

***Amman Center
for Human Rights Studies***

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مركز عمان
لدراسات حقوق الإنسان
حاصل على وضع استشاري خاص لدى
المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي بالأمم المتحدة

General Report

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies' participation to the 9th CWWM Conference

Marrakesh, Morocco,
6-8 December 2018

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INTRODUCTION



Participants of the 9th CWWM conferences, Marrakesh, Morocco, 6-8 December 2018

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) participated to the 9th International Consultation of the Churches Witnessing with Migrants (CWWM9) which was held on December 6-8, 2018 in Marrakesh, Morocco. The title of this year's theme was “*Towards an Infrastructure of Welcome & Solidarity and Advocacy & Solidarity*”. Around 35 participants attended the conferences. This is the second time that ACHRS had the opportunity to participate to such consultation after the Berlin's consultation in 2017.

This consultation was held in time for the Intergovernmental Conference to adopt the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the 10th Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The meeting of Heads of State and Government and High Representatives for the GCM in Morocco is a historic occasion and other civil society organizations prepared their engagements there as well.

About CWWM

The Churches Witnessing with Migrants (CWWM) is an international platform for advocacy and forthright action focused on global migration, particularly forced migration in all its forms. CWWM is organized as a tripartite body of equals that includes migrants and representatives of migrant-serving and faith based organizations from various faith traditions. CWWM has three-pronged objectives/strategies: analysis and theological reflection, advocacy and movement building.

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and Migrant International initially conceived CWWM. From the three initial smaller consultations held successively in Manila, Athens, and Mexico, to the larger international consultations held in New York (October 2013), Stockholm (May 2014), Istanbul (October 2015), Dhaka (December 2016), and Berlin (June 2017) participation has considerably grown. The New York, Stockholm and Istanbul Consultations produced the framework documents of CWWM. In Dhaka, the organizational orientation and structure of CWWM was finalized. CWWM Berlin was a culmination of what CWWM has done in the last nine years.

About the conferences

More than registering a presence and position during these events, CWWM9 was an occasion for strategic planning for continuing work. Foremost of which is the building and enhancing of an infrastructure of welcome and solidarity for migrants, refugees and uprooted peoples.

To lay down this Infrastructure of Welcome and Solidarity, CWWM9 tried to strive to better the systems of welcome complemented with systems of solidarity – both in the country of destination and in the country of origin. CWWM Morocco then provided a space for exchanging and coordinating these systems including the work for further policy reforms beyond Morocco.

DAY 1



Rev. Karen Thomas Smith from the EEAM explaining the situations of migrants and refugees in Morocco.

Exposure and Introduction to EEAM

The first day the participants had the opportunity to meet Rev. Karen Thomas Smith, President of the Evangelical Protestant Church and Comité d'Entraide International in Morocco. EEAM, also known as Eglise Evangélique au Morocco, is the Evangelical church that provides emergency help such as food and water distribution, medical aid and offers different programs to the migrants and refugees. Rev. Karen talked about EEAM's missions and goals and explained the difficulties immigrants face in Morocco due to the lack of support from the Moroccan government and the absence of CSOs working on these issues. She explained the provenience of the migrants, almost all of them come from the Sub-saharan area, precisely from Cameroon, Benin, Niger, Nigeria and some from the DRC. They face danger during their journey to Morocco and they are helpless once they are there.

The participants were asked to then divide themselves into different small groups and they had the opportunity to interview the migrants and refugees and hear about their experiences and the daily struggle they have to go through. Additionally, food and blanket distribution took place.

At the end, all the participants gathered to debrief and evaluate their conversations with the migrants. To conclude, it was clear how these people needed immediate help such as food and to get themselves out of the cold.

DAY 2

Introduction to CWWM

Mervin Toquero, from the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and Liberato Bautista, General Board of Church and Society from the Unionist Methodist Community (UMC, GBCS) in the USA introduced CWWM, its structure and objectives.

They presented the theme chosen for the conference, “*Towards an Infrastructure of Welcome & Solidarity and Advocacy & Solidarity*”. The two moderators for the discussion that occurred at the end of the day around the theme were Liberato Bautista and Lester Ruiz from the Association of of Theological Schools, ATS, in the States.

Testimonies

Samson

Samson is a migrant from Nigeria, he confessed that he escaped after his father was killed by the terrorist group Boko Haram and he was afraid for his life and safety, and he added that there was nothing left for him anymore since he had no else from his family.

After eight years of traveling because he was sent back several times, but thanks to his determination he finally reached Morocco. Furthermore, not being able to enter Europe he remained in Morocco and for a couple of years he ended up begging but he had the luck to get to know EEAM and he had the opportunity to get some documents and now he has a shared apartment with other migrants.



Samson answering to questions about his experience as a Nigerian migrant in Morocco.

