



B R A S I L

STATEMENT BY

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**HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL
TO THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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The importance of migration and the contribution made by immigrants to innumerable countries is by now nearly unanimously acknowledged. In many countries, immigrants have been instrumental in bringing about economic, social and cultural development.

What we presently observe is a marked inability by governments, the media and societies at large in properly dealing with the issue. Legislation, policies and control strategies are intensely pursued as ways by which to master the so-called "governance of migration flows". Attempts are made to establish control over a phenomenon which, History proves, is intrinsic in human nature: to migrate in search of better opportunities. The flows change. And yet the coming and going of people, across national borders and through different regions of this planet, remains a common trait. South America, once a traditional recipient of millions of immigrants, now testifies to the exodus of a sizeable share of its inhabitants to other parts of the world.

Restrictive immigration policies have proven ineffective in containing these migratory flows. Very often, they end up providing incentives to international mobsters who specialize in the trafficking in persons the smuggling of migrants.

This theme and its governance are generally approached by way of draft agreements geared at combating mafia organizations and to enforcing tighter visa and passport controls, airport safety, maritime and ground security measures. Mention is made to making irregular immigration a criminal offence. Changes in the penal categorization of immigrant trafficking are suggested, so as to eliminate profit as the only motif, making it also a crime to facilitate the immigration of one's relatives. Electronic and biometric means of identification are devised in several countries, coupled to rigorous visa interviews, mandatory information checks and the establishment of shared immigrant rejection databases. Yet, none of these measures has yielded satisfactory results. Much to the contrary. While violations to the human rights of immigrants increase by the day with frequent embarrassment, discrimination, incarceration and punishment, cases of illegal immigration keep on the rise.

Immigrant sending countries are keen on discussing deterring strategies and investments to contain the migratory flows while allegedly supporting developmental activities. Of themselves, however, these measures shall yield no effect.

We advocate that the theme of migration be treated as an issue absolutely unassociated from the theme of Human Rights. We stand for ensuring full civil rights to immigrants. We support immigration conformity policies. We are in favor of dignifying treatment to immigrants and the combat against all forms of xenophobia. We stand for the expansion of the current level of international protection to refugees. We believe that the interaction of human beings should be the principal goal of external policies.

Countries have the sovereign right to set controls on the entry, stay and exit of foreigners in their respective territories. No country is exempt of responsibility before the international community for such violations. The transnationality of human rights is maturely consolidated. Mass deportations, discriminatory treatment, denial of international protection to refugees, the treatment of migratory issues in the realm of Criminal Law and the deprivation of immigrants' rights are no longer acceptable, not least under the pretense of national sovereignty.

As the pro-tempore chair of Mercosur, Brazil would like to stress the contents of a document detailing the significant progress made by our regional bloc in simplifying measures to improve the circulation of people, without prejudice of common enforcement actions to prevent and combat the offences of people and immigrant trafficking. Copies of such document are available to all interested.

Brazil would like to express its faith in the proposal extended by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi **Annan**, to create a Global Forum of States on Migration and Development. We believe this is an important step – maybe the only one – towards a modern and adequate treatment of the migratory issue on an international scale. Brazil considers Peter Sutherland's informal inclusive global Forum a constructive proposal, as it would examine the linkages between migration and development from an integral holistic perspective, with an important human rights dimension. We believe that the Global Migration Group (GMG) should also support this initiative.

We further believe that it is indispensable to strengthen the United Nations High-Commissioner for Refugees as a non-political, humanitarian organization, ready to face the grave problem of persecutions by reasons of race, nationality, social status, political opinion, warfare or human rights violations.

Thoughtful consideration of these issues may open the door to common, creative, human and just solutions for the migratory phenomenon. We owe this to our ancestors as well as our descendants.

Thank you.