



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

REMARKS
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**“Making Migration a Positive Force for Development
in the Americas”**

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Mr. Secretary General
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,

It is an honor to participate in this distinguished OAS Lecture Series. Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for giving me this unique opportunity to exchange with you all on how, together, we can make migration a positive force for development in the Americas. I am particularly grateful for this opportunity given:

- (a) IOM’s close cooperation with the OAS;
- (b) the importance of migration in the Americas, and;
- (c) the timing – just two days before this week’s UN General Assembly’s High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development.

I would like to make three points. First, I would like to set the scene by giving an overview of recent global trends in migration; then review migration trends in the Americas. Third and final, I would wish to explore with you a few crucial goals for the High Level Dialogue, along with examples of practical steps, to transform migrant challenges into advantages, and thereby make migration a positive force for development in the Americas and the world.

I. Global and Hemispheric Migration Trends.

A. Ours is an era of unprecedented human mobility. There are more people on the move today than at any other time in recorded history.

In the year 2010, world population reached a total of seven billion; one in every seven persons is a migrant, that is, 1 billion of 7 billion international of our planet.

Migration is this century’s megatrend; the 232 million international migrants are up from 175 million in 2000 and from 154 million in 1990.

There are also 740 million international migrants who never leave their country or cross a border. This is three times greater than all international migrants. (China alone has more than 230 internal migrants -- a number equal to all international migrants.) What is driving this large-scale human movement?

First of all, demography. The 20th century was the first time in history that the world's population quadrupled in size in a single century.

This large-scale growth is forecast to level off by mid-century at about 9 billion.

Labor demands are also driving large-scale population movements. In the meantime, aging OECD countries and other developed countries will need tens of millions of workers that they will not have given their negative replacement rate – that is, more people dying than being born.

The vast majority of these work places will, per force be filled by migrants from the “Global South”. This large influx will change the very composition and character of the traditional 19th century Nation State. Besides demography and labor market demands, other drivers include:

- Digital Revolution.
- Distance-shrinking technology.
- Disparities – socio-economic between South and North.
- Degradation of the environment and climate change
- Disasters, both natural and man-made
- Dreams

All of these forces will ensure that large-scale migration remains a “mega-trend of the 21st century.”

Already today, international migrants comprise a population group larger than the population of Brazil.

II. Migration in the Americas Today

The Americas remain extremely important for international migration. The largest international migration corridor by far is between South and Central America and Mexico on the one hand, and North America, on the other. Since 1990, the number of international migrants in the North American corridor grew more than that of any other region, in absolute terms (25 million – the next closest being Europe with 23 million); and also in percentage terms (2.8% growth – the closest being Oceania at 2.3%).

2. People are increasingly aware of the growing importance of South-South migration, but North-South migration -- a relatively new phenomenon -- is also rising. As described in IOM's 2013 World Migration Report on the “well-being of migrants,” released this month, a large proportion of the world's migrant workers continue to come from traditional low and mid-income emigration countries; however, increasing numbers of workers from high-income countries are drawn to low and mid-income destinations, that is, increasing North-South Migration.

For example, in Brazil, there has been a 64% increase between 2009-2011 in work permits granted to foreigners, with the largest single recipient group being US nationals in 2011.

The Latin America and the Caribbean region has seen a recent increase in arrivals associated with the economic crisis, with top countries of origin being Spain (48,000), Germany (21,000), Netherlands (17,000), and Italy (16,000).

3. We must also remember that while labor mobility is primarily about where and why people move to work: it is also about where people go after they stop working. There are, for example, 3 million retired people from high-income countries who have migrated to Central America and the Caribbean alone; many of these are from Canada and the U.S.

4. The impact of global migrant remittances is enormous: at \$400bn in 2012, and projected to rise to \$515bn by 2015, the migrant remittances are several times greater than foreign assistance, and roughly equivalent to the total of Direct Foreign Investment (DFI); where migrant remittances, globally, to be calculated as GDP would place migrant GDP roughly equivalent to that of Saudi Arabia.

But it would be misleading to limit ourselves to thinking about migrant remittances only in monetary terms. Social remittances – that is, talented people returning home from abroad – greatly benefit countries recovering from crises or expanding economically. IOM helps facilitate such returns, both temporary and permanent through our Return of Qualified Nationals (RQN) programme; IOM has assisted nearly 4,000 diaspora to return in the last 10 years alone, in countries ranging from Afghanistan to Somalia.

