

25 June 2013

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,  
President of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Panel Discussion on International Migration and Development**

Special Representative of the Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the panel discussion on international migration and development, organized in preparation for the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development later this year.

I especially welcome our distinguished speakers, panelists and moderators and want to thank them for sharing their perspectives with us here today.

I am delighted that we will have a full day to exchange views with experts, senior officials, migrants, civil society and the business community. This is a timely meeting, and I hope our discussions will be fruitful.

It is timely, because we are less than four months away from the second High-level Dialogue. This panel discussion should assist all of you in preparing your positions and interventions for that event, based on the latest evidence and information. I urge you to take advantage of the expertise we have assembled in the room today.

Let us strive to make today's meeting fruitful, because this is the only mandated preparatory event for the High-level Dialogue within the General Assembly.

The panelists will present the latest evidence on migration and development, identify good practices, provide fresh insights, and identify concrete recommendations for the 2013 High-level Dialogue and beyond. I encourage you to seize this opportunity and to report major findings to your capitals, so that we are well prepared in October.

We have come far since the first High-level Dialogue in 2006. We have learned more about the complex relationships linking international migration and development. We have also learned more — often from each other — about good practices for harnessing the benefits and for addressing the challenges of international migration.

The facts are clear:

- The number of international migrants has never been greater.
- All countries are affected migration.
- Migration will have a noticeable impact on overall population change.

Migration patterns have become more complex, with some people moving permanently, and others moving back and forth for temporary or seasonal employment. Some move for jobs or to reunite with family members, while other move to escape poverty, violence and conflict, or in the aftermath of natural disasters or environmental changes.

In short, more people are on the move, they move more often, and they move over greater distances. Migration affects those who move, those who stay behind, and those who reside in the country of destination.

Today, migration is truly a global issue that requires global attention.

Previously, migration was typically viewed as problem to be solved — as if the goal were zero migration. For example, the emigration of highly - skilled migrants was often characterized solely as “brain drain”.

Today the debate has been advanced by numerous studies, which have brought a more nuanced understanding. While "brain drain" continues to pose a challenge for small developing countries, we now recognize the development potential of the diaspora — as entrepreneurs, inventors or investors — in countries of origin and destination.

Since 2006, we have also seen an increase in dialogues, partnerships and cooperation on migration. The Global Forum on Migration and Development has become exactly what it was intended to be: a platform for informal dialogue and cooperation. At the same time, the Global Migration Group has improved cooperation between various agencies of the UN system and the International Organization for Migration. We have also seen much greater engagement at the regional level.

All of this is not to say that we can now sit back and rest comfortably on our past accomplishments.

The Global Forum, the GMG and other migration platforms have evaluated their achievements since 2006. They have formulated recommendations for how to improve their functioning and advance the migration agenda. The High-level Dialogue in October is a critical opportunity to implement these recommendations. Based on all these assessments and reviews, it is now time for us, the Member States, to act.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's panel discussion will focus on the overall theme of the 2013 High-level Dialogue.

First, we take stock of lessons learned and progress made in advancing the global migration debate since the first High-level Dialogue, held in 2006.

Second, we seek to identify concrete recommendations for the 2013 High-level Dialogue and its follow-up.

Third, we hope to provide fresh perspectives on the role and future of migration and its impact on sustainable development.

At the beginning, our keynote speaker of today, Ms. Sonia Nazario, will provide a first-hand account of the human dimensions of migration.

The first panel will address the drivers and the impacts of migration and development. Experts will set the stage for our discussion by providing an overview of the current evidence base.

The second panel will explore innovative policies and measures to facilitate labour mobility, while protecting the rights of migrants.

The third panel will be an interactive discussion with institutional stakeholders. We look forward to their analyses and recommendations.

While it is important to talk about migrants, it is critical that we hear directly from them. We have invited Mr. Jesus Perez Mendez to tell us about his life as a migrant and his work to promote the well-being of other migrants.

We have sought to establish panels which are balanced in terms of migration experiences and gender. As I mentioned earlier, one key objective of today is to provide fresh insights. You may therefore hear views that are uncommon, out-of-the-box, or even provocative. There will be ideas that you or I may not necessarily agree with, but let us hear them with an open mind.

Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, let me again welcome you to this panel discussion: the speakers, the panelists, and the moderators, and of course the audience: Member States, representatives from international organizations and non-governmental organizations, those who are following this on UN webcast and members of the media.

My office will prepare a summary of today's debate in the next few weeks.

I wish all of you a very fruitful day.

Thank you.