

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Dear colleagues,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address this audience. I express my gratitude to the United Nations for the organisation of this important High-level Dialogue and for the large contribution to migration, globalisation and development issues.

On this occasion, I also would like to congratulate Mr. Peter Sutherland on the appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on International Migration and Development.

Our Dialogue is a great possibility to discuss interrelationship between development and migration processes. The enhancing of cooperation seeking to increase synergy between migration and development is among the priorities not only in the EU, but also on the global policy agenda.

The governments, international organizations and other actors, involved into the international policy making, increasingly perceive migration as a factor. It is able to contribute positively to the attainment of development goals.

Seeking to maximize the benefits of migration and to minimize its negative impacts, it is very important to ensure that appropriate policies are in place. We need to find the most effective ways and measures to contribute to the enhancing of coherence between the migration and development policies. Our activities in this field will be an important contribution for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as well.

Lithuania has already experienced both sides of the impact of migration to development. Our country confronts mostly with economical migration. The impact that we observe now is very recent. However, some tendencies can be already observed.

Unfortunately, we confront the negative migration. The peak of its saldo was in 1992 - around 25 thousands residents, it is about 0,7% of population. At that time the change of planned economy into free

market economy influenced the big unemployment rate in our country and Lithuanians started to leave abroad for work purposes more frequently.

Currently Lithuanian potential migrants, especially our young people, intend to move abroad for a short time for economic reasons and for getting more experience. The amount of willing to emigrate is decreasing, because of growing economy, better possibilities in Lithuania and also better knowledge of positive and negative aspects of emigration.

Emigration has played a big role in the rapid decline of the unemployment rate and in the increase of wages in Lithuania. But on the other hand, emigration has impact on immigration of foreigners. Owing to the shortage of qualified labour force, Lithuanian employers have started to employ foreign - non EU Member - citizens more frequently.

We do recognize the necessity of carefully regulated migration processes. Therefore Lithuania seeks to create a single comprehensive tool – both political and institutional in all

administrative levels - for proper and adequate migration management. It results in appropriate solutions of problems including the demographic ones.

Lithuania aims at effective management of the economic migration issues through domestic policy measures, i.e. in business environment, labour market, human resources skills improvement, health protection and other areas, and, also, increasing the economic activity of the Lithuanian people.

Particular attention is paid at the informing Lithuanian residents who intend to emigrate abroad about risks of irregular migration, trafficking as well as those who have already left the country about possibilities to return to Lithuania.

Lithuania recognises that the effective return policies are required. For instance we started the project aimed at return of our scientists and doctors who work abroad and observe the lively interest in it. Moreover, we already can see some signs of the tendency of return migration in private sector due to its active developments, economic growth and subsequent increase of wages.

In this context Lithuania emphasises its interest in promoting close international cooperation. It is of great importance to exchange best practices in solving migration issues as well as in creating new mechanisms which would ensure positive influence of migration on the development.

Dear Colleagues,

We know that there is no one single miracle solution to these problems which we are discussing today. Therefore we should encourage the dialogue based on partnership and cooperation, involving all stakeholders and seeking for the proper and effective solutions.

I believe that our meeting today will be an important step forward in the right direction.

Thank you for your attention.