The conference was well attended by over 100 government/EU officials, diplomatic representatives and migration workers, civil society representatives and IOM reintegration specialists from Belgium, China, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Libya, Mongolia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Suriname and Switzerland.

The main goal of the conference was to exchange information and experiences on existing policies and practices in Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) and strengthen coordination among stakeholders. The debates in the workshops and the final plenary focused on the effectiveness and sustainability of reintegration.

On the side of the Conference, the programme included two days of field visits and meetings. The foreign delegates met with potential returnees in different locations in the Netherlands and provided first-hand information about reintegration options in the respective countries of origin. Also, they visited their diplomatic representations in the Netherlands and met with Dutch government officials for further bilateral discussions.

“Increasing mutual understanding and identifying best practices”

The main goal of the conference was to exchange information and experiences on existing policies and practices in Assisted Voluntary Return and
Voluntary Return and Reintegration

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration, working closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. With 155 member states, a further 11 states holding observer status and offices in over 100 countries, IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. Dignified and humane assistance to migrants in need is a cornerstone of IOM’s work.

IOM works in the four broad areas of migration management: migration and development; facilitating migration; regulating migration; and addressing forced migration. Cross-cutting activities include the promotion of international migration law; policy debate and guidance; protection of migrants’ rights; migration health; and the gender dimension of migration.

**Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)**

Assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) is a core activity of IOM providing vital assistance to tens of thousands of migrants returning home every year. It is also a growing area of work as an increasing number of States – both those hosting migrants as well as countries of origin – recognize the value of AVRR as an essential component of an effective and humane migration management framework.

IOM remains convinced that, where feasible, AVRR is the most desirable form of return given that it takes the individual’s decision into account and allows returnees to prepare for their return while avoiding the stigma of deportation and its negative repercussions. It can also provide a viable and humanitarian response to migrants who are stranded and often destitute.

**AVRR includes organizational and financial assistance for the return and, where possible, reintegration measures offered to the individual returning voluntarily. AVRR is a 3-phase process:**

1. **Pre-departure assistance and travel preparations**
2. **Assistance with the actual trip home**
3. **Post-arrival assistance for the socio-economic reinstallation and reintegration**

**Reintegration assistance**

In recent years, growing efforts have been made to improve return policy formulation and make return
assistance effective for those in need of such support. Reintegration assistance plays a key role in facilitating sustainable returns for all parties – the migrants, the host countries and origin countries. Key tools for return and reintegration include: the socio-economic profiling of potential returnees in host countries to assess their needs and motivations, coupled by an assessment of the conditions and prospects in the country of origin to support the migrant’s decision to return; return counselling and return-related information to help with preparations for the migrant’s return and reintegration; and post-return monitoring to ensure the appropriate and sustainable delivery of reintegration assistance and that the necessary adjustments can be made to return assistance programmes.

Voluntary return takes the individual’s decision into account

The reintegration assessment of each individual is essential in determining how his or her needs can be addressed. Returnees may not have a clear idea of what they wish to be assisted with prior to departure, or may change their mind upon arrival. Once migrants return to their country of origin, they meet with the IOM office to follow up on the initial discussions in host country.

Some examples and considerations concerning reintegration in kind are as follows:

- Small business development/ income-generating activities: For returnees who wish to start a small business, assistance is provided for purchasing the necessary equipment. Beneficiaries are counselled to plan their activities effectively so as to understand the workings of the market. This also helps beneficiaries to identify and use the opportunities offered by the local market and the importance of competitors in relation to their standpoint and opportunities. To ensure that such assistance is sustainable and that the returnee has the necessary skills/qualifications to start a business, the following is advisable: to have a business plan; to have the necessary skills; and to provide any necessary legal documentation related to the business start-up.
• Vocational training can consist of any activity through which professional courses are organized for an individual who either wishes to refine existing skills, or learn a new skill to re-enter the labour market.

• Education support includes any assistance pertaining to the continuity of the individual’s education, whether at the primary, secondary or university levels. For example, the reintegration grant can cover the costs of course and examination fees, or the purchase of books and school uniforms.

• The reintegration support can include support in meeting basic housing needs as well as support for identified health needs. Health assistance in particular is taken into careful consideration. IOM pre-identifies the appropriate service providers for referral upon return; if no such service provisions are available, the migrants is informed of the situation before a final decision is made on return.

• Job placements/apprenticeships, whereby through agreed contracts with employers, individuals can benefit from on-the-job training; This type of support is extremely beneficial because the assistance can subsidize the wages of returnees during an agreed period of time, while the individual works in the identified company acquiring valuable work experience.

Monitoring and evaluation over a definite period of time investigates whether the key objectives and results have been achieved. Such an exercise makes it possible to assess the degree of success of what has been achieved for the individuals assisted; the difficulties that arose during implementation; and any factors to consider in building future reintegration assistance schemes in both host and origin countries.
Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration from the Netherlands

Some 5,000 migrants in the Netherlands contact IOM every year, a good part of whom choose to return home voluntarily with IOM. The decision to return is not always easy: there is much to consider, for oneself and for one’s family.

IOM has been assisting migrants departing from the Netherlands to return to their country of origin, or resettling to a third country since 1992. The beneficiaries of IOM’s AVRR assistance in the Netherlands include primarily (ex-) asylum seekers, meaning migrants who have permission from the Dutch government to stay in the Netherlands during their asylum procedure, or who are still in the Netherlands after their asylum application has been rejected. Migrants who are not or no longer allowed to stay in the Netherlands, as well as migrants in a regular procedure and migrants who have a residence permit, can also apply for AVRR assistance.

The support provided by IOM in the Netherlands consist of information and counselling, procurement of travel documents, arrangements for safe travel, and the provision of cash and/or in-kind reintegration support. The IOM services are intended to support the migrants with building a new perspective for the future in the country of origin and help address the challenges they face in the return and reintegration process. The needs of the migrants can be complex, and especially so when they are vulnerable migrants: families or single parents with underage children; migrants with health related concerns; victims of trafficking; unaccompanied minors; irregular migrants; or migrants in immigration detention.

Helping to address the challenges migrants face during return and reintegration

Netherlands include primarily (ex-) asylum seekers, meaning migrants who have permission from the Dutch government to stay in the Netherlands during their asylum procedure, or who are still in the Netherlands after their asylum application has been rejected. Migrants who are not or no longer allowed to stay in the Netherlands, as well as migrants in a regular procedure and migrants who have a residence permit, can also apply for AVRR assistance.

1 Migrants who are willing to have their residence permit withdrawn at the moment of departure from the Netherlands.
Through the network of IOM offices in countries of origin, IOM in the Netherlands offers in-kind grants that can finance a variety of reintegration plans: the setting up of income-generating activities, housing, and educational or training programmes. Tailored assistance is provided to specific vulnerable groups, such as migrants with health concerns, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, families or single parents with underage children, and irregular migrants.

The provision of reintegration assistance to migrants is now an integral part of the Dutch return policy. Through the years, IOM has been the main supporter of reintegration assistance for returning migrants, as a humanitarian intervention and also as a major sustainability factor. In 2013, IOM further expanded its reintegration services to returnees through existing and new AVRR projects. More than ever before, migrants in the Netherlands were offered a variety of options of cash and/or in-kind reintegration assistance in 2013. Overall, almost 80% of the number of departing migrants availed themselves of these options.

Total number of returned and resettled migrants 2009-2013

- 2009: 2583
- 2010: 3064
- 2011: 3473
- 2012: 2905
- 2013: 2489

Top 10 countries of departure in 2013

- Iraq: 10%
- Brazil: 8%
- Serbia: 8%
- Armenia: 5%
- Mongolia: 5%
- Indonesia: 5%
- China: 4%
- Russia: 4%
- Bosnia: 3%
- Afghanistan: 3%
- Other: 45%
An AVRR Case Return and Reintegration (1/2)

Urgent request for assistance
- Woman
- 35 years old
- Mother of a child
- Victim of trafficking
- No relatives in country of origin

Embassy
IOM schedules appointment with Embassy

Application
Migrant applies to IOM for AVRR support

Travel documents
Travel documents issued by Embassy

Questions raised
- Beneficiary needs shelter after return
- Can she be trained as a midwife without a medical background?

IOM support
Mother and child are entitled to a small cash grant and in-kind reintegration support

Reintegration plan
Wish: train as midwife or nurse
Maybe start small poultry farm?

