

Global Challenges in Migration: Developing an IARU Research Agenda

Thursday September 21st & Friday September 22nd 2006
Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford

The International Migration Institute at the University of Oxford hosted the first migration workshop of IARU members. The International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), a partnership of ten of the world's leading universities, aims to share top quality research in order to address many of the issues facing the world today. This workshop aimed to serve as a planning meeting, allowing members to exchange information and to define issues and themes in order to work out a programme of common research in the area of migration.

Twenty five participants attended the two day workshop from the following universities: University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, University of California at Berkeley, Peking University, National University of Singapore, Australian National University, ETH Zurich, University of Copenhagen, University of Tokyo and University of Ghana at Legon.

Professor Ewan McKendrick, Pro Vice Chancellor for Research at Oxford, opened the first plenary session, drawing attention to the support of the meeting by the IARU presidents and by Oxford University itself through the John Fell Fund.

This was followed by short presentations from each IARU institution, outlining the types of migration research currently being done across their universities and plans for future research.

Workshop participants were later joined in the Harris Manchester College Chapel by additional guests for a lecture by Professor Takyiwaa Manuh, Director of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana at Legon: *'Migration and Development in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities for National and Regional Development'*. This keynote address constituted the formal launch of the International Migration Institute and underlined the IMI's initial focus on migration processes related to the African continent. Dr Ian Goldin, director of the James Martin 21st Century School responded.

Mr Iain Watt, Chairman of the IARU Secretariat, opened the second day of the workshop. He highlighted the wish of the IARU presidents to receive joint project proposals for research on a scale no institution could produce singly, focused on bigger picture migration issues that are important in the world context.

Four Universities offered to take the lead in initiating discussions on possible comparative research proposals. The National University of Singapore began with a presentation on the theme of Global Cities and Transnational Migration; The Universities of Copenhagen and Oxford proposed a theme of Human Mobility and New Inequalities; The University of Tokyo initiated discussion on the relationship between international migration and the developing perspective of human security.

The workshop then progressed with a number of breakout groups convening to refine ideas and find common themes under the overarching proposal (working title) 'Rethinking Human Mobility: New Opportunities, Inequalities and Human Security'. These initial discussions will form a platform for building a proposal that will be submitted to the IARU Presidents Meeting in March 2007.

In summing up the workshop, Stephen Castles, the co-director of IMI, emphasised the opportunity afforded by the IARU alliance for working together at an international and intercontinental level and for developing research questions of global and regional scope.