



General Secretariat  
League of Arab States  
Social Affairs Sector

**Population Policies, Expatriates & Migration department**

# **Migration & Expatriates**

**2015**



## Background Information

Since the early stages of its work, the League of Arab States (LAS) gave special attention to the issue of Arab expatriates. This interest has been mutual from the Arab expatriates side as well. Some of them have shown great interest in the League of Arab States since its establishment, to the extent that pushed some of them to send telegraphs expressing their support for the General Arab Conference, which was held to develop LAS charter in 1945.

In the early stages of LAS establishment, this interest was limited to occasional contacts with a number of Arab Immigrants' organizations including participation in conferences and providing limited financial assistance in addition to receiving some delegations.

LAS given attention to migration and Arab expatriates became clear through issuing many resolutions at both the summit level and the ministerial level in this regard since 1955. In 1979, the Tenth Arab Summit adopted a resolution entrusting LAS General Secretariat with

the task of strengthening cooperation with Arab communities and benefit from their potentials in the host countries, to support Arab rights and strengthen the links between Arab expatriates and their homeland.

In 2002, the Arab Expatriates department was established within the structure of the General Secretariat after 9/11, and the subsequent distortion of the image of Arabs and Muslims in Western countries. Another department was in charge of migration issues, which was "Population Policies and Migration department". Since the beginning of 2014, the two departments were merged together in one department under the name "Population Policies, Expatriates and Migration department (PPEMD)".

LAS, PPEMD, gives special attention to the skilled Arab migrants and their role in development, migrant women and their role in preserving the Arab identity of the migrating family as the base of the family, as well as the youth of the second and third generation of expatriates, who represent the link between their original Arabic culture and the culture of their new society.

## LAS Efforts in the Field of Migration and Expatriates

### First: Coordination Between Arab Countries

#### Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP)

LAS established an Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP), as a State-driven, non-binding, flexible and informal forum to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between LAS member States on migration issues of common concern. This establishment was based on the resolution No. 7833 issued by LAS Council at the ministerial level in its regular session (142) in September 2014 on the periodic convention of the regional consultation meetings on migration in the Arab region as a "regional consultation process", which came in response to what was included in the final declaration of the "Regional Consultative Meeting for the Arab Region", held in June 2013, concerning the importance of establishing such a mechanism in the framework of the League of Arab States.

The ARCP Terms of Reference (ToRs) were adopted in its first meeting held on 27-28 April 2015.

The ToRs included that LAS (Population Policies, Expatriates and Migration Department) is the Secretariat of the process, chairs its meetings and represents it in international forums.

The aim of the ARCP is to establish an Arab platform to discuss issues of international migration, and work on: strengthening cooperation between the participating countries and working towards a more profound understanding of migration issues in the Arab region, promoting a common understanding about the causes, dimensions, patterns and effects of migration and its future trends in the Arab region, as well as helping governments to participate with a unified vision in the global events related to migration; such as the Global Forum on migration and Development and the high-level Dialogue on Migration and Development and others.

### The Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) on Migration and Development in the Arab Region

A “Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) on Migration and Development in the Arab Region”, in Preparation for the Second United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, has been organized by LAS at its general secretariat headquarters during the period from 4-5 June 2013, in partnership with UN-ESCWA and International Organization for Migration (IOM). The RCM aimed to prepare Arab countries to maximize the benefits of their participation in the Second High-Level Dialogue by taking stock of progress in relation to migration and development in the Arab region since 2006, with particular focus on the High-Level Dialogue roundtable themes, and by assisting representatives in the development of a common understanding of the next steps to be taken to maximize the contributions of migration

to development in the Arab region and to minimize the potential negative impacts for countries of destination and countries of origin, as well as for migrants and their families themselves.

The meeting adopted a final declaration on “International Migration and Development in the Arab Region”, which was addressed as a background document in the Second High-Level Dialogue. Key issues in the declaration were highlighted in the statement delivered by LAS representative in the plenary session of the High-Level Dialogue.

In the same framework, LAS held a coordination meeting for the Arab Group in New York on 2 October 2013, in order to brief participants from the Arab countries on the key international migration and development issues in the region and inform them of the final declaration of the above mentioned RCM.