Erwiana

Erwiana an Indonesian young lady, member of Kabar Bumi an Indonesian grassroots movement. She talked about her tragic experience as a domestic worker. She explained that she comes from a poor family in Indonesia, they did not have money nor a land, therefore she decided to look for a job in Hong Kong through an agency that promised

her a couple of months of trainings and then a guaranteed job. However, the reality turned out to be different, she was exploited and beaten up and her employer would not give her food after taking her passport and locking her in a room. Once she was useless, because she was weak due to the wounds in her body and malnutrition, she was sent back home but asked not to say anything. Erwiana was strong enough to tell her story and her employer got arrested. People started a campaign for her “*Justice for Erwiana*”. Now she tries to help those who like her have gone through a similar experience or may be at risk. Thanks to her membership in Kabar Bumi, she is giving voice to help and encourage girls not to be abused. Today she knows her right, and how to raise her voice in order to be heard and not to be abused, she learned that together people can make a difference, while alone it’s harder.



Erwiana’s presentation about her tragic experience as a domestic worker in Hong Kong.

Celia

Celia Veloso a Filipino woman talked about her personal experience of human trafficking. Coming from the Philippines she declared to be the first domestic worker to go abroad in 1982 and the first one who experienced physical abuse from foreigner employees. She is the mother of Mary Jane Veloso, who was imprisoned and sentenced to death. She declared to be one of the first to experience physical abuse and to be locked in a room without food. She had the luck after several years to escape. Other members of her family were severely injured and her daughter ended in the death row, but thanks to Amnesty International's campaign after 6 years her daughter was not sentenced to death anymore however she is still imprisoned. Celia claimed that the places that treat badly domestic workers are the Gulf countries and the Middle East, she experienced the worst mistreatment in Bahrain.

Migration Context in Morocco

Anne-Marie Tuewissen from “Comité d'Entraide Internationale” (CEI), the International Mutual Committee in Rabat, Morocco, explained how the situation of migrants is worldwide. She illustrated that migrants in Africa are 24.7 million (2017) according to the UN figures, and the numbers are expected to increase due to climate change,

especially for the Sub-Saharan area. Lately, Morocco is hosting an enormous number of migrants and refugees due to its geographical position (tip of Africa), it's only 14 km between the African continent in Tangiers and the Strait of Gibraltar and other 2 Spanish enclaves. She also explained the reason of why Morocco hosted the Global Compact on migrants this year: concerns due to the geographical position and Morocco is also a country with immigrants around Europe (Spain, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Belgium). She continued on outlining how racism is an issue that is quite opened also in media, articles in magazines, newspapers, tv and radio in Morocco. Racism is openly clear towards people with black color skin, moreover, there is an issue also with black skinned Moroccans. To conclude, Anne-Marie clarified that since 2015, due to the migrant and asylum seekers crisis in Europe, the EU implemented policies to keep these populations as far as possible from European borders. However, such operation is difficult since the border is right next to Africa. Therefore, the EU started giving financial support (a huge amount of money) to Morocco in order to control the border rather than to give actual support.

Global Compact on Migration

Christian Wolff based in Geneva, from ACT Alliance, a coalition of 150 churches and church-related organizations working for marginalized people in over 125 countries, discussed about the fact that initially the global compact was supposed to be a refugee summit, however a problem occurred. The issue was that not everyone can get the status of refugee therefore the global compact was then dedicated to all the people in movement. Mr. Christian added that in any case a summit on refugees was supposed to take place and UNHCR had the mandate, the main idea was to protect refugees however it was clear how countries are reluctant. According to him the solutions could be: hosting them or placing them into other countries. Unfortunately, the problem is that they are just put in refugee camps. He also emphasized how the GCM is a legally non-binding agreement and faith based organizations are not involved at all. These associations and organizations could be potential voices for the migrants and refugees, excluding most of them barriers for communication will be created in the future.

A young and strong lady, Eni Lestari took the floor as well, she is a chairperson of International Migrants Alliance (IMA) in Hong Kong. IMA is the first ever global alliance of organizations of grassroots migrants, refugees and displaced people. She raised concern about the global compact, about the fact that it is no longer only an economic issue but also a political problem. She additionally raised the matter about the fact that the global compact in her opinion is just another piece of paper and she does not see any hope for migrants since it's not legally binding.

DAY 3

Challenges and Discrimination in Europe

Rosa Maria Martinez de Codes a professor from the university of Madrid, together with Magdalena Molina Riofrio, former Vice Minister of Defense in Ecuador and currently an independent consultant talked about the challenges of human mobility and migration in Europe and the Mediterranean and concerns regarding racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance rising from nationalist ideologies in Europe. They pointed out the lack of the EU in coming up with common policies with respect to migration, their main concern was that despite the existence of the principles of integration, the implementation of these values are still missing.

Kenia Guimaraes, Global Public Health Specialist and General Board of Church and Society, the United Methodist Church from Brazil is now operating in France. She discussed about public health and gender discrimination and about what does welcome, hospitality, advocacy and solidarity mean to refugees. She talked about the migrants/refugees she daily meets in Paris and their experiences related to their journey, trauma, lack of sanitation, lack of water and food.

