



Closing Remarks

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Concluding Session

Greetings to the distinguished delegates and civil society representatives, brothers and sisters. I am honored to come before you this afternoon to provide some closing comments and thoughts as we conclude this session.

Thank you to the more than 300 civil society participants and more than 80 state representatives who have joined in this Informal Interactive Hearing, and our deep appreciation to the Office of the President of the General Assembly for convening us.

For many of us who may have participated in the 2006 interactive hearings prior to the High Level Dialogue later that year, we can note with pride that we have come some ways as a civil society community in our participation, understanding, advocacy and organization. The contributions to the hearing today are without precedent in their breadth, depth and specifics. We come here more prepared, and I must say that we also come with a greater degree of optimism.

As noted by previous presenters, the proposals and recommendations from civil society have emerged from numerous sources: research, academic work, advocacy at all levels of government, and the rich and often tragic experiences of our migrant communities. In the previous two days of preparation, and in the seven regional consultations during the past few months, hundreds of civil society organizations have been engaged, consulted, and have contributed the voices of their respective organizations and communities throughout the world towards a collective and thoughtful process.

We have been both concrete and sweeping in our recommendations for state action and for state and civil society partnership. We have been ambitious, as well as, modest in some of the proposals. We are mindful that we stand at an important moment, where we can begin to make a difference. I think we are all getting too tired, and our migrant communities too anxious, of asking, whether we will be able to bring about durable

solutions to the rights violations, desperate conditions and uncertain futures of migrants, *within our lifetime*.

Can our global society really wait for another generation to come and go without the kind of deliberate action that is needed?

We have come here with a 5-year, 8-point action proposal in hand as our contribution to a body of goals and objectives that we believe can begin to make a difference—which can begin to bring relief to our communities; relief from the fear of detention and deportation; relief from the separation of families; from exploitation as workers; from abuse and discrimination as women, the disabled, children, youth.

We believe we can address the conditions of migrants in distress, and address the conditions of migrants in various forms and stages of transit. We can begin to identify the problems of differentiated treatment of migrants due to race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, sexual orientation, immigration status. We are certainly more mindful than ever of the importance of bringing a gender lens to our examination of the issues and resolutions of our migration and migrants' rights dilemma.

We believe that our proposals can enhance the vital contributions of our migrant and diaspora communities not only as economic forces, but as agents of social change, certainly as contributors and leaders in the processes we are discussing.

I have been inspired by the range of ideas, phrases and proposals presented here today and in our preparations:

- A time to end the globalization of indifference
- Across the board: migrant-centred, gender-sensitive, rights-based responses
- The integration of migration into broader national economic and social policies
- Not a zero-sum game
- The urgent need for ratification and implementation of conventions and agreements that are themselves a strong platform for the rights of migrants
- The International Convention for the Protection of Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their families
- Access to highest attainable health rights/care, including reproductive health
- Government forcefulness in addressing the scourge of racism and xenophobia
- Employers as a window to immigration
- A change in our terminology—we will not further contribute to the negative stigmatization of immigrants
- Access to the highest attainable health rights and care

- An end to the criminalization of irregular migrants
- Opportunities for legalization or regularization for the undocumented as well as the provision for permanent legal immigration
- An end to the detention of immigrants, in particular, an end to the detention of children
- Access to due process, access to justice
- The right not to migrate
- Human rights, equity, dignity and sustainability in our approach to development – and being particular mindful of the important post 2015 development goals.
- A shift from the circular migration model
- The right for migrant workers, regardless of status, to form and join unions
- We cannot default to “ethical codes” of conduct or rely on voluntary monitoring of labor recruiters; the urgent need for regulation.
- Decent work, decent wages
- National, regional, international spaces for civil society engagement
- A human security, not a national security framework
- An end to the militarization of borders

All of these phrases are rich in implication. But together, they will remain only as an aspirational list by civil society without institutional and state commitments to consider and to begin the tough work of strategizing, planning and action. *A list itself is not an agenda, not a plan.* We understand they are not without controversy, certainly not without outright opposition. There are areas of clear difference, but as we have heard even today, there are a number of areas where we can explore the possibilities and that is very exciting.

On our part, civil society is committed to engage. We are here for the long haul. We have discussed the need to strengthen and make more effective, an international mechanism that functions within the UN normative framework. We are, in particular, sensitive to the fact that such an institution should enhance state and civil society engagement and capacity, and not create further barriers for effective partnerships and engagement. Our previous panel also described the need for much improved governance at all levels, and in the course of our preparations we have learned of numerous local and national initiatives that show great promise for addressing some of our most urgent issues.

We have less than three months before the High Level Dialogue and we have a lot of work to do. For groups that registered and participated today, were part of the preparatory meeting over the past two days, organized and participated in the seven regional consultations, we recognize that we are approaching an

important stage of our efforts. We remind ourselves that the October High Level Dialogue, we hope, will launch a new era of constructive cooperation towards key, common goals and objectives.

On the part of civil society, we will be very busy over the next few months; we hope to establish or will continue to connect with states and UN agencies in our preparations. We are separately organizing a People's Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights, a week-long series of events across from the UN and in the vicinity, where we hope to further engage the local community, allied sectors, and public interest in questions of migration, including a better understanding of the complex root causes. We invite all of you to join us.

In closing, I will remind us of William Gois' call to action this morning—"let's make this happen". Let's make this a transformational High Level Dialogue. We will see all of you and more in October. Thank you.