mitigating them;
- To explore effective responses to the migration crisis that will contribute to employment creation, sustainable development and social cohesion while respecting cultural and religious diversity.

#### **4.0 Expected Results**

- The migration and development nexus in Southern Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, is clearly enunciated and the implications understood;
- Policy recommendations are made to the relevant government departments, non-governmental agencies, churches and institutes of higher education on providing assistance to migrants as well as on eliminating the causes of forced migration.
- A unified plan of action for Southern Africa is developed in a spirit of cooperation between the various agencies and groups that are dealing with this issue,
- The Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUZ) launches a degree course in migration studies.