Internally Displaced People

Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally displaced people, who is also an international lawyer, started explaining her role and how the UN Special Rapporteur is a mandate of the UN Human Rights Council who makes investigations and has powerful tools to access on issues concerning human rights. She gave detailed information on her mandate, she explained who are IDPs and the reason of why people flee. After years of experience the main reasons people migrate listed by Ms. Cecilia were: conflicts and human rights violations; natural disasters; climate change; development aggression (such as building industries to develop the countries but by destroying the nature e.g. Amazon in Brazil); others such as criminal violence. She raised concern about children who are IDPs are a lost generation. IDPs are a big issue yet not much importance is given to these people, every institution always ends up talking about refugees and migrants. There are enormous problems also for the indigenous, for instance they don't even speak the official language of their county and when they are forced to leave their villages or towns after being attached to their lands they find themselves in big cities. She drew attention to the fact that the Global Compact on Migration did not take into consideration IDPs at all. She added that if refugees or migrants who escape are forced to go back to their countries they will be internally displaced therefore a solution needs to be found from the roots. She made a very clear example, if Rohingyas who are fleeing Myanmar are sent back a huge disaster would take place.



UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced People Cecilia Jimenez-Damary

Ecuador: an example of a small country hosting several migrants

Vice Minister H.E. Santiago Chavez, Vice Minister for Human Mobility, Ministry of Foreign affairs of Ecuador, after explaining that next year the meeting on migrants will take place in Quito, Ecuador, he discussed about adopting a common approach to the global compacts. Afterwards, he talked about the experience in Ecuador concerning migration, in the last two decades they have been receiving migrants from Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Peru, and now also from Venezuela. A lot of countries are going to Ecuador because they are opened to migration, it's one of the pillars of the legislation of Ecuador, migration is a human right. They have a national and specific plan regarding immigration, and specific spaces for migration in their roundtables, thanks also to the feedbacks they always receive. This is the way to understand issues of migration internally and think also on how to work on it worldwide, but also focusing more on South America. He then illustrated that 1 million migrants arrived this year, most of them were in transit, but around 300.000 Venezuelans are living in Ecuador. He added how Ecuador provides: food, services, infrastructure, employment. However, the resources are very small, it's such a small country, they try to do things step by step and coordinate themselves with those countries who are mostly in need such as Venezuelans, and vulnerable people such as children, elderly, women, and people who have chronic diseases. In his opinion instruments need to be implemented in order to reach all the goals. This is why Ecuador tries to work with other American countries, as a matter of fact the present Action Plan functions on 3 fields:

- Practical application
- Economic field
- Role of international organization, especially the UN

For instance ID/documents are given to Venezuelans by trying to collaborate with neighbors. They also try to meet with donors to inform them about the challenges Ecuador is facing.



In the middle H.E. Santiago Chavez, Vice Minister for Human Mobility, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador

Comparisons and Workshops

Different point of views were shown by Monica Emiru from the National Women’s Organization in Uganda and Rey Perez Asis from Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants based in Hong Kong. Both participants emphasized that migration is a worldwide issue and even though there are different reasons of why people flee they are still human beings. Monica illustrated the African context and its situation and explained how solutions must be found in the roots, she described and listed the issues of the African continent and the reason that force people to leave their homes. She also gave a concrete example of the possibility of helping refugees or migrants, such as Uganda a very small nation but yet hosts refugees coming from Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, DRC. Through coordination and working in the same direction, in her opinion all countries could be able to help and find good strategies. Rey as well talking about the Asian context, it was possible to see similarities, he as well suggested meeting and coming up with strategies to be implemented. He also recommended local government units to incorporate strategies on migration issues.

Conclusion

After various presentations, reports from the caucuses were discussed with everyone, in which participants discussed about what came out from this meeting after the division in 3 groups: grassroots, faith based organizations, and other CSOs the first day.

The questions/dilemmas were:

- What are the expectations from these conferences?
- Should churches be more active with governments and provide services?

Discussions to find solutions were:

- It’s important to have a big population that supports and advocates for migrants and refugees since they have no voice and are not heard by governments.
- Reflections about exposure and migration

To conclude two questions were asked to be discussed in order to make an evaluation at the end:

1. What is your understanding of the term infrastructure and architecture?
2. Identify one or two elements of your “preferred infrastructure” and “preferred architecture”.

Different answers were given:

1. Infrastructure is the body, it's a construction and a realization of a model. Whereas Architecture is the science that plans to build an infrastructure, a model of what you want to create.
2. Solidarity and services were the two preferred elements.

In the end after all the participants discussed and after giving an evaluation plans of a big project were listed:

- Mapping areas
- Identifying areas to be mapped
- Defining protocol of database
- Develop criteria of review
- Administration of mapping e.g. fundraising