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Era of increased mobility requires better protection of migrants' rights, says Ban

4 November - In an era where people are crossing borders in greater numbers seeking better opportunities, it is more vital than ever that States safeguard the rights of migrants, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told a high-level gathering in Athens today.

"Let us never forget that in the end, policies and laws are really about people and values," he said in his remarks to the opening of the third Global Forum on Migration and Development.

The Secretary-General noted that the number of international migrants today is greater than at anytime in history, with 214 million people living outside their country of birth.

Highlighting the good that such mobility can generate, he said that, when managed well, global migration greatly improves human welfare and development. Also, migrants contribute to development in their homelands by transferring remittances and transmitting new ideas and technologies.

Meanwhile, in countries of destination, migrants fill gaps in labour demand and skills to make the economy more productive.

"But we have work ahead of us," he told the gathering. "Around the world, migration is often the subject of shrill debate – a wedge to provoke social tensions, drive political extremes, fan the flames of discrimination and hatred.

"We cannot yet say that the development potential of international migration is being fully realized. We cannot yet declare that the rights of migrants are being fully respected."



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Special Adviser on migration Peter Sutherland at news conference in Athens

He noted that the conditions in which many migrants move and live continue to be “treacherous,” that human trafficking and sexual exploitation are disturbing realities and, in many parts of the world, migrant workers still face appalling working conditions.

Mr. Ban called on all countries to work together to tackle migration, highlighting three challenges that add to the urgency for action – the economic crisis, climate change, and the scourge of human trafficking, particularly of women and girls.

“As we look to these challenges, we recognize that in many ways, migration is not just a journey of people – it is a journey of policy,” he said.

“Our destination is a global system of mobility that allows people to move in legal, safe and orderly ways – with full respect for their dignity.”

The Secretary-General reiterated the importance of promoting and protecting the basic human rights of all migrants, regardless of their legal status, during a press conference with Teodora Tzakri, the Deputy Minister of Interior, Decentralization and E-Governance of Greece.

“Providing basic rights, access to education, social safety networks, sanitation and health – these are basic, which each and every country should provide,” he stated.

Mr. Ban also met with Prime Minister George Papandreou, with whom he discussed a number of regional and global issues, including climate change, migration and development, Cyprus, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UN peacekeeping operations and reform, and also piracy and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the global anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, the Secretary-General said he will spare no effort to facilitate progress on the UN-backed talks between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders aimed at unifying the Mediterranean island.

“The international community has invested a great deal in this Cypriot-driven process, and has high expectations. I believe the talks are making reasonably good progress, and this momentum must be kept up.”

He also noted that his Personal Envoy for the talks between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Matthew Nimetz, is set to restart discussions on the name issue – as soon as both parties are ready.

He said he was encouraged that the Greek Prime Minister had told him that Greece is ready and will fully support Mr. Nimetz’s ongoing facilitation role. In that regard, Mr. Nimetz reports that he is in touch with the parties and has proposed to them the holding of meetings – either joint or separate – in New York at a time to be determined.

Also today, Mr. Ban attended a luncheon hosted by Greek President Karolos Papoulias. He is scheduled to address the Greek Parliament tomorrow before returning to New York.

United by a common goal, fallen UN staff aimed to help Afghans



The guest house in Kabul where UN staff stayed, ablaze after it was attacked on 28 October 2009

4 November - Lawrence Mefful’s family and colleagues say it was typical of the United Nations security officer and devout Christian to put the well-being of others before his own safety.

So it was no surprise to them that in the early hours of 28 October, when militants armed with automatic weapons, grenades and suicide vests burst into a guest house in Kabul, Afghanistan, Lawrence rushed to protect the 34 UN workers staying inside.

Armed only with pistols, Lawrence and fellow UN security officer Louis Maxwell fought a fierce, long-running battle in the corridors and on the rooftops of the guest house before

losing their lives with three other UN staff members they were defending.

“Their actions saved lives – many, many lives,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told UN staff gathered at Headquarters in New York to commemorate their fallen colleagues. “I am so grateful for their courage and bravery and sacrifice.”