Proposal IOM Country of Origin
- Shelter only available for under 18s
- With completed ‘O’ levels she can apply for training
- Course costs USD 740 per semester

IOM International Organization for Migration
An AVRR Case

Advice
Beneficiary wants to discuss reintegration with IOM in country of origin

Return home
Mother and child return to country of origin

Potential risks
• Risk of theft of the motor cycles and limited storage space for the sand
• Close monitoring is required

Expanding
Both businesses are doing well: beneficiary is making a profit and has employed two people

Doubts
• Migrant first wants to find accommodation by herself
• Plans to contact IOM in country of origin after arrival to discuss reintegration

Change of plan
• Migrant wants to invest reintegration grant in the purchase of 2 motor cycles for public transport and to sell sand to construction companies
• Talks plan through with IOM in country of origin and receives endorsement

Reintegration
• Migrant starts motor cycle business
• Makes profit and invests it in poultry farm
Reintegration in Countries of Return

China

IOM in Beijing has offered in-kind reintegration assistance to returnees from the Netherlands since 2009. IOM Beijing provides the following services: information search, post-arrival counselling, transportation arrangements, reintegration assistance and monitoring. A very common choice among the Chinese returnees is the investment in micro-businesses. IOM helps the migrants assess the feasibility of their plans and collect the supporting documents necessary for the disbursement of the reintegration grant.

Assisting migrants returning from the Netherlands
Building a relation of trust with the returnee can have a positive impact on the entire reintegration process. Usually, it is the returnees who contact IOM China first, to share information about their background and to ask questions. In the preparatory phase, IOM advises the returnees about the documentation they need to prepare and active contact is then maintained on the progress made. About half of the business ventures developed by the returnees are based on the IOM grant, but additional resources are often needed, which returnees usually procure from relatives and friends.

Post-arrival counselling
After the return to China, the migrant contacts IOM Beijing. The discussions review the individual situation, including the migrant’s health status, family and dependents, the reintegration/business plan and motivation, the documentation needed and various other issues of concern. The reintegration plan
remains the main focus in most of the cases: IOM advises on the registration of the business, discusses the person’s strengths and weaknesses in starting a particular type of business, as well as the potential risks. The returnees usually raise questions about whether they should obtain a business registration, set up the new business on their own or in partnership, and about the kind of supporting documents that have to be submitted. In IOM China’s experience, most returnees do not change their original plans after arrival back in China. They declare to have given a lot of thought to their abilities, such as previous work experience, specific skills, or friends that they can partner with, before departure.

IOM China does not cooperate with local partners in carrying out reintegration activities. On occasion, IOM consults with the local governments on business registration issues or healthcare policies. Efforts are being made to improve this cooperation in the future.

The experience of returnees
The most common activities undertaken by returnees are micro-businesses such as small restaurants or grocery stores. Many returnees have a poor education background and modest or no savings, and they live in remote areas. These factors contribute to the difficulties they report. For example, one business plan that did not work out well was a small restaurant that one returnee set up all by himself. The poor location attracted very few customers. The man admitted that he did not do any market research while he overestimated his ability to run a restaurant.

Chinese migrants tend to concentrate in certain cities, where it is easier for them to find other returnee friends or identify business partners in the local networks. The effective healthcare system in China contributes to the decision of many returnees to settle down in their hometown and focus on business.

Most successful business activities are the result of good partnership
Most of the successful business activities are the result of good partnerships. Returnees may not have sufficient resources upon return, so it is convenient for them to invest in an existing business, because it can offer more stability than a newly born business. Partnering with others reduces risks and generates profits faster, at least in the short term. For example, a couple with experience in running a shop received a friend’s proposal that they took over a shop selling decoration supplies. Thanks to a stable inflow of customers and the personal efforts of the couple, their business made profit quite quickly.

The IOM experience
Having to cover a territory the size of Europe is probably IOM China’s biggest challenge in providing on-site monitoring, airport pickup services or direct support in the implementation of business plans. Instead, IOM’s consultations and monitoring have to be conducted by phone. With labour costs on the rise
and small service fees to cover for these, IOM Beijing can only employ a limited number of staff to work full time on return and reintegration. This is another reason why on-site services are seldom provided. As regards partners, the IOM Liaison Office in China has a close working relation with government partners such as the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Monitoring reintegration
Given the staff limitations against the vastness of the country, IOM Beijing monitors reintegration developments mainly via phone interviews. However, monitoring by phone is less reliable than on-site visits. Sometimes it is no longer possible to conduct or continue monitoring activities when the migrants change their number and contact cannot be re-established. The returnees find monitoring useful as it provides new occasions for them to receive feedback, additional advice and suggestions. Keeping track of the returnee’s situation can further strengthen the relationship between the two parties. Furthermore, the assessments of the outcome of the individual reintegration plans can be used to improve future programmes. The success of reintegration can be basically rated by the impact on the person’s self sufficiency. If the activity undertaken by the person enables him or her to settle down and earn a living, the reintegration can be called a success.

Egypt
Reintegration is an essential service provided by IOM Egypt in support of sending IOM missions such as the Netherlands. It is a complex process that requires staff with solid counselling skills, a business outlook, awareness of the local economy, and a good understanding of the overall local context.

Egypt became an IOM Member in 1991. An IOM office was established in Cairo in 1995 with sub-offices in Aswan, and four Information Counselling and Referral Services (ICRS) units in the Menofia, Benha, Minia and Fayoum Governorates.

Assisting migrants returning from the Netherlands
IOM has offered in-kind reintegration assistance to returnees from the Netherlands since 2010. The assistance consists of support for (self) employment, medical assistance, education for underage children, accommodation or house furnishing, support for legal assistance, and assistance with education or (vocational) training. Business start up is the most requested type of assistance.

Reintegration assistance should be regarded as a means to acquire a sustainable income. IOM Egypt takes an active and keen role in the reintegration process. The returnees are counselled and guided towards identifying and selecting adequate reintegration options and suitable training. The IOM reintegration assistant helps the returnee with the necessary paperwork, is present when, for instance, goods purchased from the reintegration grant are delivered, and personally conducts monitoring visits to ensure that successes and challenges are properly documented.

IOM Cairo: “Monitoring allows us to follow the impact of reintegration”
The reintegration assistants usually build up a special relationship with the returnees. Bi-weekly follow-up calls ensure regular communication. Returnees tend to rely on family and friends and therefore they often choose businesses their relatives are familiar with to ensure sustained technical backup.

**Post-arrival counselling**

After arrival, the discussions with the IOM reintegration assistants focus on the returnee’s past experiences, educational background, skills acquired in the countries of destination and origin, potential opportunities, and the plans he or she has in Egypt.

The returnees need reassurance that they will indeed receive the reintegration grant; they ask about the duration of the process: how long will it take? It happens quite often that returnees change their mind over the reintegration plans. A common cause for the change is the lack of understanding of the local market in the home country.

To help returnees implement the reintegration activities, IOM works with one main partner: the Nahdet El Mahrous. This is the NGO in partnership with which IOM Egypt has established the Information Counselling and Referral Services (ICRS) units. These have the role of a one-stop shop to connect job seekers with opportunities for employment, self-employment and training. The returnees are priority cases for the ICRS. IOM Egypt also works with other NGO partners that offer a variety of employment and self-employment training covering different geographical areas in Egypt.

“Returnees often choose businesses their relatives are familiar with, to ensure sustained technical backup”
The experience of returnees

Returnees use their in-kind reintegration grant mainly to set up a business. It is common for returnees in rural areas to decide on a cattle-feeding business. Returnees residing in urban areas mostly start business centres, grocery shops and taxi projects. A major challenge faced by all returnees is the paperwork, which is a lengthy and bureaucratic process.

One returnee decided to use his reintegration grant to buy cattle. He was made fully aware that investing in cattle is a long-term investment. A month after he received his cattle, he was so desperate for cash that he decided to sell his cattle. Long-term investment projects do not generally fit the needs of the returnees. A reintegration case that worked out successfully is well exemplified by a 50-year old returnee who decided to open a business centre. The reason for his success was his good understanding of what setting up a business entailed. He took training in entrepreneurship through IOM Egypt, after which he identified a strategic location for the shop (in front of a university) and made a realistic and detailed cost benefit analysis. Most importantly, he had the will to succeed.

The IOM experience

IOM Cairo experiences many opportunities with regard to the reintegration support offered to returnees. Through its local partners, IOM Egypt keeps working on identifying and maintaining up to date information on local market needs and potential opportunities for business start-ups. Another advantage is the information made available to returnees on job vacancies and relevant training opportunities, based on the mapping conducted by IOM’s NGO partners. By capitalizing on other on-going country projects and the ICRS units in four Governorates in key locations across Egypt, IOM has full geographical coverage and access to other local services potentially relevant to returnees.

Monitoring reintegration

IOM Cairo monitors the reintegration of individual returnees by visiting them three months after the first payment on their reintegration plan. Monitoring is conducted by phone when on site visits cannot be arranged due to security reasons and/or the long distance from the IOM office. A second and final monitoring visit takes place 12 months after the initial payment.

Monitoring allows IOM to follow the results of the reintegration activities and their impact on the returnees. It also enable IOM to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of the reintegration assistance provided.
Ghana

The reintegration activities conducted by IOM Ghana focus on the provision of psychosocial counselling, medical support, linking returnees to opportunity support systems, monitoring reintegration activities, and community assistance projects. IOM Ghana has been providing reintegration support since 2002 and in-kind reintegration assistance to returnees from the Netherlands since 2008.

