



REMARKS

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To The

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Mr. Secretary-General, Mr. President of the General Assembly, Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is an honour to participate on behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in this second ever United Nations High level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. As the global lead agency on migration, comprised of 151 Member States, active in more than 470 field locations in 175 countries and assisting governments and millions of migrants and their families around the world, IOM has a clear view of the tremendous and increasing importance of migration.

Migration is a megatrend of the twenty-first century. We can no longer think about our economies, societies or cultures without thinking about human mobility. How many of us do not have at least one migrant among our relatives, neighbours or colleagues? Which country can claim that migration has no role in its past, present or future? Migration is a reality for us all, irrespective of whether or not we ourselves move. Migration's increasing visibility and relevance is also reflected in the growth of IOM, with more than a doubling of membership in the last decade, reaching 151 Member States today, with several more countries awaiting admission at the next meeting of the IOM Council meeting in November.

All of us – governments, the UN system, international organizations, civil society organizations, and the millions of migrants across the globe – are impacted by migration. As a global community we have come far since the first HLD in 2006. Seven years ago at the first HLD, international interest in migration was still at an early stage. Since then, and through the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and relevant regional and other fora, discourse on migration has evolved to a deeper recognition of the fundamental link between migration and development and the parallel imperative for respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants to harness fully migration's development potential.

It is striking that the great twenty-first century challenges are starting to look very similar around the world: competition for labour, skills and talent is becoming a global phenomenon, as is the need to manage inequalities, diversity and social cohesion, and to adapt to an increasingly urbanized planet. We need to recognize that migration is central to these challenges and to their solution. We need to realize, too, that countries are increasingly “in the same boat” when it comes to migration: more countries are simultaneously countries of origin, transit and destination; demographic shifts and labour market transformation in both developing and developed countries will lead to increased demand for migrant labour. Matching people with jobs and meeting the needs and aspirations of migrants, home countries and host countries will necessitate a shared approach to human capital development. In a globalized world, we need to think in terms of linkages that connect countries, communities and individuals across borders, rather than in terms of the barriers that divide us.



This interconnectedness is echoed in the current global development debate, which is shifting from a focus on poverty reduction in a few countries to a broader quest in order to achieve sustainable development in all. The second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development takes place amid debates on the shape of the global development agenda after 2015. This debate is understandable: we live at a time when the economic crisis has unsettled a few certainties about the “growth poles” and “migration magnets” of this world. The HLD also takes place against the background of daily accounts of migrants who suffer terribly and needlessly: those who perish at sea or along borders, along with those who face rejection and racism by their host communities.

In short: while migration carries significant development potential, positive development outcomes – for migrants and countries of origin and destination equally – are by no means guaranteed. Migration is integral to development but not a substitute for it. By the same token, migrants can be agents of development but should not be made responsible for it. Positive development outcomes of migration depend on the protection of the human rights of migrants and on the larger context of a fair and transparent system for migration governance. For this, we need collaboration.

As it stands, too much migration today takes place at the hands of traffickers and smugglers and through irregular, unsafe and exploitative channels. Too many migrants suffer gross abuses of their human and labour rights. Too many are obliged to take up work that falls far short of their actual qualifications. And too large a share of migrants’ earnings does not make it to their families and home communities but is drained away in extortionate fees for recruitment and remittance transfer. The sad bottom line is that, too often, migrants manage to improve their lot in spite of, not because of, the policies and frameworks currently in place.

For IOM, we believe that this HLD provides a critical opportunity to shine the spotlight on migration and its contribution to development, to improve cooperation on and the governance of migration, and on the migration-development nexus in particular, at local, national, regional and global levels, while keeping the rights and well-being of migrants fully at the centre of the debate.

I believe we are here today above all because **migrants** matter. Watch the news or political discourse nearly anywhere and you are likely to find a universal, and unrealistic, concern over migrants. How often do you read about migrants contributing to our countries? Migrants are perceived as the “other”, a drain on the national system, a scapegoat during economic crises, or worse – a security threat. Such discourse is rarely fact-based and often only fulfills partisan agendas.