5. The perception of migration has changed from one of a taboo that countries avoided, to a subject on which governments wish to collaborate. This seachange in perception is understandable: all countries are now greatly influenced by migration, and today most countries are simultaneously origin, transit and destination countries. Shared challenges break down the old barriers about discussing migration: countries realize that they can only turn these challenges into opportunities by working together.

- i. I even see this transformation in IOM's expansion of member-states and partners: after the long years of IOM's work on migration when migration was not a front-page item, we are pleased to have so many new partners working on migration that benefits all. Governments' greater interest in migration is reflected in IOM's growth – from 90 Member States to 151; from 2000 staff to 9000; from 190 offices to 470; and from a budget of \$250 million to \$1.2 billion.
- ii. The growth of RCPs, the GFMD, the GMG and other state-led informal mechanisms is a further manifestation of increased interest in migration. These are playing a vital role in building confidence and consensus on migration challenges, and – in a manner that this does not threaten national sovereign prerogatives.
- iii. There is a continued need for these informal consensus and collaboration-building measures: how can the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development contribute?

III. The Second United Nations General Assembly High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

The Second High Level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development comes at a time when countries are ready to strengthen their collaboration on migration. Migration is not a substitute for development, but we must strengthen development policies to account for migration, the 1 billion migrants on the planet, and the billions more whose lives they touch.

- a. We face a global challenge: the demographics of ageing societies mean that increasing levels of migration will be required to sustain current levels of development. This applies not only to high-income countries, but to middle income countries as well.
- b. In spite of this increased need for migrants, large part of the world are reacting in a perverse and cruelly ironic manner. Anti-migrant sentiments is not confined to extremist groups; but

is, unfortunately, mirrored in migration policies of governments in countries of all income levels and even in traditional migrant countries. The HLD is an opportunity that to be seized now to arrive at common approaches to address this anti-migrant challenge.

c. IOM has prepared actively and assiduously for the High Level Dialogue in a number of ways:

-- by supporting countries and regional groups such as the SACM, RCM and the ECLAC/IOM conference in their deliberations on the HLD;

-- by compiling and synthesizing, with UNFPA, recommendations from 28 UN bodies and other entities. (The UN CEB has just launched these results in a publication this past Friday, 27 September, in New York entitled:

International Migration and Development: Contributions Ministerial and Recommendations of the International System.)

-- by holding the first International Diaspora Conference at Geneva in June, attended by Ministers from 55 countries and 500 participants overall (a volume from the conference has just been published under the title: "Diasporas and Development: Bridging Societies and States").

-- With a number of Governments and UN agencies, IOM has also just published a further volume containing the final report of a series of five Roundtables held at the UN to prepare for the HLD.

-- Finally, we carefully linked this year's edition of our flagship publication, the World Migration Report, to the HLD, under the title of "Migrant well-being and Development."

d. IOM recommendations for the HLD aim at improving global migration governance by urging (a) renewed commitment to protection of the human rights of all migrants; and (b) recognizing the contribution of migrants and migration to all dimensions of sustainable development. Success can be measured by whether -- unlike the year 2000 MDGs -- migration is included in the post-2015 UN development agenda -- both (a) as an integral part of a new **global partnership for development** and (b) as a **cross-cutting issue**.

IOM proposes **six key areas of action to enhance the development outcomes of migration** for all involved -- migrants, their families, countries of origin and countries of destination. In this age of migration, with 1 in 7 of us on the globe being migrants, protection of human rights and promotion of development requires practical, coordinated concrete steps to make migration safer and fairer. We need to identify and remove obstacles to legitimate human mobility. Following are a few examples of IOM activities geared to each of these recommendations.

i. Improve public perceptions of migrants: this means moving away from a narrow, negative view of migration as an escape from poverty with a negative impact on host communities -- to an acknowledgment of the important role migrants play as partners in host and home country, as enablers of development.

- On 2 October at the HLD, IOM will launch a global information campaign to highlight migrant contributions to societies and economies. The goal is to cover 50 countries in several stages in an effort to correct misrepresentations, ease social tensions and facilitate integration.

ii. The second recommendation for the HLD is to integrate migration into development planning, at local, national and global levels, in all countries. This means recognizing that migration today is relevant to all three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and that migration needs to be included in the post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Migration is too rarely acknowledged in development planning tools such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. When the link is made, it is all too often limited to remittances; this neglects the great value of migrant and diaspora expertise and entrepreneurship such as trade and investment -- sometimes referred to as “Social remittances”.

