



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

STATEMENT

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and Decent Work for All**

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Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your elections.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to address the 46th session of the Commission for Social Development on its deliberations related to policy options and practical measures to promote full employment and decent work for all. The theme for this 2007-2008 review and policy cycle is particularly significant for IOM as labour migration has become “a key aspect of human mobility and the global economy¹” accounting for nearly 90 million migrant workers, many of them living and working abroad on a temporary basis. The nature of the employment sectors – often low-skilled and informal – as well as the modalities of work abroad has been increasingly the subject of national, regional and international debate on international labour mobility policies and strategies. An immediate concern is the human and labour rights and status of migrant workers. As the report of the Secretary-General² indicates, global labour trends present risks for the social protection of certain vulnerable groups, among whom international migrants, and migrant women in particular, are especially exposed.

This Mr. Chairman does not necessarily need to be so. Migration management policies and practices that are conducive to the realization of the “decent work” agenda must and can be set in place. We particularly appreciate the measures identified in the Secretary-General’s report aimed at recognizing and improving the capacities of migrants, such as skills recognition agreements, vocational training programs and fair recruitment practices, among others. A common problem faced by migrant workers is high migration costs as a result of excessive (and often illegal) intermediation fees. Other problems include, in some countries, poor working conditions, absence of adequate social protection and freedom of association, isolation, exclusion and xenophobia. These problems erode the benefits of migration for all parties and seriously undermine its development impact including productive employment and decent work. Where necessary, countries of origin and destination need to have in place policies, legislation and mechanisms that afford migrant workers protection and support from any abuses in the labour migration process. An important part of IOM’s work in labour migration is policy dialogue and technical cooperation in putting such systems in place. For example, to assist States and other stakeholders in their efforts to develop new policies approaches, solutions and practical measures for better management of labour migration, jointly with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Labour Office (ILO), IOM produced in May 2006 a *Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination*, intended primarily for use by policy makers and other stakeholders in Eastern European countries and the CIS.

¹ World Migration Report 2008: Managing Labour Mobility in the Evolving Global Economy. IOM (pg 8)

² Promoting Full Employment and Decent Work for ALL (E/CN.5/2008/4)

It was translated into Russian and launched and discussed at a regional workshop in Moscow in December 2007. Subsequently, IOM, OSCE and ILO have collaborated to produce an updated and revised version tailored for the Mediterranean region which has been translated into Arabic and was launched and discussed at a regional workshop in Rabat in December 2007.

Mr. Chairperson,

International cooperation on these topics is also progressing rapidly. Regional Consultative Processes continue to offer a healthy platform for partnerships and new initiatives are developing, while globally the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) has also been addressing issues such as “human capital, development and labour mobility” with the aim to maximize the beneficial effects of labour migration. No doubt, the next session of the GFMD in Manila this coming October with its focus on social protection and empowerment of migrants will further contribute to the application of the “decent work” concept in the international migration management agenda.

At the regional level, a significant initiative has just been launched in January 2008 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where ministers from Asian labour countries of origin, Gulf destination countries and other Asian countries concluded the Abu Dhabi Dialogue by adopting a forward-looking Declaration that paves the way for the better management of temporary contractual labour mobility. Key action-oriented partnerships between countries of origin and destination were identified, which include the need for participating countries to share information on labour market trends, patterns of remittances, and build the ability of States to effectively match the demand and supply of temporary contractual labour through the entire migration cycle. The Declaration also recognizes the joint responsibility of countries of origin and destination to work to prevent illegal recruitment practices and to promote transparent recruitment and employment policies to ensure the well-being, welfare and protection of temporary labour migrant workers. As part of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, a follow up ministerial consultation on overseas employment and contractual labour will be held in two years time.

In conclusion Mr. Chairperson, allow me to confirm the interest of IOM to pursue our common effort of decent work for all, including for those who are strangers in our midst. IOM is committed to assist States and other players in efforts to promote the welfare of migrants, based on the assumption that these are beneficial not only to migrants themselves, but also to the host community, and are a powerful tool to foster development.

Thank you.