

CHILE

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STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE DELEGATION OF CHILE
AT THE HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE
ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND
DEVELOPMENT

New York, 14 September, 2006

Madame President,

My delegation welcomes the decision of the General Assembly to hold this High-Level Dialogue on the highly relevant topic of international migration and development. We are sure that this initiative will place this social phenomenon, involving almost two hundred million people in the world, at the centre of the United Nations agenda.

Through this forum, we hope to help to enhance international cooperation in this area, exchanging ideas, experience and best practices, in order to advance in the quest for concrete solutions to the varied problems stemming from international migration and its effects on development.

Let me recall that the President of Chile, Mrs. Michelle Bachelet, also lived the experience of being a migrant, when in the middle of the seventies, due to political reasons, she had to leave her country. This is why she knows and feels very closely the adversities of leaving the homeland and loved ones.

The position of Chile in the key subject of migration is basically reflected in The Declaration of Asuncion, adopted at the VI South American Conference on Migration, held in May 2006, and in the Declaration of Santiago on Migration Principles, agreed upon at the MERCOSUR Meeting of Ministers of the Interior and its Associate States, held in May 2004.

One of the central themes of this debate should be the development dimension of migration, and particularly its contribution to poverty reduction. And so the main challenge facing us is to make international migration a positive force for the comprehensive development of our peoples.

To this end, we must see how the sizeable resources created by remittances can be channeled towards development objectives that benefit the immigrant and the immigrant's family. As we know, the funds that migrants send home to developing countries amounted to over 167 billion dollars in 2005, which is much more than the totality of all types of international assistance.

This is why Chile considers that the cost of transfer of remittances should be reduced, that remittance flows should be facilitated and that development-oriented investments in recipient countries should be encouraged, supplementing and complementing official development assistance (ODA).

In addition, we share, jointly with the Latin-American and Caribbean states, the concern about the rights of migrants and their families. In this spirit, Chile last year ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, because it considers that this text provides an appropriate legal framework and a good basis for advancing towards these goals.

Today, we reaffirm our total commitment to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrant men, women and children, regardless of their legal status, beliefs, religion, ethnica or gender, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Madame President,

We believe that this High-Level Dialogue should mark the commencement in the United Nations of an ongoing process of reflection on international migration which, as the Secretary-General has suggested, could lead us to establish an international consultative process within the United Nations, enabling Governments to develop constructive approaches and effective and coherent policies to enhance the contribution of international migration to development. However, we believe that this project should not create a new organ within the United Nations or duplicate the functions of existing bodies.

Madame President,

Our country is the result of the integration and mixture of native indigenous populations with various waves of European and Arab migrants. As a host country, we have endeavoured at this time to formulate and implement a policy seeking to modernize the management of migration principally by improving the living conditions of foreigners, so that their installation and integration in the country can benefit all concerned.

Chile's migration policy establishes the following governing principles:

- Guarantees of the right of residence and freedom of movement.
- Guarantees of freedom of thought and conscience.
- Access to residence on a basis of equality and with appropriate information.
- Access to justice as a right of all immigrants.
- Social protection of immigrants.
- Guarantees of the labour rights of foreign workers in Chile.
- Non-discrimination.
- Family reunification.

Madame President,

As a country of origin, we also have a responsibility towards Chilean migrants residing abroad. This responsibility has been assumed by designing and implementing a policy of attachment with Chileans abroad, based on a series of principles and general guidelines.

As an integral part of this task, in 2003-2004 we organized the first voluntary census of Chileans residing abroad, which involved difficult but valuable work on the

five continents and in some one hundred countries. As a result of this effort, ties were established between Chilean society and the community of Chileans abroad.

Madame President,

We are sure that there is growing recognition in the international community of the reality of migration, as well as a growing awareness of migrants' rights and of the benefits that they can bring for development and poverty relief throughout the world.

We believe that this meeting in New York will be a milestone on the road to progress in dealing with this important economic and social phenomenon peculiar to our age.