Assisting migrants returning from the Netherlands

During the reintegration process, IOM Ghana provides mental health and psychosocial counselling aimed at a sustainable reintegration, as well as in-kind assistance for starting a business including management skills and empowerment coaching.

Returnees mostly request support for a business project. The reintegration assistants build a professional relationship with the returnees based on mutual respect and trust.

Returnees rely strongly on IOM for their reintegration after return, specifically as regards the identification of sustainable micro businesses, the development of business plans, the connection with service providers for technical and social assistance. Returnees are in contact with IOM at least twice a week during the initial stage of the reintegration process.

Post-arrival counselling

Post-arrival, IOM Ghana provides reintegration orientation, mental health and psychosocial counselling, assistance with business options and business plans, and information on available business opportunities. Returnees usually ask about the length of time before they can access their reintegration grant and the reasons why they do not receive their grant in cash. They also ask questions about travelling to Europe again.

Returnees often change their initial reintegration plan after their return. This is partly due to the lack of in-depth knowledge on the socio-economic situation in Ghana at the time they are drafting a reintegration plan.

IOM Ghana: “Migrants can benefit from reintegration opportunities”
plan in their host country. Upon return they learn about business options that they find more suitable. In 2013 IOM Ghana started a project identifying sustainable business plans for specific regions in the country and compiling useful practical reintegration information. The availability of such information has helped reduce the rate of changes in initial reintegration plans.

In conducting reintegration activities, IOM Ghana cooperates with the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO). This government agency assists with linking technical support to returnees at district levels. IOM also works with Scholars in Transit and Research and Counselling Foundation for African Migrants, an NGO supporting reintegration activities through sensitization programmes and monitoring.

The experience of returnees
Migrants mainly use their in-kind reintegration support for setting up a business or in combination with housing. The main business activities since 2009 have been the trading and transport business. Particular challenges are the general cost of living, the collection of supporting documents and the costs involved with mental health issues.

Reintegration is a challenging process. A reintegration activity that did not take the expected course was the case of a 31-year-old male who returned from the Netherlands in 2013. His initial reintegration plan before departure was fish farming. He later changed his reintegration plan to a transport business. The vehicle cost was paid directly to the vendor for the identified car. Later on, the reintegration process was discontinued when it was discovered he was not running the transport business, or any other business activity, for which the support was provided. This young migrant failed to benefit fully from his reintegration grant because he was not committed to his plans. A year later, he went back to school to further his education.

In Ghana, migrants can certainly benefit from reintegration opportunities. IOM Ghana assists returnees with coaching, identifying and managing common reintegration stressors to promote a successful reintegration, as well as with practical guidance on setting up and managing a viable business. IOM also provides information and insight into the current general socio-economic situation in Ghana in support of the reintegration processes.

A successful reintegration experience was the case of a 42 year old male who returned from the Netherlands to the Greater Accra Region in 2013. He sold malt drinks which he imported from Togo. He was able to save his profit which enabled him to send his children to school about six months after he started his business. The main factors leading to his success were the fact that he conducted a feasibility study on both the demand for the product and the suppliers of a relatively cheaper stock, and his deep...
commitment to his work and the application of business management principles in running his business.

The IOM experience
The main challenges lie in the time limits and financial constraints. Projects are usually too short for returnees to maximize benefits from the IOM reintegration assistance. Financial constraints limit the execution of reintegration activities.

A clear advantage of IOM Ghana is the team of professional counsellors and the ability to communicate effectively in the context of returnees’ culture, together with a long standing reputation as a mission that migrants have confidence in.

Monitoring reintegration
IOM Ghana conducts on-site monitoring, as well as monitoring by phone. Monitoring is often crucial to the success of reintegration of returnees. The mission can provide returnees with further counselling to improve their business and social activities.

Major challenges faced by IOM in the monitoring process include the difficulties to reach a returnee due to, for instance, poor mobile phone coverage and reception in some parts of the country.

Guinea
IOM Conakry’s involvement with return and reintegration dates back to 2005. In 2008, the first reintegration assistance services were offered to returnees from the Netherlands. The reintegration process in Guinea starts with pre-arrival arrangements. Medical cases require the pre-arrangement of medical expertise, checks on the availability of drugs and follow up on procedures.

Guinea has been an IOM Member since 2001. An IOM mission was established the same year, when the civil wars ended in the neighbouring countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The mission has one sub-office located in Nzerekore in the Forest region.

Assisting migrants returning from the Netherlands
Returnees are requested to contact IOM, usually within 72 hours after their arrival, to discuss the reintegration process. At this meeting, the returnee receives information and counselling on the steps in the reintegration process, the requirements concerning payments, the development of a business plan, the identification of suppliers, the relevant socio-economic conditions in the country, economic

Kabla Amihere, Chief of Mission IOM Guinea
activities that the returnee may consider, or entrepreneurship training.

**Post-arrival counselling**
Depending on the location of the returnee, IOM establishes and maintains contact in different ways. For those located in the capital city, Conakry, and its surroundings, IOM identifies and locates their residence, as well as the location of their economic activities. IOM staff pays unannounced visits to the returnees to see their progress, and also keeps in contact by phone. These visits reassure the returnees of IOM’s interest and support and help build trust and confidence.

**IOM Guinea: “Reintegrated returnees can become mentors in their communities”**

For those located further away from the capital, IOM plans field visits to their homes and activities, to learn about difficulties and to offer advice and guidance. In view of the socio-cultural dynamics of the society, the returnees rely on their families for sustenance up to the point when their activities turn profitable.

The use that migrants make of the reintegration support depend on their place of residence. Those living in the city capital engage in small trading, the sale of food items, and the resale of telecommunication components such as telephone sets, accessories and telephone recharge cards. Those living in rural areas with access to arable land choose to invest in gardening and farming, animal rearing, and, to some extent, bakeries.

The main challenge for returnees is to ensure their livelihood until their economic endeavours would yield a profit. Other challenges are administrative bottlenecks in finding suppliers able and willing to issue invoices for their supplies, the acceptance of cheques by suppliers, and the lack of technical support in the agricultural sector to ensure optimal...
yields. Oftentimes, the reintegration grant is too small as an investment for the returnee to realize profit.

The experience of returnees
Many returnees see the reintegration support as a second chance and as an opportunity to look at life from a different perspective, to reflect on their adventurism, their lost hopes, and to make the best of their life back home.

“Reintegration also offers migrants the opportunity to look at life from a different perspective, to reflect on their adventurism, their lost hopes, and to make the best of their lives”

A successful reintegration experience is the case of a man who returned from the Netherlands in September 2012. He was counselled by IOM Guinea and mentored by his own brother, after which he decided to engage in commercial activities on the main market of Conakry. He invested his reintegration grant in the setting up of a small scale business selling mobile phones. He successfully changed his business from a retail agent to being a supplier. This success originates in the counselling from IOM, the mentorship of his elder brother and the positive support from his family members. But what counted most was his own contribution to his success: taking and applying in good faith the advice and guidance he received, and his determination and strong will to succeed.

The IOM experience
There are many challenges to be faced in providing monitoring as an important element in support of reintegration activities. Visits to remote locations can involve days of travel to the regional capital, followed by secondary journeys on poor roads. Some returnees change their names, which makes their tracing difficult. However, IOM Conakry has worked on mechanisms to collect information to help the reintegration staff in the monitoring process. Considering the challenges, the mission can gain in terms of visibility, good will and trust among government authorities. The reintegration projects, while giving a second chance to returnees who hitherto had no hope or means to start their life anew, can go a long way in addressing unemployment challenges in the Guinean society.

Monitoring reintegration
Monitoring is conducted by means of field visits. When the returnees are located in, or around, the capital, IOM can undertake short visits to guide and reassure them during their reintegration process. Monitoring gives the returnee the opportunity to share and discuss difficulties and challenges with the IOM staff, and the opportunity for IOM to offer guidance and advice.

The success of the reintegration process can be measured in different ways, for instance, when the returnee no longer considers undertaking the risky adventure of illegal migration. Success can also be measured when the returnees, through their reintegration efforts, are able to provide for their family, and when they share their experiences with other returnees. Reintegrated returnees can become mentors in their communities, advocating against illegal migration, especially when they appear in public media to attest to the dangers of illegal migration and stress the benefits of the reintegration packages and the support they received after return.
Suriname

IOM Guyana started offering in-kind reintegration assistance to returnees to Suriname in September 2012. In the absence of speakers of Dutch in IOM Guyana, reintegration is supported by a consultant based in Suriname who can establish direct contact with the returnees.

Suriname has been an IOM Member since 2013. As IOM does not have an office in Suriname, returns are supported through IOM Georgetown in neighbouring Guyana, which also serves as the IOM Regional Coordination Office for the Caribbean.

