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STATEMENT BY
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TO THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE
ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT
AT THE SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 15 SEPTEMBER 2006

DÉCLARATION DE
MONSIEUR RICHARD FADDEN
SOUS-MINISTRE DE CITOYENNETÉ ET IMMIGRATION CANADA

À L'OCCASION DU DIALOGUE DE HAUT NIVEAU
SUR LES MIGRATIONS INTERNATIONALES ET DÉVELOPPEMENT
À LA SOIXANTE ET UNIÈME SESSION
DE L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DES NATIONS UNIES

NEW YORK, LE 15 SEPTEMBRE 2006

Madame President,

I would like to thank the Secretary General for convening this High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development as well as all those involved in its organization. The decision to hold the High-level Dialogue is a reflection of the broader perspective that states and experts are increasingly adopting in their consideration of issues related to migration.

It has been 12 years since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Canada continues to believe that Chapter 10 of the ICPD Programme of Action provides an important guide for global cooperation on issues related to migration.

Over the past few years, we have witnessed a growing sophistication in the way migration is treated. Linkages between migration and other areas of public policy are being explored in greater depth, an approach that Canada finds valuable.

While it has become commonplace to talk of the impact that globalization is having on all parts of the world, it would be a mistake to suggest that globalization affects all parts of the world in the same way. Or that each country's response to globalization needs to be - or even can be - the same. Although there is much to be learned from sharing approaches and experiences concerning migration, solutions need to be tailored to local conditions to be effective. In this regard, the notion of sharing "best practices" requires refinement. Not everything can be systematized into a global approach.

The High Level Dialogue brings together many voices from the worlds of migration and development: policy makers from developed and developing countries; international organizations; civil society; and the United Nations system and related institutions. In addition, a number of other experts and interested groups and individuals, who have helped prepare for the High Level Dialogue, are following closely the deliberations of these two days and keenly anticipating what will go forward from this event. Each has something valuable to add to the discussion, and as we move forward we need to ensure that each of these voices is given the opportunity to develop and to contribute.

To anchor the discussion within the realities of policy-making, however, Canada believes that this process should begin as a dialogue between States. As it evolves, the dialogue – while remaining under the leadership of States - should facilitate links with interested stakeholders.

As the Secretary General's Special Representative to the High Level Dialogue has said on a number of occasions, for progress to be made on this issue the various stakeholders need to approach these discussions in a constructive and open way.

While exploration of the linkages between migration and development is underway, much remains to be discovered. For those responsible for designing government policy, greater coherence between those parts of government responsible for migration issues and those responsible for development needs to be forged. And between governments there is a need for more communication to raise the level of understanding, so that activities in the future will increase the benefits for all. Not only are the substantive issues important, but so too is the process of governments working through these issues together.

Governments cannot and should not work in isolation. Yet at the same time, it is important that States take the opportunity to reflect upon and refine their own perspectives in order to engage constructively with others. Canada supports consideration of appropriate mechanisms for civil society and the newly-created Global Migration Group to provide input into any ongoing discussions that States may decide to undertake.

Finally, Madame President, we need to be pragmatic in thinking about what we can commit to with respect to a forward agenda on migration and development. We are all faced with limited resources and many priorities. There is already considerable international activity related to migration and development issues taking place bilaterally and at the regional level. There has been discussion of these issues in various UN conferences. And, international organizations, think tanks and academic experts account for additional attention to these issues.

(Madame President) in considering any ongoing process that might emerge from the High Level Dialogue, Canada would encourage states to take the following into account:

- an ongoing process should add value to international discussions rather than duplicate what is already taking place or what could occur within existing mechanisms;
- this new dialogue should take place as a stand alone forum and not as part of the UN system and its related institutions. Clearly defined links to the UN, possibly through the office of the Special Representative to the Secretary General, should be developed;
- the process should focus on developing understanding of substantive issues rather than on negotiating texts for resolutions or declarations; and
- States should take the leadership role, as they are responsible for turning ideas into concrete policy.

Thank you, Madame President.