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Statement by

H.E. Mr. Hans Winkler

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Austria

UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

New York, 14 September 2006

Chairperson, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Austria fully subscribes to the Statement delivered by Finland, on behalf of the European Union.

At the beginning, I would like to express my gratitude to Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, and Peter Sutherland, his Special Representative for the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, for the priority and substantial preparatory work which they have devoted to this event together with Member States and non-governmental actors throughout the world. Austria fully supports the EU position for the preparation of the UN High Level Dialogue which you have received from the current Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Migration issues have been at the top of the political agenda for years. Yet policies comprising both a migration and a development dimension and designed to create a positive impact on the ground are still very urgently needed. Our endeavour here at the global level has to be underpinned by concrete action at regional and sub-regional levels where tailor-made solutions can be elaborated.

In July 2006, the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development in Rabat brought together, for the first time, countries of origin, transit and destination along the migration routes from western, central and northern Africa to Europe, as well as regional and international organizations. The implementation of the Action Plan which was agreed at Rabat in the years to come will achieve a concrete impact on the ground, which is urgently needed in order to better manage migratory flows, and to prevent humanitarian disaster, we all have witnessed in the Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic. At the same time, the EU has always underlined that a continent-wide approach to migration is needed as well. We are looking forward to the holding of a pan African conference on migration under the aegis of the AU Commission. Perhaps these processes could inspire work in other regions.

In Austria's case, migratory flows and development cooperation focus overlap in particular with regard to several countries in South East Europe. We are including information on legal migration and on the hazards of illegal migration into development programs. We are also looking into the potential of sizeable diasporas for development cooperation purposes.

The South-South-dimension of migration warrants particular attention. Development cooperation can also, when requested by the partner countries, contribute towards capacity building in the area of managing migration for the benefit of all involved and in the area of preventing trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

Migrant women who constitute half of all international migrants worldwide and make valuable social and economic contributions to both sending and host countries are facing double discrimination all over the world, as women and as migrants. Therefore we advocate strongly for a gender perspective to be incorporated into all migration policies and strategies.

An effective and fruitful dialogue starts by exploring and understanding each others' position. It is crucial to gain this mutual understanding of the causes and effects of migration, as well as of its impact in development terms. The links between migration and development are complex. But I do believe that migration, when managed effectively, can create "win - win" situations which have the potential to deliver substantial positive impact on all parties involved, on countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as, most importantly, on the migrants themselves.

Austria shares the view expressed by many delegations that the issue of follow-up is crucial. Austria will therefore be an active participant in our common work in progress which will make sure that this ever more important topic will be kept on the international agenda.

As I conclude, I should like to state that I was particularly impressed by the metaphor used in the Secretary General's Report A/60/871 on International Migration and Development; the metaphor of the migrant as a link, a human link between cultures and societies. Can we think easily of more important functions than to constitute a link between cultures and societies that are currently in grave danger of being torn apart by strong centrifugal tendencies which are emerging as reactions to the very process of globalization?

Thank you Madame Chair!