Assisting migrants returning from the Netherlands

IOM Guyana’s general experience with reintegration has been good. Nevertheless, there have been occurrences when returnees have been too impatient to receive their grant, especially as the process includes the transfer of the funds from Guyana to Suriname.

On their return to Suriname, the returnees are advised to call the IOM Guyana office. Once the IOM Guyana consultant located in Suriname receives the contact number, date of return and date of the phone call, he follows up with the returnee for confirmation and guides the returnee on the procedure to access the grant. The returnee is requested to submit quotations or other relevant documentation (such as...
a signed lease agreement) for approval. Once the payment is approved by IOM Netherlands, the money is transferred to Suriname where the consultant makes the necessary payments, to reimburse the migrants or pay suppliers directly. Most returnees are inclined to use the grant for the rental of temporary accommodation as this is usually the most stringent need in resettling. Others focus on the starting of a small business.

**Post-arrival counselling**

IOM Guyana discusses the following issues with the returnee: the procedure to access the IOM grant, including timelines; the execution of the proposed reintegration plan; and general counselling and guidance that could support the reintegration. It is always necessary to re-confirm to the migrants that the reintegration grants are provided in kind and not in cash.

It does not happen very often that returnees should change their initial reintegration plan, although they might adjust specific aspects to what is locally available and/or possible. If a total change of plan occurs, the reason is usually that the concept of the original plan cannot be viable in Suriname’s society.

IOM can refer returnees to local NGOs and/or government offices for further assistance with the execution of specific reintegration plans or in order to apply for and access other government services.

**The experience of returnees**

In Suriname many migrants use their in-kind reintegration grant for housing or the establishment of a small business. The selling of clothes is the main business activity among the returnees assisted.

**IOM Guyana: “It takes time to assess whether a returnee has fully adapted”**

One major challenge is finding adequate housing. The newly arrived often move in with relatives, but the viability of such arrangements strongly depends on the relationships involved. Part of the grant can be used for temporary accommodation but, since rental rates are high, rental leases can only be for short periods of time. Find (initial) employment is another significant challenge, especially for elderly migrants, or due to lack of training or schooling.

Many reintegration experiences work out successfully. Most often, the returnees have a good idea of what they want to achieve with the reintegration grant and they follow the procedures for accessing their grant. However, there are exceptions. In the particular case of a woman returnee, she had major difficulties to come up with a reintegration plan; eventually, she was not able to do so within the project’s timeframe. Another case concerns a returnee who did not have relatives that could accommodate him; he ended up using his entire reintegration grant on rented accommodation. He found it a very distressing experience following which he expressed the intention to travel back to the Netherlands.

**The IOM experience**

As returns to Suriname have to be assisted from another, even if neighbouring, country, and because of the language barriers, it can be a challenge to rely solely on the consultant in Suriname: information has to change hands several times; case documentation reaches the Guyana office via the consultant; further information may be added by IOM Guyana; then the whole package has to be forwarded to the Netherlands for approval. It is thus a challenge to keep the process as effective as possible. On the other hand, the reintegration work has given the Guyana office valuable experience in the AVRR field.
**Monitoring reintegration**

IOM Guyana monitors the reintegration process by means of telephone calls. The mission’s main challenge in monitoring is to get into contact with the returnees, as many times the returnees use temporary phone numbers that at some point become unavailable. Also, IOM finds that many migrants do not consider monitoring helpful and, as a result, attempts to contact them can be very difficult. The migrants fail to see why monitoring should be useful if no additional material assistance is provided.

“Many returnees are reluctant to re-settle in the Surinamese society”

IOM Guyana believes that the returnee’s material wellbeing, i.e. when the requirements of adequate housing and regular income are met, can determine the success of the reintegration. To assess whether the returnee has adapted to his new living conditions and has a fair sense of wellbeing requires more time to determine. Most returnees express significant reluctance to settle back and only try to make a new start in Suriname because they feel that they have no other choice.

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**Libya**

IOM Tripoli provides counselling and initiates reintegration projects for migrants returning from the Netherlands to Libya and sub-Saharan countries of return. IOM assists returnees with counselling concerning the type of reintegration project, locations and other services, such as specific training.

**Assisting migrants returning from the Netherlands**

IOM Libya’s approach is organized in three phases. In a first phase, contact is established between the returnee and IOM and a general discussion is conducted on the anticipated reintegration process and the support that can be received from IOM. In the second phase, the returnees decide on what they want to do and a business plan is drawn together. The third phase is the actual establishment of the business, followed by close monitoring.

The returnee and the reintegration officer develop a good working relationship, in which sufficient trust is built so that the returnee becomes comfortable talking about his or her needs and plans. In the initial
Post-arrival counselling
The first discussion with IOM after arrival in Tripoli is about their background, skills and plans for the future. They may have returned after a long absence during which many changes have taken place at home. Therefore it takes the returnees time to adjust to the new realities. They often change their initial reintegration plan when they learn more about the market, the competition, or when the costs are too high and thus more investment would be required to make their project a success.

The experience of returnees
The assistance most requested relates to decisions on types of business to be considered. Starting a business or self-employment project is the main activity in which returning migrants decide to invest their in-kind reintegration grant. Usually, this involves the opening of a small apparel shop or grocery. The challenges are related to keeping the business, because many new shops are opening now in the main cities and this makes start-ups more expensive and more risky.

IOM Libya has seen mobile phone shops fail. It is a high risk investment due to the strong competition and the high running costs. The only way to make the investment profitable is to join an existing shop. Projects considered feasible are mainly clothes shops or car workshops. An example of successful reintegration project is a restaurant opened in Tripoli by a returnee with experience in restaurant and business management who succeeded in attracting customers and keeping them too as regulars to the place.

IOM Tripoli: “Actively monitoring success cases so we can better help future returnees”

The IOM experience
The biggest challenge faced by IOM Libya is the time pressure from the returnees themselves: most of them want and expect IOM to carry out all proceedings as soon as possible. In addition, the current security situation in Libya limits IOM’s capacity: the staff has had to work from home on consecutive days. Also, most returnees establish their business outside of Tripoli where it is still unsafe to access some areas. IOM has had to arrange an armed vehicle to be able to travel in the country for monitoring purposes.
IOM Libya keeps services for returnees very flexible: the returnees may change their minds, and many of them do so. As IOM has been assisting returnees since 2006, the IOM staff working on reintegration is highly experienced and fully aware of existing best practices.

“Trust and confidence are crucial”

Monitoring reintegration
All areas outside Tripoli are monitored by IOM Libya by phone and with the support of former colleagues living in the respective areas. IOM staff makes field visits also, depending on the case, and only if the security situation allows it. However, monitoring outside Tripoli can be very costly. There are also situations when less successful migrants would get upset over a negative monitoring assessment. IOM has had to explain to these beneficiaries that monitoring is only intended to support them: to learn from mistakes and avoid bad practices. Reintegration is successful when the returnee is well established with a business that is actually running. Changes will unavoidably be made in time and as the situation in Libya changes. It is important for a returnee to secure his or her livelihood without depending on external financial support.

Mongolia

Migrants have returned under IOM AVRR programmes to Mongolia since 2000. IOM in Ulaanbaatar focuses on counter trafficking, strengthening labour migration management, capacity building for the national immigration agency and assisted voluntary return. AVRR is the most time consuming activity in the mission, and one which needs most careful and delicate service and attention.

Mongolia became an IOM Member in 2010. An IOM office was opened in Ulaanbaatar in 2011. Currently, IOM Mongolia has one office in the capital city where it employs two fulltime staff.

Assisting migrants returning from the Netherlands
Mongolia’s reintegration activities focus on booking temporary accommodation upon arrival and onward transport, contacting family members, meeting and assisting the migrant on arrival, conducting payments and arranging ambulance services if required. The reintegration assistance introduces the returning migrant to the role that IOM plays in the process, the administrative steps including document requirements, the assessment of business proposals, visits to business sites, support with contracts, monitoring and referral to medical services, and legal support services.
Returnees face countless challenges after their return to Mongolia. For instance, they can struggle with financial difficulties due to unemployment, low income, limited investment opportunities or financial dependence on others. Accommodation is a constant issue with many returnees, regardless of the assistance they receive. Many do not have adequate housing: they often live in rented accommodation, because they sold off their property in order to finance their migration.

Returnees are facing social problems as well: they have been cut off from relatives and friends for years and now feel isolated. For instance, one woman mentioned that she had “been abroad for so many years that living in Mongolia again is a challenge”. Returnees with health concerns are often disappointed with the medical services and the quality of medication available. Added to that is the migrants’ disappointment over the general economic situation in Mongolia.

In most cases, however, the returnees are well informed and prepared about their reintegration before arrival back home. But even these migrants will change their mind about certain businesses because they have been cut off for too long from the realities in their country of origin and therefore have to reconsider their plans.

