



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

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE
ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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STATEMENT BY

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This High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) is a milestone in the journey that began years ago to find ways to maximize the benefits of migration for development and minimize its challenges.

The close relationship between migration and development was underlined in IOM's 1951 founding document. IOM has had 55 years of experience helping governments manage migration in a comprehensive manner. An important aspect of this is ensuring that migration is a positive force for development. **In IOM's view, achieving this goal involves a two-fold process: first, engaging in consultations and dialogue on migration, and second, undertaking concrete results-oriented activities.**

DIALOGUE

IOM firmly believes that dialogue and consultation are the most effective means to advance understanding and international cooperation on migration. For this reason, the Organization fully supports dialogue on migration, at the bilateral, regional and global levels.

At the bilateral level, where requested, the Organization **facilitates and supports bilateral agreements**, for example on labour migration and irregular migration. IOM also actively **promotes, supports and participates in regional dialogue on migration around the globe.** IOM either serves as the secretariat for or provides significant technical and policy support to, Regional Consultative Processes on migration (RCPs) on every continent. IOM would support efforts to broaden the focus of RCPs to include more comprehensive issues including migration and development, as well as proposals for **greater cross-fertilization among RCPs**, for example through periodic meetings of RCP heads to exchange information and experiences. At the global level, **IOM and its membership launched the International Dialogue on Migration** in the IOM Council in 2001, in fulfillment of IOM's Constitutional mandate "to provide a forum to States as well as international and other organizations for the exchange of views and experiences, and the promotion of co-operation and co-ordination of efforts on international migration issues." Also at the global level, **IOM served as the Secretariat for the Berne Initiative**, a non-binding, States-owned consultation mechanism launched by the Government of Switzerland, which resulted in the production of the International Agenda for Migration Management which today is serving as an important capacity building tool around the world.

Should the Global Forum of States on Migration and Development proposed by the Secretary General be established, member States can count on IOM's cooperation in making it a success. The Global Migration Group (GMG), of which IOM is a founding member, could serve as its Secretariat. Indeed, IOM is uniquely placed to lend the Global Forum its expertise gained from years of supporting and facilitating various other migration fora around the world – both in terms of substantive expertise and secretariat services – while helping to avoid duplication with these already existing fora.

While IOM may be the sole inter-governmental organization with a comprehensive migration mandate, we recognize that there needs to be partnership among many agencies and entities with involvement in various aspects of migration according to their areas of expertise. To this end, in 2003, IOM and UNHCR were the founding members of the six-agency Geneva Migration Group. From the outset, IOM advocated expansion of the Group to include other agencies, particularly in recognition of the growing importance of the economic and developmental aspects of migration.

Earlier this year, the Geneva Migration Group evolved into the Global Migration Group and now counts ten member agencies.¹ IOM continues to be committed to the GMG and to ensuring its link with inter-governmental dialogue. The GMG is ready to help facilitate inter-governmental dialogue, for example by providing substantive input to discussions and/or practical programmatic follow-up. In addition, at its meeting earlier this month, the GMG agencies agreed that the GMG would consider any request for support which might be directed to it by the HLD.

ACTIVITIES

The **second step** in the two-fold process towards realizing the developmental potential of migration is to **identify and support concrete measures to *make migration work for development***.

For its part, IOM has identified two specific, action-oriented proposals.

The first proposal, which we refer to as the “**International Migration and Development Initiative**” (IMDI), would facilitate **matching labour supply with labour demand, in safe, legal, humane and orderly ways that maximize the societal and human development potential of global labour mobility**. Failure to work toward a better regulated international labour market will not only adversely affect global economic growth, it will also fuel irregular migration, and human trafficking – an abuse of human rights. A better regulated market would substantially strengthen migrants’ rights, dignity, working and living conditions. In view of global demographic projections, the initiative also proposes **concrete means to invest in human resource development and to better prepare workers for overseas employment**.

IMDI is envisioned as a **collaborative effort by relevant international organizations to work together and with interested governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector**. IMDI would pool their expertise and resources and take concrete steps aimed at maximizing the development benefits of international migration and minimizing its negative impacts. Each of the members of the GMG has been invited to participate in the initiative. A panel discussion to present this proposal will take place Friday at lunchtime, and I invite all of you to participate.

The second IOM proposal is for the formation of a **global research network on development and migration policy**. This network would engage existing research networks, government ministries, NGOs and international organizations, including any interested member of the GMG. The network would have a capacity building element in order to enhance the competence of national researchers, policy makers, and other government officials in developing countries to both conduct and manage policy relevant research and evaluation on development and migration issues. This enhanced capacity, together with new and strengthened regional and global research partnerships, would assist developing and developed countries to produce migration research and evaluations that are policy-relevant, timely, and aimed at improving development outcomes.

IOM has identified **seven Key Messages for the HLD, each accompanied by suggestions of specific ways the HLD could contribute to moving the issues forward**. Copies of the

¹ The ten GMG members are ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UN-DESA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC and the World Bank.

IOM Key Messages are available here today. As time is short, let me just briefly summarize them as “headlines”, so to speak:

First, migration needs to be better integrated into development policy and planning. Migration impact analyses should figure in development project planning. The HLD should call for migration to be incorporated in national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and integrated into discussion around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Second, countries need migration policies and the internal capacity to develop them. It is striking how many countries do not have comprehensive migration policies, and not only in the developing world. The HLD should result in clear recognition of the cross-cutting nature of migration and should recommend creation of inter-ministerial working groups as a “good practice”. In addition, governmental capacity building efforts should be supported, for instance in areas such as migration research and analysis.

Third, the business community needs to be drawn into the migration debate. The business community plays a critical role in the economics of migration. Yet it has usually been absent from the table, especially at the international level. The HLD should explicitly recommend real partnership between governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private business sector and civil society.

Fourth, better mechanisms are needed to match supply and demand of labor regionally and globally. The labor market is increasingly global. Mechanisms to measure and match supply and demand, to provide frameworks for humane, safe, legal and orderly flows to meet the needs, and to maximize the development potential of migration, have not kept pace. The HLD should tackle this “unfinished business of globalization.”

Fifth, the development potential of diasporas needs to be explored and enhanced. There is growing focus on diasporas as motors of development – and not only through their remittances. The HLD must encourage better understanding of the relationship between diasporas and home countries, and what motivates diasporas to invest time, energy or money back home.

Sixth, regional consultations are a key tool for international understanding and action. More could be done globally to achieve cross-fertilization between them globally, and to benefit from good practice and lessons learned.

Seventh, respect for the human rights of migrants can be improved and better understanding and implementation of existing migration law can serve that purpose. Improving knowledge and understanding about the human rights of migrants will result in better treatment of migrants. IOM has taken on the task of compiling and disseminating information about the vast body of existing international migration law and has begun focused training sessions. More efforts like this are needed.

Let me close by stating that the HLD has already achieved success by increasing international focus on migration and development issues. The momentum created by the HLD should not be lost. IOM looks forward to playing a proactive role in whatever HLD follow-up the member States will decide to undertake. I have already engaged with Secretary General Annan in a constructive dialogue on ways and means to further improve cooperation between the UN and IOM, and our Organizations stand ready to work according to our respective memberships’ guidance.