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STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER FOR INTERIOR**

AT THE

**61ST UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT,
14-15 SEPTEMBER, 2006**

New York, 14th September, 2006

MR. CHAIR,

Migration is a fundamental feature of today's world and demands attention at the international level. It is therefore unsurprising that so much attention has been focused on the High Level Dialogue as a way of exploring new ways of making the greatest use of migratory flows.

Mr. Chair, Ghana believes that in order to give recognition to the growing link between migration and development, international migration has to find a way into country development strategies, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). This however can only happen effectively, if the nature and scope of migration are fully understood and addressed within the globalization framework. To this end, data availability, research and analysis need to be enhanced to put in place coherent national and international policies and actions that can maximize its benefits and reduce its negative effects.

Brain drain is decidedly one of the most adverse effects of migration for countries like Ghana, which has a good educational system but whose economic situation cannot provide adequate job and development opportunities for its graduates

In this regard, Ghana's delegation would like to support calls for:

- a. the promotion of return programmes in countries of origin as well as destination, thus helping to transfer back knowledge and skills acquired providing our Diaspora a certain level of ownership, in the country's development;

- b. the promotion of ethical recruitment practices or help replenish the origin countries' stock of brains by both supporting education and training in the framework of their development assistance.

Mr. Chair, Remittances and the income multipliers they create are crucial resources for development and sustenance strategies in countries of origin, as they now exceed official development assistance in some countries. Money remitted by migrants reaches even the most remote rural areas and has significant impact at the individual and household consumption level, thereby alleviating poverty and creating immediate multiplier effects on the local economy.

What is needed now is to put in place mechanisms, strategies and policy frameworks that can create a more conducive environment to leverage the financial and social remittances for development. One way of doing this is to significantly lower transfer costs and improve access to banking systems. Another is by presenting migrants with low rate credit schemes and feasible investment options which can have development

impacts on a wider scale beyond the immediate household level. Ghana has made very important strides in this regard. Indeed the current real estate boom in Ghana can be attributed to the increases in remittances over the last five years, from a low of \$300 million in 2002 to about \$1.2 billion in 2005.

But despite these huge increases in remittances most countries of origin are still struggling with how to effectively harness the capital created for national development. Initiatives encouraging migrants to return to their country of origin to share their knowledge, expertise and experiences have yielded positive results. Ghana for instance, has made efforts to reach out to its diaspora community to encourage them to invest in businesses and transfer of their skills. In this regard, Government passed the Dual Citizenship Law in 2001 to enable dual citizens establish in Ghana without conditions. A Non-Resident Ghanaian Secretariat has also been established to keep a database of Ghanaian professionals abroad and encourage them to return.

Mr. Chair, in Ghana as in most of Africa and indeed the world, we are witnessing an increasing feminization of migration. More and more women engage in traditionally "male" migration patterns, moving across long distances to fulfil their own and family's economic needs. It is estimated, that today women constitute more than half of all international migrants, working predominantly in the service and domestic labour sectors.

This gender phenomenon has serious social consequences within countries of origin with critical implications for migration management, especially regarding protecting female migrants from abuse by traffickers and employers. This state of affairs should motivate the international community to continue the global fight against the trafficking and smuggling of human beings and devise legal employment opportunities abroad. In this regard, Mr. Chair, it gives me pleasure to announce that Ghana has recently passed the Human Trafficking Law (2005) and set up a national Task Force to see to its implementation. Ghana is also a signatory to the SCOWS Declaration and Plan of Action Against trafficking in Human Beings, adopted in Dakar in 2003.

The business community plays a critical role in the management of migration, and must therefore be involved in the migration and development discourse. Many governments and the private sector have recognized the need for a more effective and efficient labour market as the gap between the supply and demand for labour are expected to increase in the coming years, with ageing and declining populations in much of the developed world, and growing populations in the developing world.

Economic and opportunity disparities, armed conflicts and related factors will continue to provide impetus for labour mobility. Ghana's delegation therefore supports the establishment of a mechanism to better match the supply with demand in safe, legal, humane and orderly ways to maximize the societal and human development potential of global labour mobility, with the involvement of the public and private stakeholders. Flexible migration policies in receiving countries can contribute to the decline in

irregular migration and also guarantee better protection from abuse and unfair treatment of migrant workers, especially women and the youth.

The Government of Ghana concurs with the view highlighted in the Report of the Secretary-General that policy coherence and harmonization need to be enhanced at the national and global levels, and welcomes the proposal advanced by the Secretary-General to promote a follow up mechanism to the High-Level Dialogue to maintain focus on the migration and development debate.

Further, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the immense contribution of the IOM, in shaping the agenda for the management of migration, particularly in the area of policy making with technical and financial support in developing national capacities of developing countries. To ensure continuity and successful implementation of these initiatives, as well as coherence in the international migration debate, the Government of Ghana recommends the participation of IOM in any HLD follow up as the principal inter-governmental organization in the field of migration.

Indeed, IOM seems uniquely placed to lend to the Global Forum or other forms of intergovernmental consultation its expertise gained from years of supporting and facilitating various migration fora around the world. The IOM must be strengthened to offer a more effective platform to move the discussion on migration and development forward in a more systematic way.

The Government of Ghana supports also the mandate and structure of the Global Migration Group (GMG) and recommends that it be endorsed by the HLD, as the inter-agency mechanism to promote coherence and collaboration among multilateral agencies.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, let me re-echo the Secretary-General's remarks that we have everything to gain and nothing to lose in exploring international migration in a more systematic and a more informed way. My delegation is confident that the deliberations and outcome of the HLD will meet our expectations by working to provide the framework on how we can make migration work for all through cooperation.

THANK YOU.