Post-arrival counselling
Counselling returnees about their reintegration requires many sessions. In the first meetings, it is important to build up trust with the returnee and his or her family. IOM Ulaanbaatar can proceed quickly when the returnees decide to invest their reintegration grants in accommodation, education or medical services and when the steps of payment are clear.

Counselling for the development of a business plan is a more complex process. First, IOM’s role is explained, then the migrant’s motivation, experience in running the selected type of business and
“Migrants often find that the business environment and the local market they used to know have now changed”

The experience of returnees
Most returnees invest their reintegration grants in schemes intended to improve their economic condition. These include job placements, starting up micro businesses such as a small shop, investing in an existing family business, paying a deposit for an employment contract, for instance as a sales person or distributor, but also self employment in taxi service, construction work, tailoring, or repair work (cell phones, electronics, cars). Education and professional/vocational training, including education for children and postgraduate training, are also popular among returnees. Migrants with health concerns invest in medical assistance - general and specialized, and in emergency and longer term care.

The IOM experience
The biggest challenges that IOM Mongolia faces are the territorial distances and the small size of the team. Mongolia is a vast country, which makes it almost impossible for IOM to provide on-site assessment and monitoring.

Monitoring reintegration
IOM Ulaanbaatar offers a 3-phase monitoring service. The inception report is easy to conduct and all returnees are usually happy to participate. However, for cases requiring medical support, this phase can be a sensitive one.

The mid-term monitoring is the most useful, and busy too, phase, as it gives the returnee a chance to step back and evaluate his or her progress in their personal and professional life.

The final monitoring phase aims to assess the impact of the reintegration efforts. It is a very useful process for IOM as an implementing organization. If the returnee is located in the capital city, IOM tries to visit his or her business location or place of residence. Some cases can only be monitored by phone, when the returnees live in remote areas in rural Mongolia.
Morocco

For the past seven years, IOM Rabat has been working on the reintegration of Moroccans returning from different countries of destination.

Assisting migrants returning from the Netherlands
IOM Rabat supports the implementation of the IOM Netherlands reintegration programmes by assisting returnees to make use of their in-kind reintegration grants. The mission offers orientation, advice, and assistance for procurement. IOM staff makes periodical checks on the status of the reintegration activity.

Most returnees request their reintegration assistance to be provided in cash, because they find the in-kind procedure cumbersome due to the requirement that supporting documents be provided for all expenditures. IOM Rabat has also noticed a dire need for psycho-social support to help returnees handle the many hardships encountered in their reintegration and readjustment. This is the case with a large number of returnees who have spent a long time abroad and who return to dysfunctional families, or belong to impoverished or vulnerable socio-economic environments. IOM plays a key role in giving returnees an identity and a structure to resettle.

The contact between returnees and the IOM reintegration officer often develops in a close relationship involving continuous advising, orientation, financial and psycho-social counselling. Most returnees rely on family and friends for support in their reintegration. Most micro business projects undertaken by the beneficiaries are achieved with financial support obtained through micro-loans and personal savings, or with help from family or friends. The reintegration assistance by itself is not sufficient to start up a professional activity that would be profitable in the short-term, let alone sustainable in the long run.

IOM Morocco: “We support returnees in a difficult phase in their lives”

Morocco has been an IOM Member since 1998. The IOM Morocco office was established in Rabat in 2007. Two sub-offices, one in Tangier and the other in Tetouan, were subsequently opened for specific operational purposes.
Post-arrival counselling
After the return, IOM Rabat discusses with the returnee the local context, the changes they are experiencing and the way in which they plan to address the challenges and limitations faced. It is a participative process whose aim is to tailor the reintegration activity to the returnee’s needs and aspirations.

The experience of returnees
Returnees use their in-kind reintegration support mainly to procure material assistance, medical assistance, accommodation and training. IOM Rabat assists with the purchase of professional equipment, goods for micro business projects, training, vehicle/means of transportation, or with the payment of accommodation, medical consultation fees and medicine. The main professional activities developed by migrants returning to rural areas focus on agriculture, such as cattle rearing, farming and beekeeping. Returnees settling in suburban areas choose to work in goods delivery in the outskirts of the city and the establishment of links between suppliers in the city markets and customers in the suburbs. During their reintegration process in Morocco, the returnees encounter challenges ranging from economic, to professional, to social and psychological related to the impact of the transition phase they go through.

Not all reintegration experiences work out well. A while ago, IOM Rabat received an unaccompanied minor who returned to his home village. Unfortunately, due to the poor socio-economic condition of his mother, who was his sole caretaker at the time, and of his siblings, he left again for Europe, as an irregular migrant, only shortly after his return. The lack of psycho-social support was one of the main reasons for this unsuccessful reintegration.

There are many opportunities to reintegrate successfully in Morocco. The economy has prospered
over the years and there are opportunities for skilled or experienced and, especially in the big cities, for ambitious people. But one needs to be equipped to be able seize such opportunities. These migrants can greatly benefit from support for personal development, empowerment by psycho-social coaching, and counselling on using their potential and skills to engage in professional activities.

An example of successful reintegration is the story of a returnee who, despite his difficult health condition, managed to start an income-generating activity. The migrant used his reintegration grant to cater not only for his own medical treatment, but also for that of his mother’s. Eventually, he took his uncle on board and they worked together to make the micro-project succeed. IOM Rabat was impressed with the efforts he invested into running the business, the confidence he showed, along with the management skills he demonstrated. Reasons for his success were his positive attitude, the moral support from his family, and his own conviction and determination to turn around his socio-economic situation.

"Reasons for his success were his positive attitude, the moral support provided by his family, and, above all, his determination to turn around his social and economic situation”

**The IOM experience**

The challenges that IOM Rabat faces in providing support to returning migrants are as diverse as those faced by the returnees themselves. The most important one is the geography of the country which makes it impossible for IOM to assist all returnees in person. One area in which IOM Rabat has gained significant expertise is the work with returnees with difficult backgrounds.

**Monitoring reintegration**

IOM Rabat monitors reintegration activities on-site. The returnees are regularly contacted on the progress of their reintegration activities and about their current circumstances. The monitoring is certainly helpful to migrants. Many of them enjoy the opportunity to show the results of their reintegration efforts.

Challenges in this phase are often related to the remote location of the migrants: it can take long hours of travelling to get to some areas in the countryside. There are security issues as well, when visiting returnees living in slums affected by high criminality.

In the experience of IOM Rabat, reintegration can be successful. Returnees can manage to lead a stable life: psychologically, socially and professionally.
Conclusions and Recommendations of the conference

The presentations and discussions during the conference examined the opportunities and challenges that migrants face in the reintegration process. The conference workshops considered the following assumptions:

1. Voluntary return is better than non-voluntary return.
2. Voluntary return with reintegration assistance is better than voluntary return with no reintegration assistance.
3. Voluntary return with reintegration assistance in cash and in-kind is better than assistance in cash only.

The number of beneficiaries of in-kind reintegration assistance has grown significantly in the recent years. Still, more needs to be done for reintegration programs to become more sustainable, measurable, balanced, complementary and innovative, and in order to take all dimensions of reintegration into account: Economic, Social and Psycho-Social.

Tailor-made individualised approaches require more time, more funding and more professionalism, for a number of reasons. Sensitivity must be developed for the individual returnee’s needs and abilities. Those migrants requiring little or no assistance are rather few; most returnees are in need of counselling; and there are many who were vulnerable before they migrated and whose needs call for particular attention.

True sustainability requires reintegration initiatives in countries of origin.
True sustainability in the developmental sense will require investments in government and national reintegration initiatives in Countries of Origin (COOs), as the path towards sustainable livelihood cannot and should not be tele-guided from the Countries of Destination (CODs). For this reason, the conference’s intended focus was on the needs in COOs, represented at the Conference by AVRR specialists in IOM missions and their government and civil society partners.

The conference discussed four topics in a series of workshops:

1. How to prepare the reintegration in the pre-departure phase?
2. What is the role of post-arrival counselling after return?
3. How to cooperate best with local partners in countries of origin on the reintegration of returned migrants?
4. How best to monitor the reintegration process?

The Conference workshops discussed the challenges and opportunities / recommendations in the reintegration process. Through the outcomes of the discussions, IOM aims to contribute to future policies and practices that would enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of assisted voluntary return and reintegration.

