

18 December 2013

**Message of H.E. John W. Ashe  
President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly,  
on the International Migrants' Day**

2013 has been a momentous year for migration. This past October, I had the privilege of presiding over the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. In the Declaration issuing from that High-level Dialogue, Member States committed to doing a better job of protecting the legal and human rights of migrants everywhere.

We affirmed that migration can and should not be stopped, but that it requires better governance. We agreed that when migration occurs in a safe manner, within the rule of law and with respect for human rights, it can be a powerful tool for progress.

Each year, billions of dollars, which could be put to good use by migrant families, are being pocketed by recruiters and financial intermediaries. The human costs of migration are intolerably high. The recent tragedies in the Mediterranean and elsewhere remind us of the extreme vulnerability of migrants, many of whom flee poverty, persecution and conflict.

Now migration has been integrated into the post-2015 development agenda and we are entering into a critical phase in the delineation of that agenda. 2014 will be a defining moment in the history of the United Nations and it will be a successful one only if we lay the groundwork for addressing the needs of migrants as a part of our future sustainable development goals. The 2013 High-level Dialogue demonstrated that we could come together on migration. Now is the time to translate our shared vision into action. It is time to deliver on our promise and make a difference in the lives of millions of migrants across this planet.