Jossie Esto of the Philippines and Yah Lydia Wonyene of Liberia, volunteers with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), were the other staffers known to have died in the attack.

The fifth victim has not yet been identified but Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), said last Friday that the agency is gravely concerned about the fate of a colleague who was staying in the guest house and has not been accounted for.

Lawrence, a 46-year-old ordained pastor who preached to the congregation of the Lighthouse Chapel in New Jersey, United States, is survived by his wife, Emma, and two daughters, aged 17 and 18. Emma spoke at an event at UN Headquarters in New York last week in honour of the victims.

“He was passionate about his religion,” said Benjamin Owusu-Firempong, who knew Lawrence from their college days in the early 1980s, time together in the Ghanaian army and as a colleague at the UN.

Lawrence was known by both his congregation and the Ghanaian community in Englewood, New Jersey, as a generous man who often placed his hand in his own pocket to assist other people’s relatives or help put someone else’s kids through school. Once he gave away his car to a parishioner.

“He had this thing for academia,” Benjamin also told the UN News Centre. “I used to tell him he should go back and teach in some school – he earned a postgraduate diploma in mass communications, after that he went to law school and he is enrolled in a master’s course in risk management at Leicester University.”

Before arriving at UN Headquarters in New York in 2004 to work for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as a legal officer, Lawrence reached the rank of major and served as Deputy Director for Legal Affairs in the Ghanaian army.

Like Lawrence, close protection officer Louis Maxwell fought heroically on 28 October, fending off the terrorists for over an hour in a bid to buy time for his civilian colleagues to reach safety.

The 28-year-old African-American from the US city of Miami turned down a university music scholarship in favour of enlisting in the US Navy, before eventually joining the UN in 2007.

“We talked about it once. I was making fun of him being in a marching band... you know, typical male bonding banter – we laughed it off,” UN security officer Henry Meza said.

“In this line of work you make bonds pretty quick – strong bonds,” said Henry, stressing that Louis’ fun-loving and charismatic manner made it easy to become close to him. “He was a great guy. He looked after me and I looked after him.”

Working together every day, after long shifts guarding UN officials, Louis would relax with the rest of the close protection team by listening to hip-hop and rap music, and talking about the day.

“We would goof on each other and laugh,” Henry recalled. “I whupped his butt a few times at dominoes. If you asked him right now, he’d tell you that’s not how it went down.”

The banter between the two men started on their first day together in mid-July after Henry picked up Louis from the airport in Kabul. “I just kept looking at him. He looked at me and I said ‘I don’t know... the name Maxwell. I just kind of figured you were bigger – you’re kind of small, dude!’ I started laughing.”

He was, in fact, around 5 foot 10 inches and in very good physical shape, into fitness and healthy eating. “He ran, we’d go to



the gym, run around the compound, do some PT, one day we played soccer.”

Louis was a family man always ready to talk about his mother, father and sisters. “He had two boys and he was raising his fiancée’s daughter with her, and he was all about them,” said Henry. “Under the circumstances of where we were and what we were doing, having people like Louis Maxwell made it liveable.”

The recent Afghan election was not the first time Jossie, a 40-year-old from the Philippines, and Yah Lydia, a 47-year-old from Liberia, had left the comfort of their homes and family to help people in war-torn countries emerge from conflict and turn to democracy.

Until last week, the two mothers had spent over a year in Afghanistan as part of a UN Volunteers (UNV) team of more than 50 staff working as electoral outreach and training coordinators.

Jossie, who learned about UNV from a cousin serving in Kosovo, was a schoolteacher in the 1990s before undertaking stints as a polling official in the Philippines and serving as a volunteer during elections in Liberia, Timor-Leste and Nepal.

“Jossie was everyone’s best friend,” Stuart Moran, UNV Programme Manager in Afghanistan, said. “I swear she could literally light up a room with her sparkling personality.”

The life and soul of social gatherings, especially when it came to karaoke and dancing, Jossie would often invite other UNV staff to the guest house, where she would take over the kitchen to cook traditional Filipino food.