### Meetings of Arab Ministers of Migration, Expatriates Affairs and Arab Communities Abroad

The general secretariat of the League of Arab States held two

meetings for the Arab Ministers of Migration, Expatriates Affairs and Arab Communities Abroad at its headquarters in Cairo:

- The first meeting was held on February 18th, 2008 within the framework of the preparation for the Arab Social and Economic Development Summit as decided by the Riyadh Summit in 2007 and upon the initiative of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The meeting discussed the general assessment of the motives and repercussions of the phenomenon of migration and the status of Arab expatriates abroad. Moreover, it considered drawing up an Arab strategy to deal with the issues of expatriates and migration. The participants included prominent figures of Arab Expatriates abroad. The ministers agreed on a number of recommendations most important of which included: supporting the Arab approach in handling migration and development issues, Arab coordination in international and
- multi-lateral fora related to issues of migration and development, promotion of the role of Arab expatriates and communities and to encourage them to maintain relationships with their Arab countries of origin.
- The second meeting was held on November 14th, 2009, in the framework of implementing the recommendations of the first meeting; and in pursuance of the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Arab Summit on Economic and Social Development, held in Kuwait in January 2009. The ministers discussed the on-going implementation of the recommendations of their first meeting and of the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Kuwait Summit on Economic and Social Development regarding migration. The meeting adopted a number of recommendations regarding the following:

Coordination among Arab countries regarding migration, expatriates and Arab communities in foreign countries, exchanging experiences, supporting rights of expatriates and Arab communities abroad; correcting wrong conceptions about the Arabs abroad, defending Arab causes, making use of Arab

competent individuals residing abroad in promoting sustainable development in the Arab countries. On the occasion of the Arab expatriates' day, the Ministers issued a declaration at the end of the meeting expressing their appreciation of the role of Arab communities abroad.

### *Second: Cooperation with International Organizations Working in the Field of Migration*

#### *Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region (RWG)*

A Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region (RWG) was established according to LAS initiative in order to promote coordinated normative and technical work on international migration in the region; prevent duplication of efforts; and ensure a consistent, system-wide message and strategy for migration. The functions of the Regional

Working Group include: information sharing, establishing priority areas for cooperation and potential joint programmatic responses, dissemination of innovative/good practices and lessons.

The RWG is co-chaired by LAS, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and with the membership of the following 12 UN agencies: the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat),

office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations environment programme (UNEP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The RWG is implementing its first work plan for 2014-2015. In this framework, a training workshop was organized to official from Arab States, and the first edition of the Situation Report on International Migration in the Arab Region is in the production process.

#### *Africa-Arab Technical and Coordination Committee on Migration (TCCM)*

According to the resolution adopted by the Africa Arab Summit held in Kuwait in November 2013, a Technical and Coordination Committee on Migration (TCCM) co-chaired by the African Union (AU) and LAS was established with the aim to help to strengthen their cooperation in migration management, and to promote and protect migrants rights, especially in the provision of sound advice to Member States on issues related to migration in both regions, in conformity with regional and international instruments.

The TCCM will build on existing initiatives to deliver specific outputs that will support the overall implementation of the provisions of the Africa-Arab Partnership Strategy



and Joint Action Plan 2011-2016 as well as migration instruments and programs of AU and LAS.

### Cooperation with the European Union (EU)

LAS coordinates with the EU in several issues of common concern, including migration, within the framework of the Arab - European dialogue to activate political, economic and technological cooperation between the two sides, which has various bodies like the European Arab ministerial meetings.

### *Third: Communicating with Arab Expatriates Abroad*

#### First Conference of Arab Expatriates: A Bridge for Communication

LAS held the First Conference of Arab Expatriates: A Bridge for Communication in its headquarters during the period from 4 to 6 December 2010, with the attendance of the Ministers in Charge of Migration and

LAS has convened a session for the European neighbouring Arab states on 28/4/2015 on the sidelines of the first meeting of the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP). A position paper was issued towards the New European Neighbourhood Policy with regard to migration. This document was submitted within the framework of the consultations undertaken by the EU on “the New European Neighbourhood Policy”, which seeks to strengthen bilateral and regional relations with its neighbouring countries, including consultations with LAS.

