

International Migrants Day

What is International Migrants Day (IMD)?

International Migrants Day is officially celebrated on 18th December every year around the world since 2000.

It is an opportunity:

- to recognize the contributions made by millions of migrants to the development and well-being of so many countries in the world;
- to demand an end to all forms of abuse and violence against migrants and their families and promote respect for their basic human rights;
- to call on governments around the world to ratify the UN Convention on Migrant Workers;
- to hold governments accountable with regards to the rights of migrants.

IMD aims to put the issues that are of key interest to migrants and their communities (those they live in and those they leave behind) on the agenda, highlight the challenges they encounter and celebrate their achievements.

Why 18th December?

In 1997, migrant groups in Asia began celebrating and promoting 18th December as an international day of solidarity with migrants. They chose this date because of its symbolic value since it was on 18th December 1990 that the UN General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and this after almost a decade of governmental negotiations and relentless advocacy by migrant communities around the world. The first IMD event took place at the UN Building in Manila, Philippines, with the participation of local authorities, foreign diplomats and representatives of international organisations and NGOs.

Building on this initiative, in 1999, groups around the world started to campaign for the UN to officially recognise 18th December as International Migrants Day. These lobbying efforts were successful and on 4th December 2000, the UN General Assembly declared 18th December as International Migrants Day.

Since then, participation in IMD activities has risen and more countries are taking part year on year. Events along the years have included a colourful rally in Bangladesh, an international food festival in Israel, a large multicultural forum in Morocco, art exhibitions and cinema festivals in France, school children contests and television broadcasts in Sri Lanka, theatrical and musical performances in the streets of Singapore, as well as press conferences, panels, meetings and demonstrations. In 2006 Radio 1812 was launched, a global audio event dedicated to International Migrants Day, producing and broadcasting programmes from radios worldwide.



Who said what?

Messages from 18 December

Kofi Annan, former General Secretary of United Nations

“On this International Migrants Day, I urge all Member States who have not done so to sign and ratify the Convention, and, in any event, to provide all migrants with the rights and protection they need and deserve. Today, more people are affected by international migration than at any other time in history. Let us work together to ensure that this global trend benefits all concerned, countries of origin and of destination, and the migrants themselves.”

Louise Arbour,
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

"I would like the international community to join me in marking this International Migrants Day and in paying tribute to the contribution of migrant women and men to the advancement of our societies."

Mary Robinson,
President of Realizing Rights and Former UN Commissioner for Human Rights

"I am very happy to join in a discussion on International Migrants Day because life of migrants, particularly undocumented migrants, is becoming more and more difficult in a world that is supposed to be a global village."

Moawia Ahmed,
Greek Forum of Migrants and Radio1812 participant

"Dear Adla and the team. Thank you very much for the great work you did. I may say that the immigrants in Greece for the first time had the opportunity to speak directly to at least half a million Greeks inside and outside of Greece."

Some ways to get involved in IMD

There are many ways you can get involved in IMD celebrations. Below are several links to organisations and other actors that have organised activities for IMD. See how people were participating in past celebrations and find out what they are planning for you to take part in this year.

Americas

www.nnirr.org
www.pcasc.net
www.garr-haiti.org
www.migrante.org.br

Europe

www.imigrant.ro
www.migrantenweek.nl
www.municipio.re.it
www.migrantscene.org

Asia

www.southasiannetwork.org
www.tiwa.org.tw
www.gefont.org

Australia

www.amnesty.org.au

Africa

www.maroc.attac.org
www.raddho.africa-web.org

Globally

www.ilo.org
www.un.org
www.radio1812.net
www.december18.net

