

**ECOSOC High Level Segment on Migrants  
The Silent Partners in Development  
New York, USA  
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**Statement by Mr. Peter Schatzer  
Director, External Relations Department  
International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

While sustainable development is a core concern of the international community, the inextricable link between migration and development has so far not been the subject of in-depth examination as part of the broader United Nations agenda. One could say that while the international community examines many aspects of the future of the Global Family, migrants frequently remain the orphans whose life-stories, problems and contributions stay out of sight. Even events of such global impact as the Monterrey conference earlier this year hardly considered these issues. Fortunately, thanks to an initiative of the ECOSOC Secretariat, it was possible to begin considering some key aspects of the relationship between migration and at a well-attended panel discussion held here at UN headquarters yesterday.

In light of the theme for this year's high-level segment - the contribution of human resources development to the process of development - discussion of this topic is particularly timely. Human resources and migration are inextricably linked. Many States owe their wealth - whether human or economic - to population movements over the centuries. And in the particular case of developing countries or countries in transition, building a bridge between national development needs and the human and economic capital represented by their diasporas can contribute significantly to growth. There is increasing evidence, for example, that the diasporas' skills constitute an important input for the strengthening of development strategies put in place by countries of origin, provided that the migrants are not faced with having to choose between their rights in the host country and a definitive return to their country of origin. Innovative approaches to mobilizing this resource can be found. Moreover, migrants' resources represent a significant financial potential. Indeed, for many countries of origin, remittances are greater in volume than official development assistance and represent a significant proportion of GNP. Globally, the 65 billion US\$ that are remitted through official channels to developing countries substantially exceed ODA. While it is true that much of this money fuels consumption, it is equally true that this has an indirect effect on poverty alleviation and development. It is also worthwhile recalling in this context that many of

the conditions for foreign direct investment spelled out in the Monterrey consensus equally apply to the useful application of remittances for migrant businesses and investments.

The reverse side of the coin, for the highly skilled diasporas in particular, is the potential or real loss of human resources that countries of origin experience - frequently without any immediate returns. The health, education, technical and agricultural sectors are the ones mostly affected, in particular in LDCs. My organization has developed an innovative approach to this dilemma, initially for the African continent through MIDA - Migration for Development in Africa. MIDA is an institutional capacity building programme based on a synergy between the profiles of migrants and the needs of developing countries; its aim is to transfer the vital skills and resources of the African diaspora to support the development of their countries of origin. The programme does not necessarily imply the permanent return of migrants, but rather seeks formulas compatible with their legal status in their host countries and with their desire to contribute to the development of their country of origin, while respecting their dual identity. The MIDA concept is based essentially on the notion of mobility - of people, skills and resources - and the possibility today of that mobility being either real or virtual.

The driving force for IOM's work on this programme, as in all of our work, is the profound conviction that well managed migration can produce benefits for countries of origin and destination, as well as for migrants themselves. Nevertheless, turning migration from a zero-sum game into a win-win situation will remain a challenge for many countries involved in migration processes all over the world. In this regard, economic integration processes in many world regions pose new challenges - and new opportunities - for migration management. This implies in turn the need for significant capacity building at national and regional levels, regular and ongoing international exchange of information, stronger mechanisms to protect migrant workers' rights, and consciousness-raising regarding the positive impact that migration can have. And of course any discussion of these aspects of migration also needs to take into account legitimate security concerns, as well as demographic impacts, both of which add further

complex elements to the equation.

These are not easy issues to deal with, it is true. Nevertheless, it is abundantly clear both that migration is a major phenomenon of our new millenium, and that migration -which has historically contributed to economic growth and development - has considerable positive potential today as well if it is orderly and humanely managed. Yesterday's panel discussion underscored that migration issues, crosscutting as they are, hold particular significance for the work of ECOSOC and merit its closer attention. IOM, for its part, certainly stands ready to contribute to deeper discussion and understanding of the link between migration and development. And in this, we welcome our growing partnership with the UN Secretariat, UNDP, the ILO and other parts of the United Nations system in the commitment to advancing knowledge of this important challenge facing the international community.