



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

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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STATEMENT BY

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Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the High Level Segment of ECOSOC.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) welcomes the strengthening of ECOSOC resulting from the 2005 World Summit and looks forward to the outcomes of both the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), of which this session marks the beginning. The AMR and the DCF can help in developing more effective, more accountable and more coherent development approaches. The linkages between migration and development can contribute to and benefit from this exercise.

The focus on the first Millennium Development Goal is particularly significant for IOM. IOM has repeatedly underlined that, while migration did not feature prominently in the original framework of the MDGs, migration phenomena could significantly impact on the successful accomplishment of the MDGs, both positively and negatively.

In order to maximize the development benefits of migration and minimize its negative consequences, IOM has consistently advocated for integrated approaches to assist developing countries in the set-up of comprehensive migration management strategies, including technical assistance. We have consistently encouraged development partners to pay more attention to the ways in which migration and development interact.

Operationally, our programmes for encouraging migrant communities and diaspora organizations to become a better source of investments, skills, knowledge and technology transfer have paid great attention to the most vulnerable and poorest countries. It is in these societies, often still in the process of recovering from man-made or natural crises, that fragile economies can significantly benefit from the support of their expatriate nationals.

Over the last few years, migration has come to be understood as a development tool in the broader context of development and poverty reduction strategies. We fully concur with the conclusions of the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) that international migration can be a positive force for development both in countries of origin and destination, provided that it is supported by the right set of policies, including mainstreaming into national development agendas.

Remittances already represent the largest source of foreign exchange for many developing countries. On the negative side, when foreign workers find themselves in an irregular status, their rights are diminished and their economic potential is artificially limited. We should help both sending and receiving countries do a better job of managing the operation of the global labour market. IOM continues to work with the World Bank and other partners on a capacity-building initiative that will help sort out some of these problems.

Practically, since the HLD last September, IOM has been operationally engaged in giving concrete application to these conclusions by following up with a number of member States in developing pilot projects to reflect international migration issues in their national development strategies.

The Global Forum in Brussels next week represents an additional vehicle to exchange know-how and experiences about migration programmes and approaches. With other members of the inter-agency Global Migration Group, IOM has been providing technical resources and institutional expertise to the Belgian government. We look forward to cooperating with the Philippines, which has offered to host the next meeting of the Global Forum.

Mr. President,

As we discuss progress in the fight against poverty, we must remain alert to new challenges. In his report for this Session, the Secretary General has pointed out that the issues of environmental degradation and climate change have the potential to and indeed are already starting to undermine the achievements of the MDGs. As we know, the poorest are those most affected by natural and man-made disasters, desertification and land degradation. These phenomena contribute to the establishment of mutually reinforcing mechanisms pushing an increasing number of people into poverty by affecting their livelihood capacities.

Recent reports indicate that by 2010 we will see an additional 50 million environmental migrants, persons or groups of persons who, because of sudden or progressive changes in the environment affecting adversely their livelihoods, have to move from their habitual homes to temporary or durable new homes, either within their country or abroad. Increasingly, indigenous peoples will belong to this category.

To advance international cooperation on these matters, IOM has recently organized an expert workshop in collaboration with UNFPA and other UN partners on the topic of Environment and Migration, bringing together environment and migration experts from the scientific and policy communities of every continent to discuss implications of the relationship between migration and the environment. IOM stands ready to continue its cooperation on this important topic.

Mr. President,

In closing I would like to convey IOM's readiness to work in collaboration with ECOSOC and its renewed mechanisms and initiatives, and all participating partners to ensure that international migration can become a positive force for development.

Thank you for your attention.