### 1. How to prepare the reintegration in the pre-departure phase?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunities / Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Migrant’s lack of trust that the promised assistance would materialize upon return</td>
<td>• Manage expectations about the post-arrival phase</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Migrant’s disappointment after return upon realizing that reintegration assistance is not as easy to access as expected, due to the administrative requirements and the time involved</td>
<td>• Involve the COO from the beginning of the AVRR cycle and put migrants in direct contact with (IOM) AVRR specialists in the COO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The gap between the COD and COO and the lack of information about one’s own country after years spent abroad</td>
<td>• Facilitate contact and the communication with AVRR specialists and fellow countrymen in the COO</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contradictory information received or collected in the COD and the COO</td>
<td>• Facilitate communication with family members to restore contacts where they have become weak</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Migrant’s physical and mental health issues</td>
<td>• Facilitate communication with former returnees via telephone, e-mail, or social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of loss of contact with family members and the community in the COO</td>
<td>• Keep cooperation close between AVRR specialists in the COD and the COO, including the exchange of information on business opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Limited time to prepare the return and to take care of all the aspects involved</td>
<td>• Pay attention to physical and mental health concerns and check availability of the necessary medical services in the COO</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Prioritize the needs of migrants especially when time is limited</td>
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2. What is the role of post-arrival counselling after return?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunities / Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy among the community towards returnees beneficiaries of reintegration assistance (especially when large cash amounts are involved)</td>
<td>Find the balance: avoid positive discrimination and aim to assist in ways that can add value to the community overall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stigma thrown by the community upon returnees</td>
<td>Promote in-kind support whenever possible. If reintegration assistance is to be provided in cash, advise the migrant on bank transfers to avoid life-threatening situations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings of discrimination when some returnees receive more reintegration support than others</td>
<td>Examine the migrant's mind-set and motivation, rather than focus on the reintegration grant and the paperwork; concentrate on social reintegration instead of stressing the importance of establishing a business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential security risks when returnees bring large reintegration grants in cash</td>
<td>Design budgets with a view to maximizing benefits and long term results by including costs for staffing, on site monitoring, information campaigns, capacity building for stakeholders and counterparts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not everyone is an entrepreneur and able to start and conduct a successful business</td>
<td>Promote independence, self-empowerment and the capacity to turn challenges into strengths, instead of focusing on solving all problems the returnee may have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different approaches to post-arrival counselling: providing long-term and comprehensive reintegration assistance with specific attention to mental health issues vs. customer-based assistance that treats the returnee as an independent individual or customer that is in charge of his/her own life</td>
<td>Connect migrants to local possibilities and make use of local services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detachment of migrants from their own home society</td>
<td>Form a team of former returnees for coaching and experience sharing; these can be the best guides for other returnees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding of local economy and bureaucracies</td>
<td>Continue cooperation between AVRR specialists in the COD and COO in the post-arrival phase and invest in innovative means to consolidate the cooperation, e.g. short-term/TDY-based staff exchange schemes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Returnees need time - sometimes more time than foreseen in a project’s timeframe - to find their way in the local reality after return, understand the local market and develop a viable business plan</td>
<td>Most importantly: keep commitments made in the pre-departure phase. Migrants must receive their entitlements within the project period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reintegration assistance that takes longer than a year to establish a sustainable livelihood should be seen as development assistance and needs to be tackled with specialised partners</td>
<td>Negotiate staff budgeting in the project development phase. Explore mixed systems of service fees combined with staff costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of communication between the COD and COO after return</td>
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<tr>
<td>The service fees do not always reflect and cover the effort invested in the reintegration process</td>
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</table>
3. How to cooperate best with local partners in countries of origin on the reintegration of returned migrants?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunities / Recommendations</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• IOM and other organizations providing AVRR services cannot be everywhere, do everythi...</td>
<td>• Cooperate with local partners, including governmental actors, the civil society and the pri...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of experience in cooperating with local partners in some countries</td>
<td>• Diversify the services of IOM, civil society partners and governments so that programmes are c...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Costs involved when making use of local networks and NGOs, as fees to local partn...</td>
<td>• Cooperate with local partners when IOM does not have the geographical coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Low expertise among local partners in combination with lack of funding for capacity building for partners may suggest a lack of credibility of local partners and lack of capacity to meet donor requirements</td>
<td>• Enable continuity of monitoring by local partners where needed, to support sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of clarity as regards responsibilities in coordinating and executing programmes when different partners work together</td>
<td>• Learn from successful cooperation models, such as Ghana, Egypt, Guinea Conakry and some Balkan countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Measuring results can be more complex when different partners work together</td>
<td>• Conduct mapping exercises to identify available services, activities, as well as needs; the aim is to achieve complementarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of involvement from (local) governments</td>
<td>• Initiate cooperation with local partners in the pre-departure phase to identify additional services, on top of AVRR, through proactive referral</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of employment opportunities in the private sector</td>
<td>• Involve (local) governments to expand the palette of services and provide additional support, such as housing, social protection assistance and the provision of documents; make use of Diaspora agencies where available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cooperate with local partners, including governmental actors, the civil society and the private sector to increase ownership and enhance the position of the returnee in the community</td>
<td>• Explore cooperation with the private sector, e.g. with banks for credit schemes, or with international or local companies to create business opportunities for returnees</td>
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## 4. How best to monitor the reintegration process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunities / Recommendations</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• There is a thin line between controlling and monitoring</td>
<td>• Monitor aiming to provide guidance to the returnee through the reintegration process, to motivate the returnee and to assess the successfuless of reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for guidance, motivation and technical support during the reintegration process</td>
<td>• Be culturally sensitive to prevent feelings of being controlled on the part of the returnee broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for harmonization of monitoring formats, especially from a donor’s point of view, vs. the need for tailor made and individualized approaches that focus on monitoring the returnee’s personal goals</td>
<td>• Let monitoring be carried out by a counsellor who already knows the returnee</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Loss of information when no lessons are learnt. Monitoring results must be put to use</td>
<td>• Make self-empowerment and the capacity to manage one’s own life an indicator to be monitored, as this is the ultimate goal of the reintegration assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The monitoring timeframe is often considered as insufficient to ensure ‘sustainability’; however, others voices argue that monitoring cannot stretch to attend to the returnees for the ‘rest of their life’</td>
<td>• Use the information gathered through motoring in the counselling of potential returnees, for donor reporting purposes and in project development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The length and scope of monitoring depend on the available budget, the project conditions and geographical coverage of the organizations providing AVRR assistance</td>
<td>• Seek to strike a balance in setting the timeframe for monitoring so that monitoring serves the purpose of contributing to sustainable reintegration and does not turn into development assistance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

The sending and receiving countries should maintain close cooperation. Information sharing needs to go both ways and interaction must continue through all the phases of the reintegration process: pre-departure, departure and post-arrival. One should be aware of the diversity of types: some migrants return without needing or requiring additional assistance; for these, in-kind assistance is not a necessity per se. Other migrants are vulnerable and need a lot of help in their reintegration.

Empowerment is the key word. It should not happen in economic terms only, but in a more holistic way. Professional counsellors are very important in this phase. Counselling can take place in group sessions, and peers with relevant experience can be invited to share it with returnees. Together with their counsellors, the returnees should be able to identify priority sectors in the COOs, where they trust they can make a difference. The reintegration should not be limited to starting a business; job placements are another option worth considering. Post-arrival assistance has to leave options open and flexible, for adjustments that need to be made in the reintegration plan.

The added value of monitoring is clear: apart from it often being a donor requirement, monitoring also informs on the wellbeing of the returning migrants, and of what is needed to improve their situation. Furthermore, monitoring is important for reasons of institutional learning and innovation in the longer term. Is it always clear what we aim to measure and what is measurable? Should the returnee’s personal goals be leading? Should monitoring schemes be harmonized or carried out by externals? How long should the monitoring take place? There are no simple answers to these questions. On the one hand, the door should not be closed at the end of the project; on the other hand, the longer monitoring continues after return, the closer it gets to development assistance.
Your excellencies, Mr Wyss, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured that IOM's Netherlands office invited me to open this conference. With so many government officials, NGOs and IOM staff participating, from different countries of origin and from the Netherlands, I am sure this will be a most interesting and productive gathering.

Migration policy is the shared responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ministry of Security and Justice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and especially our Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, attaches great importance to an effective migration and development policy that fosters development in migrants' countries of origin.

Migration is a cross-border issue that demands cooperation between countries. Reducing obstacles to the movement of people is important not only for the people concerned, but also for the development of both origin and destination countries. But if migratory flows aren't well managed, they can have negative effects. They can cause brain drain in countries of origin and xenophobia in countries of destination. They can also lead to illegal migration, which entails a risk of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation. As governments, we share responsibility with the private sector and civil society for managing migration and mobility in everyone's interests.

Supporting voluntary return and reintegration is an important part of our work. But we also fund other projects related to migration and development, aimed at strengthening the positive impact of migration to development, and minimizing the negative effects. Projects for the temporary return of professional migrants, for example. Or facilitating migrants' remittances to family members is their countries of
Not to mention promoting migrant entrepreneurship among migrants, migration management and building the capacity of local organisations involved in migration and development.

On the topic of return, we work closely with our colleagues at the Repatriation and Departure Service of the Ministry of Justice and Security. We jointly define and implement return and reintegration policy. Later this morning Rhodia Maas will tell you more about Dutch return and reintegration policy and the role all the different partners play in it.

In many projects, we also work with IOM Netherlands and several Dutch NGOs. We value this cooperation highly. We are happy to work with the IOM, not only because it is a reliable partner in implementation, but also because of its valuable input in discussing and formulating policy.

