



EESTI VABARIIGI  
ALALINE ESINDUS ÜRO JUURES

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**UN High Level Dialogue on  
International Migration and Development**

**New York  
15 September 2006**

**Statement by  
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*Madame President,  
Honourable Delegates and Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Many timely and crucial aspects of migration and development have already been discussed by the eminent participants of our dialogue here in recent days. The European Union's general position was outlined in the Presidency statement. Therefore, and as a member of the EU, I will not repeat what has been said before me, but focus just on some main aspects that are of great importance to Estonia.

*Madame President,*

Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen defined development as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. That encompasses both social and economic arrangements as well as political and civil rights. Although migration is in the globalizing world increasingly a complex phenomenon, its primary cause is still the disparity of freedoms that can and cannot be enjoyed by individuals. Therefore, I would first like to stress the need to tackle the root causes of migration. They encompass conflicts, poverty, famine, diseases, lack of livelihood opportunities, trade barriers, lack of rule of law, poor governance etc. Most of those causes have primarily man-made origins.

*Madame President,*

These are significant unfreedoms that need to be abolished, in order to eliminate the conditions where people are compelled to leave their country. It goes without saying, that we as states are above all responsible for creating an environment conducive to development. And naturally, one element of this environment is also the efficient and purposive utilization of the remittances of migrants for further development. Such as for education, investment, microcredit etc. That benefits both sending and receiving societies. These reasons, among others, necessitate that aspects related to international migration become an integral part of the development agenda.

And that the development issues likewise should be recognised as important elements of migration policies.

*Madame President,*

Secretary General has stressed the importance of respecting the rights of migrants in order to fully realize the benefits of international migration. He also stressed the obligation to observe the laws and regulations of the host state. It is almost a truism that education plays a key role in one's development and significantly expands the individual's opportunities and capacity to live a happy life. Past Estonian president Lennart Meri has said that the lack of language skills creates lawlessness. Only by understanding the language we understand the laws and through that effectively our rights and obligations. Learning of local language and respect for local culture opens to an immigrant the window of opportunity to effectively operate in host society as a subject and not an object. It also allows to increase his/her competitiveness in labour market as well as to obtain new skills and other values for development. To effectively support that process, we need to continue with local introductory and integration programmes, keeping also in mind that integration is a two way street where citizens of receiving nations must also be educated. Last but not least, for successful integration we all — sending and receiving states — must avoid using the migrants for domestic ideological purposes. We must not make these people into our domestic policy instruments.

*Madame President,*

With these ideas in mind, let me conclude by once again borrowing the words of an outstanding development economist Amartya Sen: "Freedoms are not only primary ends of development, but its principal **means....** The organizing principle that places all the different bits and pieces into an integrated whole is the overarching concern with the process of enhancing human freedoms and the social commitment to help to bring that about". We truly hope that the dialogue on international migration and development will continue and play a significant global role in this respect.

Thank you for your attention!