

**U.S. Statement
Regarding the Secretary-General's Reports
39th Session of CPD
April 4, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, since this is my first time taking the floor, let me say that the United States would like to thank the Population Division and UNFPA for their work in preparing for this 39th session of the Commission. My delegation would like to offer comments on the three Reports of the Secretary General presented yesterday.

The United States notes that the report entitled "World Population Monitoring, Focusing on International Migration and Development" covers a wide range of issues related to population and migration. Migration is of course a very important issue to the United States, as immigration has made America what it is today. The report estimates 20 percent of all migrants live in the United States. We see that, in some countries, the relevance of family reunification has declined. In the United States, however, family reunification for legal immigrants remains a key priority. Over 80% of the 950,000 persons granted legal permanent residence in FY2004 were for family reunification purposes.

The United States, a country founded on immigration, believes that orderly international migration can have significant positive impacts on development, especially through remittances. Legal migration can have beneficial impacts on both sending and receiving countries, as well as on the migrants themselves; the Government of the United States, however, remains extremely concerned about irregular migration. Trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling are unfortunately, key elements of the current landscape of international migration.

Mr. Chairman, on October 19, 2005, President Bush signed the instrument of ratification for the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols on trafficking and smuggling. The United States became an official party to the Convention and these two

Protocols in December of 2005. We encourage other states in the region that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention and its two protocols.

My delegation commends the analysis, in the Secretary General's report on World Population Monitoring, of the demographic and social aspects of international migration. We note that migration has become the major driving force behind population growth in the developed world, although in some regions, international migration flows have not offset population decline. The impact of migration flows on population trends, particularly at a time of increased population aging, is a topic of growing prominence on many national agendas.

This report also discusses the migration of skilled workers. The United States continues to believe that states should work to create the conditions in which individuals are able to seek education and work opportunities, in their own country, as well as overseas. We note the report's reference to returnees from the United States who go back to China, India and the Republic of Korea and serve as a main driving force for the growth of the software industry. There may be lessons that can be learned from these experiences and applied to other migration relationships.

The United States concurs with the report's statement that regional dialogues such as the Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies and The Regional Conference on Migration in North and Central America – known as the “Puebla process”- promote regional cooperation and coordination. As members of both groups, the U.S. agrees with the report that it is the “level of informality that facilitates dialogue and the exchange of information.” We note that there are many such dialogues throughout the world and my delegation believes that they hold the most promise for practical regional cooperation on migration issues.

Moreover, we note that the report details some of the international initiatives on migration. The United States would like to highlight the success of the International Dialogue on Migration, or IDM, as part of the Council Meetings of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The IDM has provided member states the opportunity to meet for thematic discussion of key migration issues, benefiting from IOM's tremendous institutional expertise in migration.

With regards to the report, "Monitoring of Population Programs, Focusing on International Migration and Development," the United States strongly agrees with the point that "diasporas are important instruments for promoting development, economic opportunities and social and political changes" in countries of origin. The report notes that "countries can still develop strategies that would channel remittances into activities to promote economic development and employment growth." The United States supports the use of remittances for development purposes but stresses that this should be strictly voluntary. Finally, with respect to skilled migration, we agree with the paper's highlighting of the fact that it is not practical at the bilateral, or multilateral, level to selectively exclude the migration of skilled workers from developing countries. As stated earlier, the U.S. believes that the decision to migrate or not to migrate is an individual one. A State has the sovereign right to determine who can enter its territory and decisions about which categories of migrants may be permitted entry should be made at the national level.

Turning to the issue of financial flows for ICPD implementation, my delegation is pleased to see that the Secretary-General's Report acknowledges the United States' strong support for voluntary family planning programs. The United States is committed to continuing this support and remains the largest bilateral donor of assistance in this field. As the Report

recognizes, the U.S. contribution of \$3.1 billion dollars for population and health activities was more than half of total donor contributions in 2005.

The United States also notes the positive development of increased domestic funding for population activities by developing countries in all regions. The U.S. believes that there is a need for a greater focus on interventions that will help women and infants in the birth process, as well as recovery from it. Interventions that focus solely on pregnancy prevention do little for women who become pregnant and their infants.

The United States appreciates the work that went into producing the Secretary-General's report. My delegation believes, however, it is written at a level of generality that is of limited utility for policy-makers, and the U.S. disagrees with some of its conclusions, such as a GNP target-based approach to ODA or the advisability of adding new MDG goals or indicators.

To conclude, let me emphasize that the United States looks forward to a productive and informative week in the Commission and to a successful outcome to our deliberations.

Thank You Mr. Chairman.

