

MALTA



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Christopher Grima,
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations
Commission on Population and Development - Forty-sixth Session)
"New trends in migration: demographic aspects"**

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United Nations, New York

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your Chairmanship of the 46th Session of the Commission on Population and Development and to wish you and other members of the Bureau a successful meeting.

Malta fully supports the statement delivered by the Delegation of the European Union. We would like to deliver the following views in our national capacity.

This year's theme, 'New trends in migration: demographic aspects' is timely in view of global events over the past few years. In recent years, propelled by the process of globalisation, migration has taken a new dimension. Indeed, never before has the migration and development nexus and the need to strengthen the synergies between the two been more important.

The Government of Malta believes that crucial to securing development from migration is to ensure that such migration is well-managed and via legal means, whereby movement is transparent for the countries of origin, transit and destination, and that migrants travel with full knowledge of their rights, without fear or coercion, and with a clear goal of their future prospects. Development-oriented actions are also essential to address the root causes of migratory flows by generating opportunities and economic activity in the countries of origin, thus lessening the propensity to migrate.

Mr. Chairman,

Malta also has its own emigrant population beyond its shores, which has been a source of economic and social growth for the communities in which they have settled into as well as for Malta. The Government of Malta makes every effort to maintain a close bond with the Maltese diaspora, ensuring that they are proud and responsible representatives of Malta. The key in this discourse is the strong bond that the Government of Malta maintains with the Maltese diaspora, with the aim of promoting the highest level of cooperation between the Maltese emigrant communities and their host country, in full compliance with the laws and customs of the land. This, we believe, is a fundamental ingredient that ensures migrating communities are a motor for development wherever they settle.

Mr. Chairman,

Migration offers opportunities and hope for many, but for these same reasons, migration is often a source of abuse. This is why we cannot talk about migration and development without addressing the related challenges. Malta retains a strong and long standing commitment to help those who are in need of protection, and has always upheld its moral and legal duty to protect genuine refugees as well as those entitled to other forms of protection and humanitarian assistance as provided by international law. However, the rights of such individuals must not be undermined by criminal international organisations which exploit their plight for illicit financial gain.

We also recognise the beneficial impacts of remittances by migrants especially in the contribution towards the reduction of poverty and the improvement of health and education of migrant families, for which reason we support further research and analysis into remittances by migrants towards developing countries.

My delegation would like to bring to the fore the particular circumstances of Malta, whereby irregular immigration continues to pose serious challenges. Malta's situation is exceptional considering its geographic and demographic factors. Its population density is by far the highest among EU Member States, and it is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. .

In this context, Malta will continue to work towards resettlement of beneficiaries of international protection and the return of irregular migrants to their countries. Malta is also willing to assist in the reintegration of those who return to their respective countries voluntarily, and assigns due priority to voluntary return. Whilst return must always take place in full respect of human rights and in compliance with international obligations, cooperation between States must be such as to ensure that all return operations are conducted successfully.

Malta will also continue to support development action in the countries of origin, as well as increased development assistance for those countries that honour their international obligations to readmit their nationals who were apprehended in an irregular situation abroad. Malta assigns particular importance to the return of such irregular migrants, highlighting the fact that nothing can be gained by opting for migrating irregularly, a phenomenon that has led to considerable loss of life at sea and exploitation, and which also undermines legal migration and international protection.

Evidently, migration is a complex phenomenon, and it is only by addressing its different aspects of in a holistic manner that we can maximise the effects of our efforts. This is what we seek to do with the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, by which we aim to tackle migration comprehensively, by combating illegal immigration, enhancing well-managed migration, ensuring international protection for those who need it, and strengthening the migration and development nexus.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to conclude with a final thought on the subject on the relationship between migration and development. The aspiration by the host countries, as well as countries of origin and transit countries to enjoy the fruits of development resulting from migration are hinged on various factors, two of which the Government of Malta believes to be fundamental: firstly, countries must together coordinate their efforts and share common burdens so as to also share the fruits of human activity resulting from migration. Secondly, development, like wealth, cannot be engineered by countries or organisations. Their role should be that of providing a safe and stable environment that would allow their citizens, as well as migrants, to reach their full economic and social potential.

Thank you