



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

STATEMENT

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Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is pleased to join this discussion on international migration and development.

Mr. Chair,

Historically, migration has not been an issue of great inter-state dialogue and cooperation. Over the past decade however, reflecting the impacts of globalization and increased interdependence, there has been growing recognition that migration is a phenomenon that affects all of us, and that has implications far beyond the borders of any one nation. There are good reasons for reaching this conclusion. Migration is a cross-cutting issue that impacts, and is impacted by, many areas of human endeavor. It affects hundreds of millions of people across the world, including those who migrate and those who stay behind. Today, nearly every country in the world is involved in the process of migration as a country of origin, transit or destination and increasingly as all three simultaneously.

It has also been recognized that migration has important links with development. The Secretary-General's report has highlighted some of these links – remittances, migrant rights and migration policies, and environmental change. There is a two-way, positive and negative link as migration can result from lack of development and, at the same time, underdevelopment can be alleviated or exacerbated by migration. Thus, migration is neither categorically an obstacle to development nor a magic wand for its achievement. However, migration that is safe, legal, voluntary and humanely managed can and does contribute positively to development, including the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indeed, migration itself can be viewed as a form of development if we consider, in the words of Amartya Sen, that freedom is development.

While awareness of the connection between migration and development has grown, strategic development frameworks, including the MDGs and most government

development policies, still do not systematically integrate migration considerations. Helping governments build essential capacity to realize the development potential of migration is therefore a major task ahead. We must work towards policies that are carefully shaped to boost the positive potential of migration for development, while reducing its negative repercussions. Without the necessary foundations – comprehensive and coherent policies, fair and properly functioning legal and administrative structures, and well-trained personnel – governments will remain ill-equipped to harness the potential benefits of migration. It is therefore time for governance of migration to be a priority focus at the national and international levels. And it is time for real capacity building to be made available for those governments and other stakeholders who need it.

IOM, as the leading intergovernmental organization dedicated solely to migration, supports Member States and the international community in promoting humane and orderly migration that benefits migrants and societies. In 2011, IOM expended more than USD 1.3 billion in support of the following activities of greatest relevance to the Secretary General's report:

- a. Initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacities of migrants, governments and the international community to respond to challenges as well as harness opportunities related to international migration and development;
- b. Selected migration initiatives with a thematic focus, including increasingly topical issues such as migration, climate change and the environment;
- c. Initiatives to facilitate international cooperation, dialogue and partnership on international migration and development.

With more than 450 field locations and a global staff complement of 8,300, IOM delivers policy guidance, technical and operational support in an increasing number and diverse range of fields, at the request of its Member States and in partnership with stakeholders. This year, some 2,700 active projects with a bearing on international migration and development are being implemented by IOM and its partners. In 2011, IOM spent 95% of its operational budget on migration management; migration health; movement, emergency and post-crisis assistance. As a result of this experience, IOM wishes to highlight key findings in the following six areas for consideration:

Human Rights of Migrants

First, with respect to the human rights of migrants, there is need for enhanced action to:

- Improve awareness, understanding, ratification and implementation of existing legal instruments relevant to the protection, promotion and realization of the human rights of all migrants, in particular the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- Strengthen the capacity of States and the international community to give effect to the human rights of migrants, including by training government officials;
- Ensure protection of migrants against violence, exploitation and trafficking;
- Ensure effective communication on and proper recognition of the contributions of migrants and migration to human development and society; and
- Combat xenophobia and discrimination against migrants.

Migration and Development Programming

Second, with respect to migration and development programming, greater strides can be made by all stakeholders towards:

- Promoting the mainstreaming of migration into development planning, PRSPs, the MDGs and the post-2015 development framework;
- Improving coherence in migration policymaking and developing internationally comparable statistics on migration, as well as migration and development indicators;
- Enhancing the development potential of social and economic remittances, and mobilizing the skills and resources of diaspora communities; and
- Sharing effective practices on international migration and development.

Labour Migration

Third, in the field of labour migration, in 2011 IOM facilitated the migration of more than 12,000 labour migrants; assisted more than 5,000 victims of human trafficking; and provided more than 55,124 people with voluntary return and reintegration assistance. We have learned that there is a need for:

- More effective and better managed labour migration and cooperation that facilitates regular movement, integration and re-integration of migrants;
- Safe and better regulated recruitment of foreign workers to meet labour market shortages;
- Enhancement of the capacity of low-skilled migrants to increase their access to employment opportunities; and
- Greater awareness of their rights and concomitant obligations amongst migrants.

