



STATEMENT

BY

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**AT THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

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Madame President,

It affords me a particular pleasure Madame President to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the Sixty First Session of the General Assembly thereby once again proving the adage that *women hold up more than half the world*.

Introduction

Allow me to commend the preparatory work conducted by Member States, the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration, and civil society whose contributions represent important input to our present discussions.

As numerous speakers before me have acknowledged, the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, is the first major event in UN history to focus exclusively on international migration issues and presents a unique opportunity for the international community to strategize on policies that would enhance the role of migration in promoting development and poverty reduction.

Our challenge is manifold. Not only must we reach a common understanding of the complexities of international migration as a phenomenon in and of itself; we must also contextualize that phenomenon in our development agenda.

Above all, we must ensure that our discussions to this end move beyond the ephemeral nature of words and materialize into concrete actions. We recognize the United Nations as the appropriate platform to facilitate these discussions.

Belizean experience: best practices

Since Belize's independence in 1981, migration flows have transformed the social and demographic composition of Belize moving it from a majority Afro-Caribbean population to one with a Mestizo ethnic majority. The Government of Belize advanced policies and with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee undertook programmes to ensure the successful assimilation of these new Belizeans. These programmes facilitated access to arable land for farmers, free education and free primary health care. Legislation was put in place to allow for permanent residency or citizenship. A Refugee Department was established to process the large number of refugees and the Labour Department increased the number of employment permits granted. In 1999, an Amnesty came into effect allowing undocumented migrants and recent arrivals to apply for permanent residency.

As the ECLAC report observed, while the government is undertaking efforts to respond to the challenges that past immigration flows have posed on the country over the last 20 years, new migration trends are emerging. These trends include inflows of more and generally higher qualified people from Asia and North America and the outflows of highly qualified natives particularly women, and the relocation of families.

Embracing co-development

The concept of co-development proffered in the Secretary-General's report *International Migration and Development* is pivotal in rethinking migration as a tool for development. International migration is intrinsically linked to the development of both receiving and sending countries. Migration flows can indeed at once satisfy the labor demands in advanced economies while reducing unemployment and underemployment in countries of origin and, in the process, generating remittances, savings and know-how for the benefit of the latter. The emphasis in co-development is on the complementarities between countries of origin and countries of destination which operate in a mutually beneficial symbiotic cycle.

Given the deliberate link between migration and development, the concept of co-development will necessitate coherence in policy making at the national and international levels. As well, its emphasis on the complementarities will likewise necessitate a new approach to migration management founded on the principle of common interests and shared responsibilities. But most importantly it will require a commitment to enduring multilateral and multidimensional cooperation.

Humanitarian approach

In moving forward, we must set policies aimed toward enhancing migration's contribution to development and reducing its negative impacts. These policies at their core must respect the human dimension of migration. The Secretary-General rightly notes that:

The benefits of international migration, not only for the migrants themselves, but equally for receiving societies, are contingent on the protection of migrants' rights.

We should encourage the universality and support the full and effective implementation of the various human rights instruments and international labour instruments that comprise the normative framework on international migration.

Although the shaping of migration continues to be part of the sovereign rights of States, States must collaborate on the issue and move to coordinated action. The *High-level Dialogue* presents the first major opportunity for Member States to *find* concrete means of *enhancing* that **collaboration, and** in the process, ensure that the potential contributions of migration to development are fully realized. We fully endorse the building of a Multilateral Mechanism for effective multilateral evaluation and cooperation to address international migration.

I thank you.