“It is not an exaggeration to say that everyone loved Jossie,” said Stuart, who also worked with her in Nepal. “She regularly stayed late in the office and came to work six days per week. Her office was next to mine in the project headquarters and every day I still expect to see her smiling face at my desk.”

Jossie leaves behind a husband and two children, a 14-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son.

Yah Lydia, popularly known as Lydia or Mum to her friends and younger colleagues, had also served as a volunteer for elections in Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone before arriving in Afghanistan.

Lydia took the difficult security situation in Afghanistan in her stride, describing to colleagues over lunch one day the brutal violence and bloodshed she had witnessed in her homeland, Liberia.

“Lydia was very much of a wise African woman and mother,” said Stuart. “She loved to care and nurture her friends and colleagues. She really looked after her UNV colleagues and I know that this made her very happy.”

She was survived by five children ranging in age from six to 28, including 16-year-old twins, as well as one granddaughter, aged four. “Her greatest love was for her family,” said Stuart.

The two volunteers were working with UNDP/ELECT, supporting elections in Afghanistan. Working closely with such bodies as the Independent Election Commission (IEC) of Afghanistan, UNDP/ELECT provides project and programme design and management, mobilization of donor funding, activity coordination, reporting and the channelling of funds for electoral support.

UNV has created an online memoriam for Jossie and Lydia to allow readers to leave their messages of condolences.

Although the five men and women who died in the terrorist attack – for which the Taliban say they are responsible – came from different corners of the world, they were joined by their dedication to the work of the UN in helping vulnerable populations in need.

“These women and men went to Afghanistan with many talents, but they shared a common goal, that is, to help the Afghan people,” said Mr. Ban.

“They went despite the risks. They went to support another election and the opportunity for the Afghan people to shape their destiny,” Mr. Ban added, sending condolences to their families and to the families of the Afghans who lost their lives in the attack.

UN assists after another tropical storm pounds the Philippines and Viet Nam

4 November - United Nations aid agencies are at work in the Philippines and Viet Nam after yet another typhoon pummelled the region, bringing heavy rains, causing power outages and communication problems and raising the threat of renewed floods.

Typhoon Mirinae, also known as Santi, generated winds of around 185 kilometres per hour as it crossed the northern Philippines on Saturday before making landfall in Viet Nam early on Monday.

At least 87 people are thought to have been killed in Viet Nam, the UN Country Team reported, while the UN World Food Programme (WFP) said more than 115,000 people had to be evacuated from their homes in the Philippines.

Widespread damage has also been reported to rice paddies and other farmland and also to homes and basic infrastructure.

Mirinae is the fourth major tropical storm or typhoon to strike the region in less than five weeks, and the Philippines has been the worst affected country.

Last month the UN and its aid partners issued a flash appeal for \$74 million to help typhoon victims, but the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that so far only \$25 million has been provided.

WFP reported it was revising its estimates of aid needed in the wake of Mirinae, and it is now asking for an extra 44,000 tons of food to assist typhoon survivors through March next year. The agency expects to help about 1.5 million Filipinos recover from the storms, including thousands of farmers who lost their entire rice harvests.

WFP said it was particularly concerned about the impact on young children, and is making preparations to start a supplementary feeding programme with the assistance of national nutrition authorities.

The agency’s country director Stephen Anderson said Mirinae “has hit vulnerable people already struggling to cope after the previous storms and flooding. It has made our food assistance even more important to them.”

An assessment mission comprising representatives of WFP, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Health Organization (WHO), government departments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has inspected Santa Cruz municipality, one of the hardest hit areas.

Emergency food supplies have already been distributed in Santa Cruz following Mirinae and logistical supplies are also being provided.

In Viet Nam, the UN Country Team is working with Government officials to help monitor the humanitarian situation and assist where needed.

The damage has been worst in the centre of the country, with Binh Dinh province among the hardest hit and Quang Nam, Ninh Thuan and Gia Lai provinces all at risk from floods and landslides.



