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Statement by
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**Civil Society Days of the Global Forum on Migration and Development
Geneva, 29-30 November 2011.**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to take part, along side these other eminent panellists, in this special session on the future of the Global Forum and the path towards the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which will be held by the General Assembly in 2013.

First, let me congratulate the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), and in particular John Bingham, for the tireless efforts, for constructively engaging with the Global Forum since its inception, which culminated in organizing these civil society days. Your continued support will be essential on the road to “2013”.

Let me focus on some of the tasks that lie ahead as we start to prepare for the High-level Dialogue. The better we prepare ourselves, the greater the chances that the 2013 Dialogue will as successful as its predecessor in 2006.

Civil society played a key role in 2006. A one-day informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector took place on 12 July 2006 as part of the preparatory process leading up to the High-level Dialogue.

Civil society also contributed to the High-level Dialogue itself by actively engaging in the four round tables in September 2006.

Following the 2006 High-level Dialogue, civil society has continued to play a constructive role in advancing the debate on international migration and its relationship with development, both in the context of the State-led process of the Global Forum on Migration and Development as well as at the United Nations.

The engagement of civil society in the Global Forum process continues to evolve. The creation of the “common space” in Puerto Vallarta last year was an important innovation. I am pleased to see that the common space is now an integral part of the concluding debate.

Civil society and the private sector have also advanced the debate within the United Nations. During the informal thematic debate on international migration and development, organized by the President of the General Assembly on 19 May 2011, you greatly enriched the discussions, through interventions from invited panellists as well as statements from the floor.

Dear colleagues,

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently said, our times “demand a new constellation of international cooperation - governments, civil society and the private sector, working together for a collective global good.”

I urge to you to start thinking about the role of civil society and the private sector in the 2013 High-level Dialogue.

“Civil society” sounds monolithic, but is far from it. The non-governmental actors in our field include advocacy groups, migrant organizations, research institutes, employment agencies and labour unions. So far, you have been very effective in drawing attention to gaps in existing, international legal frameworks to protect migrant rights. Yet the evidence-base on the contributions of international migrants to societies of origin and destination, as well as on the many challenges that migrants face remain weak. Addressing gaps in evidence represents a practical way of improving policies and ensuring that the rights of migrants are protected.

Difficult as it is, I encourage you to provide a channel for the views from all stakeholders.

There are many ways to contribute to intergovernmental debate at the United Nations. To name a few:

- Raise awareness about the unique opportunity of 2013
- Urge your Government to hold national consultations meetings
- Work through your representatives and the permanent missions in New York
- Convince your Government to include an NGO representative in its delegation.

In 2012, the General Assembly is expected to adopt a resolution on the modalities of the 2013 High-level Dialogue. I urge you to seize this crucial occasion to shape the 2013 High-level Dialogue, including its length, timing, themes, organization and outcome.

I count on your critical contribution and support to make the 2013 High-level Dialogue a success.

Thank you.