Expatriates Affairs, representatives of the Expatriates of each Arab country, Arab civil society organizations abroad, Arab Expatriates youth, prominent figures of Arab Expatriates abroad, some representatives of the embassies of foreign countries accredited to the Arab Republic of Egypt, in addition to some of the heads of LAS missions in the big countries of destination.

The conference discussed the issues of the Arab communities abroad and ways to enhance communication between them and the Arab world through three main themes discussed over three days through seven sessions dealt with: the role of the civil society organizations in the advancement of the Arab Communities, the role of Arab Expatriates in the development and strengthening of the dialogue of civilizations, cultures and religions, towards establishing an organizational and information framework for Arab Expatriates.

At the end of the conference, the participants issued the “Declaration of the First Conference of Arab Expatriates”, which included recommendations concerning the role of Arab civil society organizations abroad, the role of Arab skilled migrants and exchanging expertise with their countries of origin, culture and openness towards others, political and social participation of Arab expatriates, intensifying links with new expatriate generations

and their culture of origin, Arabic language and its importance as means of communication between Arab communities and their home countries, in addition to establishing an organizational framework for Arab expatriates.

### The Arab American Economic Forum

LAS, in cooperation and coordination with Arab prominent figures in the U.S.A. and the U.S. Middle East Economic Affairs Committee, organized three sessions of “The Arab-U.S. Economic Forum”. The first session was held in Detroit in 2003, the second in Houston in 2006 and the third in Washington in May 2008. This Forum emphasizes the importance of promoting Arab-U.S. interests through mutual cooperation. Moreover, it stresses the importance of the role of civil society with a view to launching joint programs and organizing intellectual fora for the Arab-U.S. Chambers of Commerce.

### Conference of the Federation of Arab American Association (FEARAB-AMERICA)

LAS organized a conference with the Federation of Arab American Association (FEARAB- AMERICA) at its headquarters in 2006. The conference discussed a number of topics dealing with Arab Americans in sending and receiving countries, the impact of Arab values and principles on culture and education in the U.S., the dialogue of civilizations, the image of Arabs in the media, means of strengthening relations between LAS and (FEARAB), means of enhancing the conditions of Arab-American youth and women and their future, Arab-American economic relations and the role of Arab communities in enhancing and promoting them. The Conference concluded its work by holding a roundtable discussion which culminated in issuing a number of recommendations.

### The Arab Expatriate's Day



LAS celebrates the Arab Expatriate's Day on annual basis according to the resolutions of the Ministerial Council No.6464 dated 14/9/2004 and No. 7411 dated 13/9/2011 concerning the celebration of Arab expatriate's Day annually on December 4, which came as a recognition of the importance of the role played by Arab expatriates and in support to their scientific and practical efforts and achievements. This resolution also shows a strong determination to extend bridges of communication with Arab expatriates abroad.

On this occasion, LAS organizes annual celebrations in cooperation with its missions abroad and in coordination with the Arab ambassadors' councils. Representatives of Arab

communities abroad participate in these celebrations, and LAS honors symbols, leaders and heads of Arab communities as well as their civil society organizations on their accomplishments to serve their community.

Accordingly, a celebration was held in Brasilia LAS mission in 2007, another was held in Berlin LAS mission in 2008, two celebrations were held in 2009 in Berlin and Madrid LAS missions, in Washington in 2012, in Beijing in 2013, and in New Delhi in 2014. Some missions also took the initiative to organize celebrations on this occasion; in 2007 (Berlin and Bonn), in 2008 (Madrid), in 2009 (New Delhi), in 2011 (New Delhi and Madrid), in 2012 (Madrid), and in 2013 (Washington and Madrid).

### Communication Visits to Arab Communities Abroad

A delegation from LAS organizes visits to countries of destination with the aim of establishing communication channels with the Arab communities

in host countries, to get to know their situation, problems and aspirations and to brief them on LAS' vision regarding Arab expatriates and the role they can play either in their new communities or in their countries of origin. The delegation visited Paris and Rome in 2007, Vienna and Berlin in 2008, four Spanish cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Seville and Granada) in 2009, and Brussels in 2010.

