

**STATEMENT BY WILLIAM LACY SWING
DIRECTOR GENERAL, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION
ON BEHALF OF DR. SUPACHAI PANITCHPAKDI
ON BEHALF OF THE GLOBAL MIGRATION GROUP
GLOBAL FORUM FOR MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT
MANILA, 29 OCTOBER 2008**

President Arroyo; Mr. Ban-Ki Moon, UN Secretary General; Honourable Under-Secretary Esteban Conejos, Chair of the GFMD, Special Representative of the Secretary General Peter Sutherland, Sir John Kaputin, Secretary-General of the ACP, Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a singular honour for me today to represent Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary General of UNCTAD, in his role as Chair of the Global Migration Group (GMG). This also affords me a unique opportunity personally, coming as the Manila Global Forum does within one month of my assuming office as Director General of the International Organization (IOM). My own remarks, on behalf of IOM, will be available outside in the three official languages of IOM.

Now follows Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi's message on behalf of the GMG:

“As you know, the GMG is comprised of 13 United Nations entities and the IOM. The GMG has supported the Global Forum on Migration and Development since its inception and, I might say, the Forum continues to have IOM's enthusiastic support. I have the pleasure today of reiterating GMG's support for this valuable process. I also wish to congratulate, personally and on behalf of my GMG colleagues, the Government of the Philippines and, in particular, Under-Secretary Esteban Conejos, for the care and effort expended in organizing this trailblazing event.

This meeting could not be occurring at a more timely moment. As other speakers have noted, the global financial crisis that the world is experiencing this year cannot but have an effect on migration. For all of us who care deeply about ensuring that the rights of migrants are respected and that the benefits of migration for development are reinforced, it is particularly important to see the international community gather together here today in this Forum to discuss seriously and in a spirit of cooperation the crucial interlinkages between migration and the multiple dimensions of social and economic development.

The GMG considers the theme of this meeting – “protecting and empowering migrants for development” - as most appropriate. As the most recent United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD XII, rightly stressed: “All migrants should be accorded the full protection of human rights and the full observance of labour laws applicable to them, including the principles and labour rights embodied in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work”. In relation to the contribution of migrants to development, UNCTAD XII highlighted the potential benefits and opportunities of trade, investment and developmental links between countries of origin of migrants and their communities abroad -- as well as the potential of migrant's remittances to contribute to development.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To commemorate that anniversary and contribute to the discussions taking place in this Forum, the GMG – in a collaborative effort – has analyzed the challenges of protecting the human rights of international migrants. I am pleased to present and make available to all here the product of this collaboration -- a report entitled *International Migration and Human Rights: Challenges and Opportunities on the Threshold of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

The report documents the key role of human rights in the migration and development discourse: First of all, the report highlights that lack of respect for the human rights of migrants reduces their ability to contribute to development. The report argues that cooperation among governments of countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as with non-governmental organizations and civil society, is essential to ensure that international human rights instruments are implemented and that migrants are aware of their rights and obligations. The report concludes that a major challenge in the protection of the human rights of migrants is the ratification, implementation and enforcement of existing human rights instruments.

A key objective of GMG is to improve the policy and operational responses of the United Nations system and the international community to international migration. GMG has played an important role in guiding the United Nations debate on international migration and development. Recently, the United Nations has recognized the important role of GMG. In its resolution 62/270, the UN encouraged GMG members to contribute to the GFMD and provide the Forum with technical support. The UN Secretary General’s report on International Migration and Development -

to which all GMG members contributed - takes stock of ongoing activities and actions in this area. The Secretary General's report also highlights the interlinkage with the UN system and also the GMG.

For our part, GMG members, individually and as a group, have been actively engaging in providing the support requested by the Forum. This spans several areas of expertise. GMG members have contributed to a number of Roundtables by preparing papers; consolidating research; providing data; and sharing experiences and practices in different migration-related areas. GMG members have commented on most Roundtable papers. We thank the Roundtable co-ordinators for sharing the draft documents with us.

GMG members have also seconded staff and assisted in the organization of civil society events. We have also responded to requests for migration-related services from governments; for instance, *A Compendium of Good Practice Policy Elements in Temporary Bilateral Labour Arrangements* was prepared at the request of the Governments of Morocco and Spain. Similarly, GMG members provided input and support to the EC-Mauritius Workshop on Circular Migration that took place in September and grew out of the Forum process.

Other contributions linked to the Forum but also going beyond it include: a conference on the rights of migrant children; papers on vulnerable migrants and on "Gender, Migration and Development" prepared for the International Conference on that topic held in Manila in September.

Some GMG members are currently preparing a *Handbook on Integrating Migration into National Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies*. The Handbook is an important practical tool for the use of Governments of developing countries.

Some GMG agencies are also key actors in the initiative launched earlier this year by the European Commission, known as the "*Joint Migration and Development Initiative*". The overall objective of this Initiative is to support local authorities, NGOs and diaspora organizations in finding and pursuing strategies to help migration contribute to development. The European Commission will provide 11 million Euros in funding for this joint initiative. To highlight just one of its innovative aspects, the joint partnership will bring together practitioners in on-line 'communities of practice' to share news and information and to provide mutual support. Annual Stakeholder Fairs will complement the on-line communication and provide opportunities for networking and building partnerships. With

its global outreach, the joint partnership is expected to advance knowledge and disseminate effective migration and development practices.

In conclusion, we, the members of GMG, look forward to continuing and strengthening our collaboration with the Global Forum, making full use of our respective areas of expertise and operating within on our respective mandates. At the same time, we hope that we can improve our interchanges in ways that promote coherence and the coordination of our responses to your needs. We believe that, particularly in this time of crises, we do not have the luxury of wasted efforts and duplicative work. The negative impact that the financial crisis is already having on migrants and the families and communities they leave behind will require a concerted effort on the part of all of us. Within their respective mandates, GMG member agencies will examine the consequences of the current financial and economic crises for migrants and their countries and suggest ways and means to help minimize negative effects. It is thus with a sense of added urgency that we look forward to a continued and productive collaboration with the Global Forum, particularly in its third edition under the leadership of Greece.

In the meantime, it only remains for me to thank the Government of the Philippines and the organizers of this Second Forum for involving GMG in the whole process and inviting me to address this plenary on behalf of our Group. We wish you success in your deliberations and look forward to its outcome.”

Thank you.