Our ministry has been involved in the voluntary return of ex asylum seekers for many years now. We began in the 1990s by giving financial support to returnees to help them make a fresh start in their countries of origin.

In time, we came to realize that this was not enough. Returnees spent the financial support provided on things that had no direct link to their reintegration after their return. In recent years the ministry has felt more of a need to monitor the extent to which reintegration support is spent on building a new life, for example by investing in small business, finding a job or sending children to school.

Subsequently, in-kind reintegration support was introduced. It had a slow start, mainly because returnees had to choose between cash and in-kind support. But it is up and running now. Returnees with an asylum background can now make use of both cash and in-kind support.

“We are working on a monitoring system, to gain information about sustainability”

In the past few years we have had some very successful projects, some of them again in partnership with IOM or NGOs. More returnees are participating in these projects and are receiving guidance to help them formulate detailed, tailor-made plans before they return. And after their return, local NGOs or IOM missions provide them the support they need to put their plans in to practice.

We still need more information about the results of these projects, in terms of the sustainability of return and reintegration, and the impact on the communities that people return to. This year we will be working on a monitoring system and more uniform monitoring activities by all the organisations involved.

Of course we have to keep in mind that many other factors play a role here, such as the socioeconomic situation, personal circumstances, professional skills and the efforts made by individual returnees. In the months to come we will consult with implementing organisations on all these matters. We need to exchange knowledge and experience in order to make our policies successful – and therewith the return and reintegration of a single person. Consultation is key.

In this respect and as a concluding remark, I wish you all fruitful consultations and an outstanding conference. I hope that the outcomes of this day will help improve our future projects and policies.

Thank you.
Introduction
Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to be here. Return migration has gained prominence in recent years, and numerous efforts have been made towards improving return policy formulation and making return assistance effective to those in need.

For this reason, today's topic is a key issue on the agenda of national and international migration policymakers around the world because of its impact on [all countries] countries of origin, transit and destination.

My brief intervention will touch upon 3 points:
1. An overview of IOMs AVRR programmes
2. The concept of Reintegration assistance
3. The way forward

IOMs AVRR programmes
Migration challenges in Europe have reached a scale and complexity that can only be addressed by countries’ concerted and common action.

Whilst it is clear that the migration situation across the EU varies, IOM – through its comprehensive approach and experience in implementing AVRR activities – is in a privileged position to provide a forum for states, as well as for international and other organizations, to reach a better common understanding on return and foster positive approaches to bilateral and regional return dialogues.

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is a core activity of IOM and has provided vital assistance to tens of thousands of migrants returning home every year. It is a growing area of engagement as an increasing number of States – both those hosting migrants as well as countries of origin – recognize the value of AVRR as an essential component of an effective and humane migration management framework.

Since 1979, IOM’s rationale for its involvement in the facilitation of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes has evolved to reflect the changing migration realities. Programmes
which started four decades ago merely offered basic support to facilitate return transportation.

Today, AVRR activities have developed into more comprehensive programmes that have integrated a range of services in order to promote the sustainability of returns.

Allow me to provide some basic figures
1. Since 1979, AVRR programmes have assisted over 1.4 million migrants.
2. Within the EU, including Norway and Switzerland, approximately 400,000 migrants have been assisted over the last 10 years.
3. On average 35,000 migrants are assisted per year in over 100 return programmes.
4. Today, we have 89 AVRR programmes active in the region which are tailored to the specific needs of migrants.

The progression and diversity of programmes is a reflection of the fact that as migration has become more complex and circular, return migration has been increasingly incorporated into the migration management strategies of many governments, and has gained prominence in international policymaking discourse. AVRR is now an integral part of the migration and asylum policies of many countries and multilateral frameworks, such as the European Union, and is regarded as a preferred option.

In implementing AVRR, IOM firmly advocates for the establishment of a cooperative approach and continuous dialogue engaging countries of origin, transit and destination in promoting effective migration management, and therefore strongly supports the EU Return Directive on the importance of cooperation with countries of origin and continuing efforts by Member States in addressing return and relevant migration matters through partnerships.

This leads me to a brief, but important intervention on reintegration, which is key to our discussion today.

Reintegration assistance
In recent years, growing efforts have been made to improve return policy formulation and make return assistance effective for those in need of such support. As an integral part of AVRR, IOM strongly believes that reintegration assistance plays a key role in facilitating sustainable returns for all. By addressing the needs and concerns of those returning, not only does reintegration assistance help address the factors that compel individuals to emigrate in the first place, but also takes into account the needs of the communities in countries of origin.

Indeed, reintegration assistance remains intrinsic to the return process, and four issues of core importance are a) addressing the sustainability of return and reintegration process b) encouraging a cost-effectiveness/burden sharing of resources in countries of return and c) the need to generate
further information and data on those who have returned, and finally d) tailoring assistance to vulnerable migrants

The delivery of reintegration assistance plays a key role in facilitating sustainable returns for all parties – the migrants, the host countries and origin countries. Unless the factors that compelled individuals to emigrate by irregular means in the first place are addressed, a substantial number of returnees will not remain in the country of return; instead, they will continue to pursue migration as a solution to the unsustainable living conditions at home.

Reintegration assistance should not only be aimed at helping migrants to re integrate into society, but should also place this assistance in a wider context that includes the community affected by the return process. By addressing the needs and concerns of the communities of return, such assistance can help to address the push factors of irregular migration, while also minimizing any disadvantages for the local (non migrant) populations through the assistance offered to returnees. The forging of potential links between effective reintegration schemes and local development potential in communities of return should be encouraged at all levels, and may involve longer term, structural and development aid.

IOM programme experience demonstrates that returns are sustainable when policies are protective of migrants’ rights, when the process is voluntary and informed, and when supported by structured and comprehensive reintegration assistance mechanisms in the country of origin. For returns to be sustainable they must be beneficial to the migrant, the host country and the country of return. For migrants this implies complete socio-economic reinsertion into their community of return, in an environment that is conducive to effective reintegration, involving for example, the existence of a secure socio-political climate, the ability to sustain oneself independently, and access to social services etc. For the host country, return may be considered sustainable if it maintains the integrity of immigration and asylum systems, encourages migrants to use regular immigration channels, or is cost effective; while in the country of origin, sustainability may be assessed by the impact of returns on the receiving community.

Conclusion
The growing significance of AVRR programmes demonstrates that the return journey in itself is no longer simply regarded the end of the migration cycle; it also represents the transition into a new phase for the returnee, focused of achieving optimal socio-economic, cultural, and political reinsertion in the country of origin.

1. Sustainable
Returns can be more sustainable when they are linked to assistance mechanisms that contribute to the creation of socio-economic opportunities in countries of origin and return strategies that ensure that non-migrant local communities are not disadvantaged by the level of assistance provided, but benefit from the newly-acquired or enhanced skills and experience of returning migrants.
2. Measurable
Clear indicators and benchmarks are necessary in order to objectively evaluate reintegration outcomes and further strengthen future reintegration projects. Determining which factors improve returnees’ well-being should be paramount in the progress of return related programmes as to best serve returnees.

3. Balanced
It is crucial that an approach to individualized tailored assistance be balanced with the implementation of community based approaches back in the country of origin, so that all the key factors affecting reintegration can be well addressed and long term solutions can work for all actors involved.

4. Complementary
The forging of potential links between effective reintegration schemes and local development potential in communities of return should be encouraged at all levels.

5. Innovative
Cooperation with development agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to provide capacity for specialized assistance delivery for such things as business development, microcredit and job creation need to be further explored.

Thank you.
Foreign nationals who do not leave the Netherlands voluntarily will be returned forcibly. Today we discuss how to promote voluntary return and how the Dutch government encourages and supports this practice.

Relation with IOM
Already for years the Dutch government has a subsidy relation with IOM to implement assistance projects for voluntary returnees. Martin Wyss and I have a close working relation regarding this matter. IOM carries out various support programmes, which foresee in financial assistance or in-kind support.

“The Netherlands is a trend-setting country with promoting voluntary return”

And over the years we even explored new ways to assist returnees, for example to assist returnees from detention. The R&DS, together with several IOM offices, also assists in post-arrival assistance for forced returnees.

Dutch subsidy programmes
In addition to the special relation with the IOM office in The Netherlands, R&DS has subsidy relations with other NGO’s and organisations in the NL and abroad that carry out different types of return and reintegration programmes.

I would like to explain to you which types of subsidy schemes there are and how the Dutch return policy is shaped with regard to promoting voluntary return. For in-cash support IOM implements the programmes REAN and HRT (reintegration schemes). For in-kind support we have different subsidy schemes. For each subsidy program I will give you some details:

Grants Regulation for Voluntary Return

The R&DS is mandated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to implement the Grants Regulation for Voluntary Return. This budget is made available in the context of the Migration and Development funds.