During these visits the delegation met with prominent Arab figures in these countries, representative of their civil society organizations in addition to holding meetings with officials and ministers for briefings on the policies of the host countries vis-a-vis Arab expatriates and the problems they confront in dealing with them. Moreover, the delegation meets with Arab Ambassadors' Councils in the headquarters of LAS missions.

### Cultural Exploratory Trip for Second Generation of Arab Expatriates



In the framework of the attention given to Arab expatriate youth from the second and third generations of Arab expatriates, LAS organizes cultural exploratory trips in cooperation with its member states. Seven cultural exploratory trips for the second generation of Arab expatriates were organized during the period from 2003 to 2009 in seven different countries. These trips were hosted by Egypt in 2003, Lebanon in 2004, Saudi Arabia in 2005, Algeria in 2006, Qatar in 2007, Jordan in 2008 and Morocco in 2009.

### Fourth: Reports and Studies

#### A Study on the Dynamics of Arab Expatriate Communities: Promoting Positive Contributions to Socioeconomic Development and Political Transitions in the Homelands

LAS and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a study focusing on the situation of Arab expatriates in various countries

of residence in the light of the changes taking place in these countries, in order to provide an overview of Arab expatriates, their characteristics and current conditions according to the countries of residence, which is the cornerstone of any project that aims to engage these expatriates in the development process in the Arab world.

The study focused on: the conceptualization of Arab expatriates in the context of the dynamics of Arab expatriates, giving a brief overview of the Arabs abroad, exploring the characteristics and conditions of

Arab expatriates, in addition to the evaluation of the expatriates' potentials and their willingness to participate in the development process in the Arab world, especially after the recent events in the region.

#### Report on Arab Migration



LAS issues a report on Arab migration with the help of a group of experts in the field of migration. The first report was issued in 2006 and focused on "Arab Labor Migration", the second report issued in 2008 and focused on "Arab brain drain", and the third was issued in 2014 and focused on "International Migration and Development". The fourth report is to be issued in 2016 under the thematic focus of "Irregular Migration in North Africa".

### A Situation Report on International Migration in the Arab Region

LAS, in partnership with member organizations of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab region, is preparing a joint report every two years on the situation of international migration in the Arab region, with the aim to address the knowledge deficit on international migration in the Arab region by providing a multi-disciplinary and comprehensive overview of relevant contemporary migration trends and their economic and social consequences in the Arab region for policy makers, researchers and practitioners, drawing on the expertise and mandates of the member agencies of the Working Group. It will highlight the need for coordinated and holistic responses to international migration challenges.

The first issue of the report, to be issued in December 2015, is focusing on "Migration, Displacement and



Development in a Changing Arab Region". It sheds light on refugees' conditions in the region, their rights and the impact of their presence on the social and economic development in countries of asylum.

#### "The Arab Expatriate" Newsletter

LAS issues a non-periodic newsletter titled "The Arab Expatriate", which is distributed to its member states, its missions abroad and the Arab expatriate communities. The newsletter includes the latest events and activities LAS has organized in the field of migration and Arab expatriates, as well as the activities it participated in and were organized by other entities, its initiatives in the field of migration, news on Arab communities living abroad, information on Arab expatriate figures, in addition to some information about Arab communities in certain countries.

#### Studies presented to the seminars and academic conferences

LAS organizes seminars and conferences in collaboration with academic institutions and international organizations concerned with migration; where studies are prepared and presented on issues related to migration and expatriates. LAS has organized the following events:

- Three seminars in coordination with the Afro- Egyptian Studies Program, the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University; the first one was held in 2005 on "Arab Expatriates in African Countries" and the second was held in 2007 on "Arab expatriates from North Africa in Europe", and the third was held in 2008 on "Arab-African migration Abroad: Problems and Solutions".
- International seminar on "International Migration in the Middle East and North Africa after the Arab Uprising: A Long Term Perspective" was held in 2013, in cooperation with the International Union for the Scientific Study of

Population (IUSSP), the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) - the American

University in Cairo (AUC), UKAID.