Thousands of people in Viet Nam and the Philippines have been affected by Typhoon Mirinae

General Assembly begins debate on UN rights probe into Gaza conflict



The four person United Nations fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict

4 November - The General Assembly today began its debate on the report of the United Nations probe which found that both Israeli forces and Palestinian militants were guilty of serious human rights violations during the Gaza conflict earlier this year.

The report is the result of a three-month investigation, led by Justice Richard Goldstone, a former prosecutor at the UN war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and mandated by the UN Human Rights Council.

The four-member team found evidence that both Israeli forces and Palestinian militants committed serious war crimes and breaches of humanitarian law, which may amount to crimes against humanity, during the conflict in December 2008 and January 2009.

The report calls for a number of measures, including its referral to the Security Council, since neither the Government of Israel nor the responsible Palestinian authorities have so far carried out any credible investigations into alleged violations.

In addition to the debate, the Assembly is considering a draft resolution, tabled by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of Arab States, by which it would endorse the report, and request the Secretary-General to transmit it to the Security Council.

The Assembly would also call for independent investigations by both the Israelis and the Palestinians within three months.

“What the Goldstone report essentially constitutes is another damning record of the Israeli crimes committed against our people under occupation,” the Palestinian representative, Riyad Mansour, told the Assembly, adding that its recommendations represent a significant contribution to the pursuit of accountability and justice.

He called on Member States to support the draft resolution, which was an important step to end impunity and the absence of justice that obstructed peace efforts and prolonged the suffering of civilians.

Ambassador Gabriela Shalev of Israel said that the fact-finding mission, with a “one-sided mandate,” was a politicized body set up to reach pre-determined conclusions. “It is the product of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, a body whose obsession with Israel had led it to pass more resolutions against Israel than on all other UN Member States put together.

“It makes explosive charges against Israel – yet the evidence provided to support such accusations is at best uncorroborated, and at worst false,” she stated.

Opening the meeting, which was slated to hear from more than 40 speakers, Assembly President Ali Treki said that despite the political sensitivities associated with the report, the question before the Assembly was simple.

“We have to answer whether the respect of human rights is universal or not? Whether we should be divided on human rights issues or should we remain united behind advocating their respect all over the world?”

“Let us be clear on what is at stake here: the human rights of nearly 2 million civilians,” said Mr. Treki, adding that “without justice there can be no progress towards peace.”

UN agency airdrops food aid to over 155,000 hungry people in southern Sudan

4 November - The United Nations has begun to parachute food aid into isolated areas of conflict-ridden southern Sudan with the aim of reaching more than 155,000 people cut off from road access by heavy rainfall, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced today.

The airdrops, which began last week, are slated to continue for another two-and-a-half months, providing some 4,000 tons of food to people hit by conflict, high food prices and poor harvests in three of the 10 states in southern Sudan – Jonglei, Upper Nile and Warrap.



Food airdrop

“We can’t wait for food prices to drop or the roads to be passable again,” said WFP Sudan country director Amer Daoudi. “Airdrops are the only way for us to reach them.”

The few roads that exist in this vast area are impassable during the current April to December rainy season, and a recent spike in tribal fighting has also blocked road and river access to some areas.

WFP has chartered an Ilyushin-76 aircraft – capable of carrying 36 tons of food on each flight – to make the airdrops on 22 different locations across the three states where trained teams will be ready to collect the food from the drop zone and organize distributions.

Underscoring the higher expense of airdrops over road and river transportation, Mr. Daoudi said that the “need is so immense that we need to use all our resources to feed so many people facing food shortages.”

WFP has appealed for \$44 million to buy and deliver 22,000 tons of food to feed 300,000 people facing severe food shortages in southern Sudan, and plans to reach half of them through airdrops and the rest by road and barge. To date the agency has received \$14.5 million of that amount from various UN funds.

UN initiative aims to create jobs, spur lasting peace in post-conflict nations



4 November - The United Nations today launched a new policy aimed at creating employment and income generation in post-conflict situations, where they are vital for future stability, socio-economic growth and sustainable peace.

Led by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration will be carried out in five initial countries emerging from conflict: Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste.

“The end of conflict in a country creates a window of opportunity for social and economic reform,” notes José-Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director of the ILO Employment Sector.