- For its part, IOM conducts comprehensive country migration profiles – for more than 40 countries -- and more than 60 diaspora surveys; these are essential prerequisites (a) for integrating migration into development planning – and (b) for keeping migrants’ well-being in mind.

iii. The third recommendation is to protect the human rights of all migrants: a more rights-based approach to migration can ensure migrant access to their social and economic rights – and addresses various vulnerabilities based on gender, age, health and legal status.

- In accordance with its mandate, IOM directly protects migrants’ rights. We also support governments to protect migrant rights. We do so by offering to governments our perspective of a “high road scenario” approach to migration management -- as an alternative to “low road” anti-migrant policies motivated by xenophobia. Here are a few elements that IOM constantly encourages governments to adopt:
 - a. Centralize and simplify migration programmes through an inter/ministerial coordination mechanism, a so-called “whole of Government” arrangement; (A “Whole of government” approach should also include civil society in a “Whole of society” outreach).
 - b. De-criminalize irregular migration;
 - c. Use existing alternatives to deportation and detention such as IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Re-integration (AVRR) programme;
 - d. Establish processes for legal status for those who meet state criteria;
 - e. Establish integration as an option in a two-way assisted process;
 - f. Multiple-entry visas and dual citizenship laws;
 - g. Portable social security benefits;
 - h. Give Migrants access to health, education and other basic public services;
 - i. Establish labor migration multi-skill policies for all skill levels;
 - j. Establish circular migration programmes.

iv. The fourth recommendation is to manage migration in crisis situations, including implications of humanitarian crises for migration and migrant populations in terms of protection and development. Do so before, during and after natural and man-made disasters. Specifically, consider the role of human mobility in disaster risk reduction strategies, disaster preparedness, national climate change adaptation programmes, and sustainable urban planning.

- IOM's Migration Crisis Operational Framework provides a clear example of IOM's rights-based approach to identifying and addressing migrants' vulnerabilities -- ones that are often overlooked -- in a holistic manner, before, during and after crises.
 - IOM has long worked to rescue migrants in peril – victims of trafficking, those caught in civil wars, and those who fall victim to natural disasters such as earthquakes and flooding. We agree with the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Peter Sutherland, about the need for companies to do more to protect their workers. In this regard IOM will shortly launch a new International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) designed to eliminate the role of unscrupulous recruiters who traffic in people -- through a universal code of conduct and compliance process.
- v. The fifth recommendation is to enhance evidence building and knowledge-based policymaking** on migration. This means (a) raising the quality of research and data collection on migration; and (b) investing in more systematic evaluation and impact assessments of migration policies and migration and development initiatives.
- IOM's 2013 World Migration Report -- a further contribution to the HLD -- is the first effort to understand migrants' well-being on a global scale from migrants' own perspective. This study, based on listening to migrants, forces us to question some of our most basic assumptions about migration and to develop a more fine-grained understanding of migrant well-being.
 - How can migration and development policy help remove one-by-one, the obstacles to migrants' contributions to development, and tip the balance towards migrant well-being?
- vi. The sixth and last recommendation is to promote policy coherence and institutional development:** Specifically, the idea is to improve policymaking processes at national, regional and global levels through the effective participation of a range of partners.
- IOM assists governments in building their capacities to draft legal and institutional frameworks geared towards formulating effective migration and development policies. The EU-funded Joint Migration and Development Initiative is a good example of how this is done by connecting local authorities with each other and a variety of global actors.
 - Another example closer to home is the April 2013 international migration course on the trends, opportunities and challenges of international migration in the Americas, co-organized by IOM and OAS. More than 30 representatives of OAS Member States, Observers and officials from the General Secretariat attended.
- e. How can we better manage migration collectively through consensus-based global governance to reduce the risks and costs of migration – which are often far too high? How can we one by one, remove obstacles that prevent migrants from realizing their full potential and ability to contribute to development? Too few countries integrate migration in their reports on progress made towards MDGs. I would encourage all countries to collect data on migration-related indicators in order to understand migrants' well-being

better. For my part, I offer IOM's support in the HLD and in the post-2015 UN development agenda discussions.

In conclusion, large-scale migration is: (a) **inevitable**, primarily as a result of the demographic differences between North and South; Unprecedented human mobility is **necessary** to meet labor demand, ensure skills availability and sound economies, and maintain development levels in high and mid-income countries with ageing populations; and population movements are **desirable** – for migrants and host populations alike -- if well-managed.