The voluntary return projects foresee a sustainable return of migrants in their country of origin and benefit their nationals. In 2014 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made 1.6 million euro available for projects focused on the voluntary and sustainable return and reintegration of former asylum seekers. We, as the R&DS, manage the daily business of these subsidy relations. For 2014, 5 projects are granted funding, including the AVR ERA project of IOM, this is the project for Assisted Voluntary Return and Enhanced Reintegration Support for (ex) asylumseekers. The support offered in the projects consists of assistance in-kind to the returnee, such as medical assistance, support in finding employment or starting-up a business.

A very vivid example to me is the organisation WereldWijd in the very south of the Netherlands which assists ex-asylum seekers to start their own small business in the country of origin. When the returnee returns, the migrant receives additionally a crate with materials to start-up his or her business. The contents of the crate may vary from tools to computer supplies, often donated by private individuals or parties. The in-kind support amounts up to a maximum of 1500 euro per returnee.

Ministerial Decree for the support of voluntary return, in Dutch: Ondersteuning Zelfstandig Vertrek (OZV)
Subsidies are granted to Netherlands-based NGO’s or IGO’s on the grounds of a Ministerial Decree for the support of voluntary return. The Dutch Government subsidises several voluntary return programmes implemented by (local) NGO’s to provide an alternative to detention. This practice started 2 years ago as a pilot. Since 12
March the ministerial decree is published for project funding in 2014. From 2014 onwards, every year, 1 million euro will be made available for subsidising projects. Project proposals should include the support/cooperation of at least one local government or municipality. This promotes locally engaged projects that can address a particular target group in a specific local context. New NGOs without project experience, can also apply for this subsidy. Since the start of the pilot in 2012, 11 projects were granted funding. The in-kind support amounts up to a maximum of 1500 euro per returnee.

**NL as trend-setting country**

The Netherlands is a trend-setting country with regard to its policy to promote voluntary return and setting up and managing return and reintegration programmes.

I personally believe in Assisted Voluntary Return programmes as it gives perspective to the returnee to re-build their future in a sustainable way. The Netherlands works already on this subject for years together with IOM.

Over the last years, The Netherlands has invested in more subsidy schemes via the Grants Regulation for Voluntary Return and the Ministerial Decree for support of voluntary return. Over the years, the R&DS has identified good quality of implementing service providers for reintegration programs. And the R&DS does not stop here, together with the civil society we explore other opportunities to assist in voluntary departure schemes. The Netherlands is a leading country with regard to these subsidy schemes.

**European funding and leading position of NL**

The Netherlands is also a trend-setting country in setting-up European reintegration projects. European funding increases in importance. For example, this conference is also partly financed via European funds. Several reintegration projects are financed via European funding. The Netherlands
has led one of these European projects, the European Reintegration Instrument (ERI) project.

The ERI project started in 2012 and was the first joint European project in which 5 EU member states cooperate within return and reintegration. These EU member states are Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France and Sweden. We all work together in order to provide return and reintegration assistance to returnees to 7 third countries.

The following countries were selected for post-arrival assistance projects: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan and Russia. In order to select the best service providers in these countries, the post-arrival assistance projects were tendered.

In some of these countries we also cooperate with the IOM offices, e.g. in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. In order to select the best service providers in these countries, the post-arrival assistance projects were tendered.

The European Commission recognizes the leading position of The Netherlands in the field of assisted return programs. Since February 2014, The Netherlands and the European Commission chair the expert group which deals with Return and Reintegration.

In this expert group EU States discuss and exchange best practices on return and reintegration programs. Moreover, the subject of return increases in political importance within the European Union.

Our Minister for Migration, Mr Fred Teeven, is very active in uniting EU Member States for a coherent return policy approach. Within the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the EU he called for a common approach towards third countries to increase support for the return of their own nationals.

This European initiative is essential to retain the worldwide support for the protection and care of refugees and regular migration. In this regard the work of IOM is valuable as well, as IOM has the network and the experience in the countries of origin.

The Minister for Migration, Mr Fred Teeven, will touch upon this subject this afternoon.

Closing remarks
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The R&DS and civil society complement each other in the assistance to returnees. I can only reiterate the importance of the support by IOM and other service providers via the different Assisted Voluntary Return programs and mechanisms.

I truly believe in these reintegration programs. Return of foreign nationals who are not allowed to stay, is essential to keep the common support for our migration and asylum policies and to continue to give protection to those in need.

In times of austerity it means we have to look for innovative ways to assist returnees and to find the best cost-effective programs and measures. Furthermore, we have to restrain the pull-effect of big innovative reintegration programs. These are questions which bother us today and are of importance for this conference.

To conclude:
In a globalized world with many migratory movements and changing circumstances, many challenges lie ahead of us.

May I wish you a fruitful conference.

Thank you.
Fred Teeven

Minister for Migration of the Netherlands

Mr Wyss, Mr Hemingway, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to close this conference on the practical side of re-integration for returning migrants. I appreciate the IOM taking the initiative to organise it. Its title, Opportunities and Challenges in Practice, is both intriguing and stimulating. It must have been a real source of inspiration for the organisers.

Ladies and gentlemen, I don’t have to tell you that people have always migrated and always will. That’s because there are so many reasons why people migrate. The great majority of migration is voluntary and legal. There have always been people who seek adventure. Or greener pastures. That’s human nature for you.

Unfortunately, there have also always been individuals and groups who see no other option than to leave their home country. Because of war, persecution, internal conflicts, poverty or natural disasters. There are many examples.

Let’s go back in time. Research shows that people settled here on the coast about five-and-a-half thousand years ago. They built new lives at the site of the former airfield in Ypenburg, where a brand-new housing development now stands. There was no one living here before they came, so they could build their houses and hunt undisturbed. It’s hard to say what motivated these first migrants to come to the Low Countries. Actually, any of the reasons that apply today might have made them move. In that respect, five-and-half millennia later, there’s nothing new under the sun.

The difference today lies in communication and transport. We know what’s going on all over the world and we can get almost anywhere relatively quickly. In this world of instant information, when a hurricane hits the Philippines, it’s obvious to us that we should send disaster relief. That we should care for orphaned children. And give refuge to Syrians fleeing violent conflict. For cases like these, we have developed a set of rules to steer emergency migration in the right direction.

To continue the comparison with the first inhabitants of this place: it is no longer possible for people to settle in our country at will. Over the centuries the Netherlands has always been, and will continue to be, a safe place.
for refugees and people who need humanitarian protection. But as you know, compassionate admission policies have their limits. People who don’t meet the conditions to stay here have to leave. And that brings us to the theme of return and re-integration.

I’d like to stress here that return and re-integration is an important part of Dutch migration policy. It is the final step in the process. It is also the part of our policy that is hardest to manage, because the Dutch authorities depend on the cooperation of others.

We’re dependent on what other countries do, and on the migrant’s cooperation. Of course, ideally we would like people to return voluntarily, with re-integration assistance. We do everything we can to avoid forced return, but as you know, sometimes it’s unavoidable.

Ladies and gentlemen, the IOM plays an extremely valuable role in this process. Your organisation has been a partner to the Dutch government in return procedures since 1991. The REAN programme has proven effective. The name behind the acronym – ‘Return and Emigration of Aliens from the Netherlands’ – says it all. As an independent international organisation, IOM Netherlands has helped over 30,000 migrants return. Supported by colleagues in more than 120 countries, who are committed to advancing the interests of migrants the world over. As I said, this has proven to be a formula for success. My compliments to the IOM for this result and especially for the humane way it has been achieved.

REAN is an effective tool for dealing with practical issues, like obtaining new travel documents or airline tickets. But over time we concluded that we had to expand our programme. So in 2004 we added the Reintegration Scheme for Returnees to provide financial support. This scheme is also run by the IOM.

“Examining return and reintegration from various perspectives”

At the beginning of 2012 another form of support was introduced: assistance in kind. This allows returnees to do occupational training, ship household goods, get assistance in finding a place to live or a job, and the list goes on. The IOM provides this form of support too. But so do other NGOs, like the training centre Stichting WereldWijd or Bridge to Better.

In consultations in the House of Representatives on 5 March, someone asked whether these additional services have been effective in practice. That’s difficult to say. The projects providing support in kind only started a short while ago. We need to give them time.

Ladies and gentlemen, holding this conference was a good idea. It will give us greater insight into the practical side of return and re-integration and the results of our efforts. I’m glad that apart from the IOM and government representatives, other stakeholders are here today. So return and re-integration will be examined from various perspectives.

I moment ago I mentioned the first coastal inhabitants who settled here around over five thousand years ago. I suspect that the first thing they did was to make a home and ensure they had the means to survive. Those early efforts would have been vital. For the people we are talking about at this conference, a fresh start in their country of origin is just as important. And that is why the IOM’s work is so valuable.

Ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to thank the IOM representatives for organising this conference and all the participants for coming and making a contribution. For now, please enjoy the reception. And for later, I wish you a safe return home.

Thank you.