Migration Health¹

Fourth, in the field of migrant health, in 2011 IOM performed more than 250,000 migration health assessments of migrants and refugees, and implemented over 200 migration health projects worldwide. From these, we believe there is a need for greater efforts to ensure that:

- Human mobility occurs in a safe and healthy manner for both migrants and host communities;
- A holistic approach is adopted in examining how broader factors impact health outcomes; and
- The removal of barriers migrants face in accessing critical health care services.

Migration Crisis Management

¹ Health is a catalyst for fostering positive migration outcomes, human development and social cohesion. IOM activities cover three interlinked programmatic areas: health assessments and travel health assistance; health promotion and assistance for migrants; and migration health assistance for crisis-affected populations.

Fifth, with respect to migration crisis management, in 2011 IOM brought 230,000 stranded migrants to safety in the MENA region; provided 6.5 million displaced persons with humanitarian assistance and protection, and 3.5 million people with recovery and transition support. Greater protection for migrants in crisis situations can be achieved by:

- Tailoring solutions to the migration consequences of crises before, during and after crises in keeping with the migration crisis management cycle;
- Developing comprehensive strategies to address the impact of crises on migration and development, integrating emergency preparedness and response, disaster risk reduction, and post-conflict transitional support;
- Strengthening durable solutions for forced migrants, including through resettlement, repatriation, return or local integration; and
- Factoring environmental considerations and their implications for migration into National Adaptation Plans of Action.

Dialogue, Partnership and Cooperation on Migration

Sixth, and finally, IOM is committed to and actively engaged in promoting dialogue, partnership and cooperation on international migration and development.² In this context, there is further need for:

- Enhanced multi-lateral engagement with governments, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders, including through IOM's International Dialogue on Migration;
- Sustained support to Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs), especially nascent ones;
- Greater cross-fertilization of ideas and practices amongst RCPs, the Global Forum on Migration and Development and inter-regional fora that consider migration issues; and
- Strengthened coordination at the inter-agency level, specifically through the Global Migration Group (GMG).

IOM firmly believes that dialogue is a crucial element to advancing migration and development on the international agenda. In that respect, we welcome the Secretary-General's report and the themes and modalities it has proposed for next year's High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, including the roundtable themes on mainstreaming migration into the development agenda and strengthening partnerships and cooperation. This event, which comes at an ideal time given the international community's focus on the post-2015 development agenda, offers an opportunity to build on the momentum that has been growing over the past few years through mechanisms such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which provides a platform to create the coherence of thought and action previously missing from international debates

² IOM convenes sessions of the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) annually; supports regional consultative processes on migration (RCPs) and convened in 2011, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Botswana, the third global meeting of RCPs. IOM is involved with the Global Migration Group (GMG), including as co-chair of the two GMG working Groups. IOM also maintains extensive partnerships with civil society and the private sector across the world.

on migration, and to establish migration as a mainstream issue that is incorporated in development policies and programs.

IOM welcomes the Secretary-General's recognition of IOM's potential role in providing, in partnership with the broader UN family, a coherent and robust inter-agency response to the challenges and opportunities of migration. Concern for the well-being of migrants has been embedded in IOM's constituent documents – and reflected in its activities, projects and programmes – since the Organization's creation 60 years ago. IOM is mandated by its Member States to address migration in its multiple facets and we remain committed to doing so.

But there is still more we can do.

Establishing a post-2015 United Nations development agenda that fully incorporates migration as a mainstream issue will require us to not only consider the links between migration and development, but also, recognizing its cross-cutting nature, with other critical policy areas. The relationship between migration and gender for example, is an issue of growing importance given the increasing number of women now migrating – a phenomenon that has been labeled the 'feminization of migration'. Health is another important area often overlooked in the migration and development debate, even though the health needs and rights of migrants are crucial in making the migration experience more humane and productive. The shortage of health personnel in some developing countries, due in part to migration, is also of growing global concern. Ensuring respect for human rights, including of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people, is another crucial component of migration governance and any future development framework. There are many other important linkages besides these that we must take account of in our discussions on migration. IOM will continue to promote these issues for the benefit of migrants everywhere.

Mr. Chair,

Let me close by assuring you that as the principal inter-governmental organization on migration, IOM is committed to providing leadership and support to the international community in realizing the full development potential of migration. We stand ready to help promote more orderly and humane mobility, in order to harness the positive potential of migration for development. Thank you.