#### *Fifth: Engaging Arab Expatriates in the Development Process in the Arab Region*

##### The Conference of Arab Expatriate Scientists "When Arab Minds Integrate"

LAS, in cooperation with the Society for the Advancement of Science and Technology in the Arab World, USA, (SASTA), held the Arab Expatriate Scientists' Conference under the theme "When Arab Minds Integrate" at its headquarters in December 2012, with the participation of the Egyptian Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research,

Arab Republic of Egypt, heads of Arab universities and relevant bodies in the Arab countries, academics, researchers and Arab scientists, in addition to a distinguished group of Arab scientists living abroad.

As a conclusion of the work of the conference, LAS and SASTA launched the initiative of "Arab Expatriate Scientists" to implement projects in the fields of: Biomedical and Health Sciences, Information and Communication Technology, Alternative Sources of Energy.





### Entrepreneurial knowledge: Towards Arab German-Egyptian Women Development Experience



LAS has implemented a project titled “Entrepreneurial knowledge: Towards Arab German-Egyptian Women Development Experience”, in partnership with the Deutsch-Arab Friendship Association (DAFG) in Berlin, and in cooperation with Hawaa Almostaqbal Association in Egypt. The project was funded by EC-UN Initiative

for Migration and Development.

The project aimed to enhance the level of Egyptian women participation in economy through acquiring knowledge, skills and work style on small-scale projects from female Arab migrant entrepreneurs in Germany, in addition to developing networks and partnerships between Arab Expatriate Businesswomen in Germany and their counterparts in the Arab region, and helping Arab Expatriate businesswomen to get better information about business and investment opportunities in the Arab region.

A seminar was held at the closing of the project on March 31, 2011 at LAS headquarters.

### Sixth: Capacity-Building Programmes

- In the framework of continuous cooperation with international organizations, LAS organizes, in collaboration with the UNHCR, a



training workshop for officials from the Arab Mediterranean countries on “**Mixed Migration and Irregular Movements**” in November 2015. The International Organization for migration (IOM) and the Commission of the European Union participate in the presentations during the workshop sessions due to their experience of the subject.

- In the framework of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab region, LAS, UN-ESCWA and IOM carried out a capacity-building workshop for Arab countries of origin in order to build their capacities to **mainstream international migration into their development strategies** in September 2014. The trainers used tools based on the handbook prepared by GMG for policymakers and practitioners titled “Integrating International Migration into Development Strategies” and the training manual prepared by IOM on

“International Migration and Development”. These modules were translated into Arabic in order to increase its accessibility to policymakers and practitioners in the Arab region.

- LAS organized two training workshops for government officials of LAS member States on **international migration, refugees, and human displacement**, in collaboration with IOM and UNHCR. The first one was held in December 2013, while the second was held in June 2014. The workshops aimed to build the capacity of LAS Member States in the promotion of the rights of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people. The participants in the workshop represented ministries of migration and Arab expatriates, ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of interior and human rights national institutions.

## *Seventh: Data Collection*

### **MED-HIMS Programme**

LAS is participating in the implementation of the programme of regionally coordinated Household International Migration Surveys in the Mediterranean Countries (MED-HIMS Programme), in cooperation with the European Union (EU), World Bank, UNFPA, ILO, UNHCR and IOM.

MED-HIMS is a regional programme of coordinated international migration surveys requested by the National Statistical Offices of 8 Arab countries (namely—Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia).

MED-HIMS is composed by the regional level, where mainly the common methodology and instruments are discussed and developed/reviewed and activities are evaluated/planned under the coordination of international organizations, and the national level, where the household surveys are

implemented under the responsibility of the national statistical institutes.

### **LAS Information System on Migration**

LAS is seeking to establish an information system for immigration and Arab expatriates affairs, which is based on the integration of migration information systems in the Arab countries. The system includes three databases:

- Database of **highly skilled Arab Expatriates,**
- Database of **associations, unions and organizations** established by Arab communities in countries of destination,
- Database of **laws, legislations and regulations** related to migration and expatriates.

The establishment of such a system would contribute to create the necessary mechanisms to benefit from the current situation of Arab migration within the framework of the current international circumstances and developments, and to maximize its positive side and minimize its hazards to serve economic and social development in the Arab world.