“Job creation and self-employment opportunities provide to communities and individuals the means for survival and recovery,” he adds.

Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs says the number of jobs that need to be created in post-crisis settings is “staggering,” noting that in 2007 conflicts around the world created more than 28.5 million internal displaced persons (IDPs) and nearly 4.7 million refugees. Programmes are also seeking to reintegrate over 1 million ex-combatants.

The demobilization of Iraq’s military left 350,000 former soldiers in need of jobs, while the conflict in Afghanistan has

resulted in at least 2 million IDPs requiring reintegration and employment.

The new policy gives special attention to the needs of conflict-affected groups, particularly unemployed or under-employed women and youth.

Creating employment that taps into the positive energy and skills of young people is a particularly difficult challenge, says Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs, as these groups often find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of violence, poverty, illiteracy and social exclusion.

The policy includes three programming tracks: stabilization; return and reintegration; and sustainable employment creation and decent work.

It was developed jointly by 20 UN agencies and international financial institutions that constitute the Inter-Agency Working Group on Post-Conflict Employment Creation and Reintegration, and follows a three-year consultation and drafting process.

Top UN official in Sudan hails return to civilian life of 15,000 former civil war soldiers



Small arms at a disarmament collection point in Akobo, Sudan

4 November - The top United Nations envoy to Sudan has praised the disarming, demobilization and reintegration so far this year of over 15,000 former combatants from the African nation's north-south civil war.

It is hoped that as many as 180,000 ex-combatants across Sudan will return to civilian life under the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) scheme that was launched in February as part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the war.

“The momentum built up thus far is impressive and continues to grow as new sites will become operational in the Three Areas and Southern Sudan,” the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sudan Ashraf Jehangir Qazi told a gathering of partners involved in implementing the DDR on Tuesday.

The DDR process “has given hope to ex-combatants and their communities as they see something concrete being done to promote peace,” said Mr. Qazi, adding that the UN has started to work with its Sudanese partners to extend DDR operations.

Mr. Qazi, who also heads the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), stressed that the return to society of former fighters from the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), Popular Defence Forces and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was “critical to creating a conducive environment for the upcoming elections.”

Highlighting a funding shortfall faced by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in their efforts to demobilize child soldiers, Mr. Qazi that it is “important we regain momentum on the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces to prevent children from returning to life in the barracks.”

At the partnership meeting, held in the Sudanese city of Kadugli, the representative from Norway announced an additional pledge of around \$5 million to support adult and child DDR.

Demobilized combatants are provided with opportunities for alternative livelihoods in agriculture, micro-businesses, vocational training or formal education. The North and South Sudan DDR Commissions implement the programme with support from the Integrated UN DDR Unit, comprised of UNMIS, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Latin America making important progress towards development, UN official says



UNDP Administrator Helen Clark (right) with President Michelle Bachelet of Chile

4 November - The head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has spotlighted the slow global progress towards reducing gender inequality and violence against women on the first day of a three-day official visit to Chile.

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, met President Michelle Bachelet and Foreign Minister Mariano Fernandez Amuntategui yesterday in Santiago, as well as with UN Resident Representatives and Resident Coordinators across Latin America, who have gathered in the Chilean capital for their annual meeting.

Addressing that meeting, Miss Clark said Latin America was on track to achieve many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the set of social and economic target that the world's countries agreed to try to reach by 2015.

She noted that the region remained on track even to meet the target for reducing extreme poverty – halving the proportion of people who live on less than \$1 a day – despite the current global recession, the impact of climate change and high food and fuel prices.

But Miss Clark said that, worldwide, progress towards those MDGs relating to the needs of status of women has been slower.

“In this region UNDP has been very active in addressing challenges related to gender inequality, including violence against women and the need for better balance between work and family life,” she added.

“I believe it will be critical for gender analysis to be applied in the preparations for the 2010 high-level MDG review next year at the UN General Assembly. All development stakeholders need to become more aware of how attending to women's needs will help achieve a wide range of development goals.”

