

As written

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STATEMENT

by

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on

AGENDA 3:
FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TO THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ICPD

(E/CN.9/1999/3)

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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am most pleased to introduce document E/CN.9/1999/3, *Report of the Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Task Force on Basic Social Services for All (BSSA)*. This report has been prepared in accordance with resolution 1997/1 of the Commission on Population and Development, which requested the Chairman of the BSSA Task Force to report back to the Commission at its thirty-second session in 1999 on the outcome of the Technical Symposium. The BSSA Task Force was established in 1995 and was chaired by Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund.

The Technical Symposium took place in The Hague, the Netherlands, from 29 June to 3 July 1998. It was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and received financial support from the Governments of Austria, Netherlands and Norway.

It was organized by the Working Group on International Migration of the BSSA Task Force as one of activities to track progress in implementing the action programmes of recent United Nations Global Conferences, particularly, that of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). As such, it also served as one of the technical meetings undertaken as part of the ICPD +5 review process.

A Steering Committee, comprised of: the United Nations Secretariat (the Population Division, the Economic Commission for Europe, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean); UNESCO; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the International Labour Organization (ILO); and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), organized the Symposium, which brought together 49 invited experts from 33 countries, representatives of organizations of the BSSA Task Force, concerned intergovernmental and non governmental organizations, host country institutions and universities and research institutions from around the world. A detailed report of the Technical Symposium has been distributed widely; copies are available at the back of the room. Also, the unedited papers presented at the Symposium have been compiled in three bound volumes and these are available upon request.

The Symposium

The Technical Symposium served as a forum for an objective discussion and assessment of approaches to international migration issues confronting policy makers in both countries of origin and destination. The presentations and the ensuing discussions provided insights regarding: fostering orderly migration flows; counteracting the economic and social marginalization of migrants; and increasing the focus on the human rights and gender dimensions of migration.

According to United Nations estimates, the number of international migrants, present in the world in 1990, was 120 million persons, about 2 percent of the world's population.

International migrants accounted for 4.5 per cent of the population of developed countries in 1990 and for 1.6 per cent of the population of developing countries. Women account for 48 per cent of all international migrants, and female migration has become more pronounced in particular regions and in certain types of flows. Most women who migrate for employment tend to be concentrated in low status jobs and many are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and harassment.

The Symposium underscored that globalization of capital and trade flows and the emergence of regional economic cooperation modalities are having an impact on migration and it examined the extent to which poverty and environmental degradation caused South-to-North migration. Remittances were identified as an important mechanism through which international migration could influence development. The Symposium took note of efforts to incorporate the use of remittances into a revised economic theory of migration.

Several presentations addressed the issue of irregular migration and irregular employment, noting that the growing informalization of the economies in many countries had intensified the interaction between these two trends. It was pointed out that irregular migration and irregular employment are often a reflection of restrictive or ineffective migration regulations, which do not adequately take into account the **labour** force needs in the receiving country. In examining various frameworks to protect the rights of migrant workers, the Symposium concluded that a partnership between the Governments of countries of origin and countries of employment was the best way to curtail the exploitation of migrants by **labour** recruiters and other intermediaries and to promote a more positive climate of opinion that would recognize the mutual benefits of migration for employment.

The Symposium discussed the need to improve the situation of migrants and foreign residents in receiving countries, especially the prevention of their economic, social and cultural marginalization. It also considered modalities to facilitate return migration, with particular attention to strategies for releasing the development potential of return migrants. In view of the growing importance of forced migration and the rising number of persons in need of protection who did not qualify as refugees, the Symposium examined the range of responses to the arrival of asylum seekers. In both developing and developed countries there is increasing restrictiveness in the admission of refugees and asylum-seekers. The Symposium suggested that some rethinking of elements of refugee and asylum regimes may be necessary and that more diverse and flexible solutions, in full compliance with human rights norms, may be needed to respond to the variety of situations in the world today.

Conclusion

The Technical Symposium provided a forum for an objective examination of key policy issues in international migration and development. It stressed that increased international cooperation was needed to develop a comprehensive approach for the management of orderly migration, taking into account human rights and gender concerns. It called attention to the importance of the media and education in promoting a more positive attitude toward migration, and to the facilitating role that **NGOs** can play in preventing the marginalization of migrants

residing in foreign countries, and in reintegrating return migrants in their country of origin. The Symposium emphasized the usefulness of Chapter X of the ICPD Programme of Action as both a policy framework and an evaluative framework for gauging progress on international migration issues.

The Symposium did, however, underscore that much remains to be done. It emphasized that our knowledge of complex migration issues is often compromised by the lack and poor quality of data. The variability and inconsistencies in definitions make international comparisons tenuous. Existing methodologies often limit the range of analyses that can be undertaken and the robustness of findings. Our knowledge of the root causes of migration is, at best sketchy, as is our understanding of the determinants of international migration and their relation to development. Efforts to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies are needed in order to build up a knowledge base of “lessons learned” and “best practices”.

The Commission on Population and Development, at its thirtieth session, provided valuable guidance for the organizing of the Technical Symposium. We are confident that this session of the Commission will provide most useful direction on the follow-up to the Symposium.

Thank you.

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