It is a cruel irony that, at a moment of the greatest human mobility in recorded history, there is a rising tide of anti-migrant sentiment in much of the world - especially in migrant receiving countries and, sadly, even in traditional migrant ones. When migrants come to a country, they carry with them a lot more than a suitcase. They also bring fresh talent, experiences, new perspectives and much more. And every migrant has something unique to bring. As we heard from many countries at our recent Diaspora Ministerial Conference held in Geneva in June, a well-educated and well-connected global diaspora gathers talented people who can offer resources in the form of remittances, know-how and contacts – and may return home someday. Ultimately, transnational communities are development actors in the form of human resources with great possibility and economic capital to serve both countries of origin and destination.

Governments have a responsibility to dispel myths and destructive stereotypes associated with migration. This requires educating and informing the public about the overwhelmingly positive contributions of migrants, and by creating policies that allow and embrace orderly migration.



Migration is a necessity for some, a dream for many and a reality for all states. With this in mind, let me offer six areas that IOM believes require our dedicated attention in the years to come.

1. A fundamental shift in public perceptions of migrants and migration: migration is not a problem to be solved but a process to be managed – managed responsibly and humanely. Xenophobic approaches and hate speech put migrants at risk; deprive them of their rights and dignity; and prevent them and us all from fully benefiting from the many contributions that migrants have historically made. We need better informed dialogue between migrants, host communities and origin countries.
2. Investment in fact-based migration policy. To do so, the quality of research and data collection on migration must be raised -- more systematic data collection and evaluation of migration policies, migration and development initiatives, and the impact of international and regional labor mobility.
3. The integration of migration as a key element of development and broader sectoral planning at local, national and global levels, in developed and developing countries alike. Migration is a proven enabler of all three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental; migration must therefore be factored into national development plans as well as into the post-2015 UN development agenda.
4. The protection of the human rights of all migrants, providing particular attention to the often-hidden vulnerabilities of undocumented, stranded, stateless or otherwise highly-vulnerable migrants, including vulnerabilities related to gender, age and health. We must remember that practical protection is also about empowering migrants – not to the detriment of host communities, but rather to their mutual benefit. IOM’s International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) initiative aims to address many of these vulnerabilities related to labor migration.
5. Managing migration in crisis situations. IOM’s Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) was developed and is now being implemented to provide a holistic, long-range analytical and operational approach to integrating human mobility concerns into disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. This approach is necessary to protect migrants as standard humanitarian approaches alone are too often inadequate, particularly when not linked to longer-term recovery and development. We need to ensure proper consideration of human mobility not just in preparing for or responding to crises, but in climate change adaptation programmes and sustainable urban planning as well.
6. Policy coherence and capacity development: the vast and growing number of international migrants requires us to assess and coordinate development, trade, labor, health, environmental and many other policies through the lens of human mobility. This means supporting inter-state, multi-party consultation, dialogue and cooperation on migration; it also means investing in capacity-building for the actors involved in managing migration to have the requisite technical and financial skills to perform their functions effectively and pursuant to the rule of law. To achieve this, we must work in partnership with a full range of governmental, inter-governmental, non-governmental, private sector and civil society actors.

Conclusion:

For IOM, this is why we are here today at the HLD. On behalf of IOM, I offer our full commitment to working together to further strengthen international partnerships and cooperation in this field. We



are at the cusp of a rare opportunity to come together and increase the benefits of international migration for migrants, host societies and countries. To do so, we must remove barriers that hinder migration from reaching its full development-driving potential. We can do more together than acting alone or vainly trying to duplicate each others' strengths. Cooperation, dialogue and partnership are essential to safe, orderly and humane migration that benefits countries, migrants and every single one of us alike.

Migration is *inevitable*, in view of the demographic, economic, environmental and other challenges we face; *necessary* for the vibrancy of our economies and societies; and *desirable* when governed humanely, fairly and in collaboration as a path to opportunity and the realization of human potential. We believe the world is ready to walk the high road on migration governance.