TERCERA COMISIÓN – 68ª ASAMBLEA GENERAL
TEMA 69: Promoción y protección de los derechos humanos sobre “Derechos de los migrantes”

INTERVENCION DEL EMBAJADOR RODOLFO REYES RODRÍGUEZ,
REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE CUBA ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS
EN REPRESENTACION DE LA COMUNIDAD DE ESTADOS LATINOAMERICANOS Y CARIBEÑOS, CELAC

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THIRD COMMITTEE – 68ª GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ITEM 69: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON “RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS”

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR RODOLFO REYES RODRÍGUEZ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES, CELAC

New York, 30th October, 2013
Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CELAC countries reaffirm our strong commitment to the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social, including the right to development, for all.

In this occasion, CELAC will focus its comments on a topic that is of particular relevance for our countries, the human rights of migrants.

The composition of current societies is a result of historic and contemporary migratory flows. A clear example of this is our region, which is the reflection of diverse migratory components and of a mix of people coming from all over the world. The countries of CELAC are proud of our multiethnic and multicultural character.

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, human migrations with its various characteristics and implications should be properly and systematically addressed by all countries, and the international community, counting on the valuable contribution of relevant entities and actors at different levels. Thus, it is necessary that States, regardless their status, namely, origin, transit or destination, work together to find solutions to the challenges that international migration represents in our time.

CELAC members acknowledge the importance to keep the links migrants have with their countries of origin, including their cultures, languages and traditions. It is further recognized that the skills of the Diaspora may be positively cultivated to foster development in countries of origin.

We are cognizant of the significant contributions that migrants make through tourism, investment and family remittances, inter alia. However, the latter should not be considered to be the replacement of Foreign Direct Investment, Official Development Assistance, Debt relief or other kind of public policies for development.

At the same time, the contributions of migrants to the economic and social development of host countries are not sufficiently taken into account. We reiterate our concern about violations of the human rights of migrants as well as the deterioration of the working and employment conditions of migrant workers and their families around the world. CELAC further recognizes the impact of the ongoing economic, financial and environmental crisis on the socio-economic situation of migrants.

In this context, we would like to highlight the increasing reversal of migration flows between the Latin-American and Caribbean region and the developed countries, which not only includes the return of migrants to their country of origin, but also the arrival of migrants from these developed societies. We also acknowledge the complexity of migratory flows and that international movements also occur within the same geographical regions and from South to South and, in this regard, we call for a better understanding of migration patterns across and within regions and subregions.

While acknowledging that Governments have the right to formulate and implement laws and policies to regulate the flow of migrants in and through their territories, CELAC regrets the adoption of laws or regulations, at any governmental level, that criminalizes the act of migrating. In this regard, we encourage Member States to respect the dignity and human
rights of migrants, regardless of their migration status. CELAC urges all States, to eliminate laws that stimulate unsafe migration causing the loss of life of persons.

Additionally, we encourage States to refrain from adopting measures that discriminate or stigmatize any group of people and can negatively impact migrants or the members of their families.

Mr. Chairman,

CELAC reaffirms its concern about the vulnerable situation of migrants and their families, in particular the vulnerabilities of women migrant workers, who suffer discrimination, violation of their human rights and lack of protection.

CELAC encourages States to implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes for women migrant workers. It is about time to undertake concrete actions to protect migrant workers, mainly women, when facing the various forms of exploitation and violence, and to ensure effective ways to respect their dignity, fair working conditions and productive employment and decent jobs, as well as their full integration to the labor force.

We urge all countries to guarantee the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants, particularly migrant children and adolescents - especially those travelling alone, women in extreme poverty, single mothers, persons with disabilities, older persons, and indigenous - regardless their migratory status, through processes enabling family reunification according to the international regulations, obligations and commitment of Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

CELAC members recognize the important work done and the technical cooperation provided by the International Organization for Migration, main promoter of the existing regional spaces for the discussion on this important topic.

We take this opportunity to recognize the efforts undertaken by Member States at the Global Forum on Migration and Development, as well as its contributions to the dialogues on this matter in all regions. However, these efforts are proved to be insufficient.

Of particular concern is the current tendency toward the exploitation of migrants. We are also concerned that transnational organized crime networks have targeted smuggling of migrants as one of the objectives of their criminal activities. Migrants sometimes even risk their lives, leaving behind their homes, their culture and their language, to find themselves in unfamiliar environments. We support the need to promote effective policies and strategies that contribute more tolerant and integrated societies.

CELAC Member States are committed to intensifying measures aimed at preventing and combating trafficking in persons, including trafficking and exploitation of migrants, in all its forms and ensuring full protection and care for the victims of these crimes, especially women, children and adolescents. At the same time, we urge all States to establish and strengthen appropriate focal points for coordination between countries of origin, transit and destination in order to combat these crimes.

Equally, we consider of the utmost importance to take all measures in order to protect the migrants from the consequences of the activities of criminal groups, which profit of the vulnerability of migrants, that can be exacerbated by a lack of channels capable to ensure a regular and orderly migratory flow.
CELAC recognizes the importance of the right of migrants to a safe voluntary return to their countries of origin and the need to create domestic, social and political conditions to provide opportunities for them. In this regard, we encourage countries of origin to formulate and implement national policies and strategies that would discourage unsafe migration which may result in loss of life of migrants.

Mr. Chairman,

CELAC welcomes the holding of the Second High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, in compliance with Resolution 67/219 of the General Assembly. We are confident that the outcome of this meeting will provide guidelines for the work of the United Nations on the issue of international migration and its link to development.

CELAC considers that coherence, cooperation and dialogue among all the relevant actors in the migration phenomenon, in particular among countries of origin, transit and destination, is crucial in order to maximize the potential benefits of migration and overcome its challenges. In this regard, we acknowledge the significant socio-economic and security challenges that migration can pose to transit and destination countries, and therefore Member States of CELAC are committed to addressing these challenges through a coherent, integrated and multidimensional approach through dialogue and cooperation, and with the assistance as appropriate, of the international community.

The fight against racism, xenophobia and the defense of all of the human rights of migrants, particularly those who are more vulnerable, such as women and children, are important tasks that should not be postponed nor avoided. It is equally necessary to consider in the proper way the needs of other groups present in the migrants’ flows, like the youth.

In view of the challenges confronting migrants globally, CELAC takes this opportunity to once more encourage Member States which have not yet done so to sign or ratify the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Finally, CELAC underlines the importance to give due consideration to the issue of international migration, including the promotion and protection of Human Rights of migrants, in the elaboration of the post 2015 Development Agenda.

Thank you very much.