Independent UN expert urges Mauritania to do more to end slavery practices



Gulnara Shahinian, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

4 November - While noting the significant steps that have been taken in Mauritania to tackle slavery, an independent United Nations human rights expert today called for a comprehensive strategy to put an end to this scourge, warning of its impact on the country's future.

“Unaddressed, slavery in all its forms may be an obstacle to the stability, sustainable development and prosperity of Mauritania,” said Gulnara Shahinian, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, at the end of her visit to the country.

During her visit, Ms. Shahinian met with various Government authorities, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and visited communities in Atar, Rosso and the capital, Nouakchott.

She met with people who told her that they had been victims of slavery practices such as serfdom and domestic servitude.

“These victims said that they were utterly deprived of their basic human rights,” she said in a news release. “Having no alternative, they voluntarily stay or after fleeing, return back to slavery. This perpetuates the vicious circle of slavery for men, women and children. The women I met felt that they were the most vulnerable as they suffer triple discrimination

firstly as women, secondly, as mothers and thirdly as slaves.”

She commended the country for taking legal measures to eradicate all forms of slavery, including the passing in 2007 of the law criminalizing the phenomenon, which she said sends “a clear message that slavery can never be tolerated in Mauritania.”

She recommended that a sustained awareness-raising campaign be carried out in the urban and rural areas to make all Mauritians aware of the law. In addition, to encourage victims to come forward, she suggested that the slavery law include provisions that offer victim assistance and socio-economic programmes for their reintegration into society.

“A comprehensive and holistic national strategy specifically addressing slavery that includes awareness raising, access to basic services and income-generating activities is required in order to effectively put an end to this phenomenon,” said the Special Rapporteur.

Ms. Shahinian, who was appointed to her post in May 2008, works in an independent and unpaid capacity, and reports to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council.

Migrants worse off than other workers during recession, warns UN official

4 November - The global economic crisis is having a particular impact on the well-being of those who cross borders seeking better opportunities for themselves and their families, a senior United Nations official said today, noting that migrants are often the first to suffer job losses or worsening working conditions.

“While the impact is not the same in all countries and regions, globally speaking, worsening economic conditions and more restrictive policies for labour movements have led to a slowdown of migration and remittance flows,” said Carlos Lopes, Executive Director of the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and Chair-in-Office of the Global Migration Group (GMG).



United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Executive Director Carlos Lopes

Established in 2006, the GMG is an inter-agency effort aimed at enhancing cooperation between UN agencies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Bank in the field of international migration.

Addressing the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which opened today in Athens, Mr. Lopes noted that remittances are a major source of foreign income for developing countries, especially at a time when foreign direct investment (FDI) has declined owing to the economic slowdown.

While remittances remain relatively resilient, the World Bank forecasts that flows to all developing regions will decline between 7 and 10 per cent in 2009.

“Many countries which depend upon these flows will be adversely affected not only economically, but also socially. Households that receive fewer remittances are under pressure to cut back on expenses.

“Too often this will negatively affect development outcomes, for example in the area of children’s and especially girls’ education and health,” said Mr. Lopes.

The recession has also led many States to adopt restrictive requirements for obtaining entry, legal residence and work permits. Mr. Lopes noted that curtailing regular migration tends to increase irregular flows that are more risky for migrants, particularly the most vulnerable such as unaccompanied minors.

“Additional restrictions can also reinforce the impression that migration is a questionable, criminal phenomenon, thereby contributing to anti-migrant, xenophobic reactions in destination countries,” he stated.

“From a development perspective, such measures risk slowing down the resumption of growth,” he said, adding that migration policy should keep sight of its development implications as it adapts to the crisis.

In addition, he stressed that migration policies and practices must be rooted in human rights, and that States must be vigilant against xenophobic sentiments and discriminatory practices prompted by the economic crisis.

The recently released 2009 UN Human Development Report, entitled *Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development*, called for wide-ranging reforms to maximize the gains from migration and to protect the rights of migrants – now estimated to be one out of every seven persons in the world.

The report, written by independent experts and commissioned by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), proposes reforms to migration policies in source and destination countries that it says are politically feasible and will increase people’s freedom and strengthen human development.