



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

STATEMENT BY
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AT THE HIGH LEVEL SIDE EVENT TO THE 70TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STRENGTHENING COOPERATION ON MIGRATION AND REFUGEE MOVEMENTS IN THE
PERSPECTIVE OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT AGENDA
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Secretary General, Deputy-Secretary General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm pleased and honored to participate in this very important event today, and I'd like to thank the Secretary-General for helping to draw attention to this crucial issue.

I wanted to emphasize three points that I hope will be amongst the outcomes of this meeting. These points are too often forgotten in the global and national debates about migration, but are critical if we are to promote dignified, orderly and safe migration for the benefit of all.

First of all, I think we need to realize we are living in a changed world, and a changed world requires policies that keep pace. We have more people on the move than ever before, more of them being forced to move than in the past. We have unprecedented conflicts in the world, and we have unprecedented anti-migrant sentiment. We need to come to grips with this if we're going to manage this in a humane and responsible manner. Migration can too often be governed by knee-jerk reactions and short-term, populist approaches that ignore its realities and that undermine its potential benefits. That means governments need to manage migration in a balanced, comprehensive and coherent way, addressing both the immediate and the longer term.

Second point is that we need to look upon migration in its historical setting: that migration has always been historically overwhelmingly positive. Migration is not a problem to be solved, it is a human reality to be managed, and that requires the appropriate policies. I would also like to state a

thesis, which is that given the driving forces of demography, disasters, the digital revolution, distance-shrinking technology—migration is inevitable. We have more people than ever before in the world today who are on the move. Secondly, it is overwhelmingly necessary if jobs are to be filled, skills to be available and economies to flourish. And finally, it is highly desirable if we have the right policies.

Finally, there are several challenges we will have to meet if we are going to address this situation responsibly and humanely. First of all, we have to change the public narrative about migration. At present, it is toxic. We need to get back to viewing migration as a positive force and as an enabler of development. Second, in terms of challenges, we have to learn to manage diversity, as cultural, ethnic and religious diversity is going to be the wave of the future. We have an aging north with lots of jobs to be filled and we have a youthful south with a turgid rate of job creation—we need to address that. And finally, we have to conjugate the conundrums of national sovereignty versus individual rights, and between national security and human security.

In all of this, IOM is firmly committed to supporting you in addressing these migratory flows. You have our support. That is why we are here today, and I hope that you will join us on a new path to dignified, orderly and safe migration for the benefit of all.

Thank you.