

COLOMBIA



COLOMBIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Alejandro Borda

Ambassador, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs

Plenary Meeting

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Madame President,

My delegation is delighted to see you presiding over our debates, and is sure that under your leadership, we shall achieve the targets that we have proposed.

Madame President,

Due to its complexity, international migration is charged by tensions between globalization and national sovereignty, between best practices and worst realities, **between unilateral and multilateral positions.**

Globalization has turned migration into a transversal affair, closely related to development, human rights, the struggle against poverty, and the quest for opportunities in an inequitable world, which is why this phenomenon should be addressed at the global and intergovernmental levels.

The global approach fully justifies its treatment in a context as inclusive as the United Nations, as the only inter-governmental forum of a global nature. Therefore, the convening of this High-level Dialogue is welcomed, and we should follow it up with all due consideration.

Colombia considers that it is convenient to set up a regular and continuous dialogue, which will allow a general and comprehensive political approach to migration, and should lead to specific mandates for the agencies concerned.

There are other inter-governmental instances whose composition is not universal, and that approach the issue of migration from specific points of view; however, simply because of their own characteristics and limitations, they do not do so from an integral perspective. Hence, our dialogue should be broad and including all elements which form part of migration issues, and we should at all costs avoid considering a migrant as "unskilled labour on the move", that is, just as some kind of merchandise required to develop an economy. On the contrary, we should start with a reflection regarding the human dimension of the migrant, and respect for his/her fundamental rights.

Regional dialogues on migration matters are useful; we believe that many specific issues could be approached in greater depth in the framework of regional encounters, to seek schemes for cooperation. Nonetheless, migration is a phenomenon that is not limited to regional dynamics. Therefore, we need to preserve the broad and inclusive framework of the United Nations to assure that its analysis will take account of all aspects of a complex reality, as a global phenomenon linked to development.

The High-level Dialogue should be a constructive forum, with flexible mechanisms of understanding, policy agreement and cooperative solidarity that propel reflections at the domestic and global reflection on the structural causes of migration, and the possibilities of development.

Madame President,

My delegation thanks the Secretary General for his report "International Migration and Development" (A/60/871). In general terms, we share the approach of the document, which has seen migration as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, presenting challenges and opportunities for countries of origin and destination alike, by linking migration to development.

When it comes to considering the agendas for migration and development conjointly we should take into account the global prevailing economic model, which harms local forms of production, and encourages migrant flows to developed countries when the local population has no viable alternative to overcome poverty or generate wealth, invest or save.

With the results of the economic model implemented in Latin America to improve living standards, proposals have been made based on a new paradigm of sustained development through the productive use of remittances. It should be noted that remittances are private resources, and therefore they cannot be the subject of government intervention: their use is determined by the migrant and his immediate family; and the medium and long-term effects of this have not been evaluated in macroeconomic terms.

In this same sense, Colombia values efforts to implement the new model of "co-development" as a complement to international cooperation. Despite this, it is evident that neither remittances, nor co-development are substitute for it, since this would imply transferring the responsibility for change in economic structures to the migrants. This is even clearer having taken so long to recognize that migration generates benefits for host countries as well.

Madame President,

In a multilateral context, the concept of "best practices" has been imposed as the model from which international public policy has been slowly built up. Nonetheless, in the field of migration, this model cannot be an excuse for ignoring the "worst realities" to which migrants are exposed in societies that exploit them, or turn their backs on them: xenophobia, discrimination, racism, and the dismissal of the economic and cultural contributions made by migrants to their communities of origin and destination societies.

We should start from the everyday realities of migrants, their problems, and start the participatory construction of solutions, and produce innovative policies. The clear understanding of the positive aspects of migration, tolerance, and the acceptance of cultural diversity of the migrant and his harmonious integration into the society that receives him, should be the basis of the first and most important of the so-called "best practices".

Thank you, Madame President.