**United States Statement on
National Experiences with Migration and Development
39th Session of the Commission on Population and Development
April 5, 2006**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for this opportunity to reaffirm the United States' commitment to the protection of migrants and to highlight our national experience with migration. As President Bush said recently at a naturalization ceremony in Washington DC, "Our immigrant heritage has enriched America's history. It continues to shape our society. Each generation of immigrants brings a renewal to our national character and adds vitality to our culture. Newcomers have a special way of appreciating the opportunities of America, and when they seize those opportunities, our whole nation benefits."

The United States is a nation of immigrants. In fact, the United Nations estimates that of 200 million migrants worldwide, nearly 25% currently live in North America. As the Secretary-General's report notes, 1 in every 5 international migrants lives in the United States of America. Immigration into our country has contributed to a diverse and multicultural society. Many prominent Americans, including members of the U.S. Congress, are immigrants or children of immigrants. America's welcoming environment is due to more than cultural tradition; it is one of the fundamental premises of our democracy that our Constitution does not limit citizenship by birth or background.

As a country built on immigration, the United States has tremendous experience in addressing the challenges of migration. Yet we approach these tasks with humility. We recognize that even for a country such as ours with an immigrant experience reaching back to our beginnings, these are complex and emotional matters that go to the heart of

national identity. The United States believes that while migration has clear benefits for all concerned, these benefits can be maximized only when migration is managed effectively. We encourage humane and orderly migration through legal channels. Irregular migration, however, remains a pressing concern. Irregular migration places individuals at great risk. It makes migrants, particularly women and children, vulnerable to harm and abuse, including as possible victims of trafficking. The United States remains committed to protecting the human rights of migrants and to combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.

The U.S. also strongly condemns manifestations and acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance directed against migrants. Hate crimes against migrants are prosecuted under U.S. law (Hate Crimes Sentencing Act of 1992). The term "hate crime" is defined in the law as a crime in which the defendant's conduct was motivated by hatred, bias, or prejudice. Protection of those who are fleeing persecution is also a United States priority. The U.S. has a robust asylum process for those migrants who have a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country. In fiscal year 2003, the United States granted asylum to over 15,470 people. The United States also welcomes refugees from overseas, for whom resettlement is the appropriate durable solution. In FY05, the U.S. resettled nearly 54,000 refugees. More than 2.5 million refugees have been resettled in the United States since 1975.

The United States is continually reviewing its immigration policies and procedures to ensure appropriate treatment of migrants, and is fully committed to the integration of migrants into American society. I would like to share some of the things the United States does to facilitate the integration of legal immigrants into our culture and

society. Helping immigrants become productive members of our country is a task shared by civic organizations, faith-based groups, and businesses as well as federal, state and local government. It is important to emphasize the key role of civil society in this process. Civic and religious organizations across America facilitate immigrant integration in countless ways. They prepare manuals on citizenship, offer classes on civics and the English language, and provide advice on tasks like paying taxes and enrolling children in school.

On the topic of school, the United States is steadfast in its commitment to the schooling of children and has implemented several programs to ensure that all children have access to education regardless of immigration status. Family re-unification for legal immigrants is also a cornerstone of U.S. immigration priorities. In FY04, the United States granted legal permanent residence to approximately 950,000 immigrants, over 80% of which were family members of US citizens or legal residents. The U.S. believes that the transition into American society is greatly eased by the support of family.

Small and medium businesses are the avenue by which many immigrants are able to realize their dream of achieving financial security for their families here and in their countries of origin. All legal permanent immigrants to the U.S. have virtually unlimited access to the U.S. labor market and have the same protections as U.S. citizen workers. The U.S. also has many different categories of temporary workers—each with its own requirements and protections tailored to their unique worker category. Generally, the more vulnerable the workers, the greater the protections provided by U.S. law.

The Federal Government is also doing its part to help immigrants succeed in the United States. The office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in the

Department of Homeland Security was established in May of 2003 and has made tremendous progress in continuing to secure America's promise as a nation of immigrants. This office is responsible for providing accurate and useful information on immigration benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of U.S. citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of the immigration system. The office has a network of 250 local offices around the country processing 30,000 applications for immigration benefits every day. Each work day these offices also issue 7,000 green cards, grant asylum to 80 individuals already in the United States, and welcome 3,000 new citizens, 3,000 new permanent residents and some 200 refugees from around the world.

Let me conclude by again quoting President Bush on the topic of migration and integration: "This is a land in which foreigners who respect the laws are welcomed as contributors to American culture not feared as threats. The United States has been strengthened by generations of immigrants who became Americans through patience, hard work, and assimilation. Like generations of immigrants that have come before them, every new citizen has an obligation to learn this Nation's customs and values. At the same time, America will fulfill its obligation to give each citizen a chance to realize the American dream. By enforcing immigration laws, the Federal government is protecting the promise of a tolerant, welcoming America and preserving opportunity for all." Thank You.