



UN General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2013

Statement by the Global Migration Group “International Migration and Development”

Delivered by William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration and Chair of the Global Migration Group

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Secretary-General,
Excellencies and Representatives from the Diplomatic Missions,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The Global Migration Group (GMG) was established prior to the first High-level Dialogue in 2006, as the successor of the Geneva Migration Group. Today, it is the principal inter-agency coordination mechanism on migration, encompassing 15 entities of the UN system and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It aims to promote all relevant international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration. Bringing together heads of agencies, the GMG also seeks to encourage more coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approaches to maximize the benefits and address the challenges of migration.
2. Now in 2013, it is the second time that we discuss the theme of international migration and development at a high-level event in the United Nations General Assembly. We believe it is essential that *migrants* – the main protagonists in the migration-development debate – must be at the centre of our attention. Migrants are not commodities or factors of production. They are mothers and fathers seeking a better life for their families. They are young people using their talents to realise their dreams and ambitions. They are individuals trying to escape discrimination, the poverty trap and conflict. They are neighbours, relatives, friends, employers, or colleagues of each and every one of us in this room. Many of us are also migrants or the children of migrants. With this in mind, the GMG calls for a people-centred and human-rights based approach to migration and development.
3. Our key message for this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) and beyond is that migration, undeniably, is an enabler of inclusive and sustainable development for individuals and societies alike. Rights-based governance of international migration, premised on the protection and fulfilment of the human and labour rights of all migrants regardless of their status, will make migration a safe, productive and enriching experience for migrants and their families. We need migration policies and laws that address the entire migration process and that are coherent with other policy areas. We need inclusive, transparent and accountable cooperation bilaterally, regionally and globally. Only then can we also harness the substantial

gains that migration offers to the countries that migrants come from, travel through and live and work in.

4. The experiences of migrant men, women, the young and the old are varied. Where a migrant comes from and moves to, her migration status, his sector of employment and conditions of work, health (including possibly disability) and cultural identity and ethnicity will influence the individual migration experience.
5. As a result, there is no simple, single “migration story” applicable to all. We need to recognize the diverse biographies, capacities, needs and vulnerabilities of those we collectively call “migrants”. At the same time, however, we can identify relevant universal principles, good practices, and policy priorities in addressing migration. All migrants, regardless of their legal status, are entitled to protection, respect and fulfilment of their inherent human and labour rights. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “*all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*”.
6. The 2013 HLD is a unique opportunity for States and the international community at large to anchor the debate firmly on international migration and development in the three fundamental principles: human rights, equality and sustainability, which lie at the heart of the future UN development agenda. Together we can lay the foundation for improved rights-based migration governance that enhances the human development outcomes of international migration for migrants and States.
7. Let us fast forward a few years. Imagine we are in this room again, say, for the next HLD. What would we hope to have achieved? What world do we want for the migrant of the future?
 - a. First: a few years from now, we would like to be working in a world in which all States are committed to the human and labour rights of migrants and their families both in law and in practice, with a focus on the most vulnerable. As one indication for change, governments would enhance access to regular migration channels to meet actual labour market needs, and for family reunification. Fewer migrants would languish in immigration detention facilities, and none of those would be children or adolescents. There would be a significant reduction in human trafficking and exploitation of migrants with increased prosecution of perpetrators. There would be a precipitous drop in hate crimes and violence against migrants; in abuse and maltreatment in the workplace and of migrants in transit. We would like to see more national human rights institutions with mandates and dedicated departments for migrants. Equally, we would like to see more inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral coordinating bodies on migration – in a whole-of-government approach. Effective mechanisms would be in place to meet the humanitarian needs of migrants, in particular migrants in crisis. All migrants and their families, irrespective of their status, would have access to health, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, education, adequate housing, social security and protection, and other basic services. Migrant women, including those in domestic work, would be empowered to enjoy fully their rights. Migrants would have their own organizational capacity to articulate and claim their rights and trade unions would continue to open their doors to and advocate on behalf of upholding labour standards for migrant workers. Migrants would have productive and decent work, and employers and private recruitment agencies would adopt equitable recruitment practices and respect labour laws. Perhaps most importantly in this domain, migrant women, men, girls and boys would be recognized and valued for their unique and inherent individual human worth, dignity and contributions.

- b. Second, we hope to have a new reference text for global development, one which builds on and enhances the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). That text, we hope, will have remedied the MDGs' silence on migration issues. The new text will reflect the realization that migration is not exclusively a South-North issue, but contributes to equitable, inclusive and sustainable development in all countries and regions. A few years from now, we hope to be implementing a new "partnership for migration" as part of a renewed global partnership for development. Such a partnership could be measured in the number of development plans, labour market and employment policies, social protection, education and health policies, as well as investment, trade-related and financial inclusion policies that systematically include migrants, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, through participatory and accountable processes. Other measures of progress might be reduced up-front costs for recruitment and lower transfer costs for remittances. More multiple-entry visas, dual citizenship and mechanisms to recognize qualifications across borders would help ensure that the globalization of "personhood" keeps pace with the globalization of commerce.
 - c. Lastly, we hope that dialogue, cooperation and partnership on international migration will have expanded and flourished and will have become more inclusive and accountable. We would like to see the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) continue to advance understanding and consensus on migration and development. The GFMD could also use its position to promote all international instruments and norms relevant to migration. We encourage Regional Consultative Processes on Migration to continue expanding their agendas and their circle of participants. The GMG stands ready to continue to support the GFMD and explore synergies for future collaboration. We would like to see a greater number of regional mobility schemes and labour migration agreements signed and implemented that protect and fulfil the human and labour rights of migrant workers and their families. Above all, we would like to see mechanisms at global, regional and national levels that promote the contributions and participation of migrants and of civil society more generally in the migration debate.
8. These are just a few measures of progress that we put to your consideration as you deliberate the future of migration. The GMG avails its support to States, and other actors and entities in this endeavour. We have put forward our recommendations in greater detail in a GMG position paper on the HLD, available on the GMG website.
 9. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who participated in the GMG side event earlier today. We were honoured to have Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with us in a discussion on the GMG's work, priorities and future directions.
 10. In closing, allow me to reiterate our call for future migration governance that is migrant-centred and that recognizes human rights and development as two sides of the same coin. It is our hope that this second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development will conclude with a concrete agenda for action on protection of the rights of all migrants, migration's role in development, reduction of the costs of migration, and cooperation on migration matters at all levels. We, as the Global Migration Group, are strongly committed to this endeavour and offer you our full support.
