

REMARKS BY DR. LUIS ERNESTO DERBEZ BAUTISTA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF MEXICO, IN THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL
MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

New York, N. Y., September 14th, 2006

Madame President,

Mexico aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Guyana on behalf of the Rio Group.

Madame President,

The migratory phenomenon has gained greater importance in both the national and international agendas. It has finally been acknowledged that the consideration and tackling of migration surpasses the domestic and the bilateral realms. No country can address migration alone. Now more than ever, there is an additional need to analyze the issue at the multilateral level and consequently, foster international cooperation.

Though migration has constantly been addressed in different United Nations fora, it has been done so without a systematic or integrated perspective. It is of the utmost importance to advance an approach that could guarantee treating migration in a holistic manner.

As the Secretary-General's Report on International Migration and Development points out, it is worrisome to realize that due to the increase in the migration flows resulting from interdependence and globalization, there is a current trend to treat migrants as if they were just "another good or merchandise to be managed". This trend is quite paradoxical if we take into account that the recognition of the individual as a subject and not as a mere object of development strategies, was one of the most important achievements of the twentieth century.

Mexico welcomes the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. My delegation believes that the Dialogue is the starting point of a process that will inaugurate a new vision; a new migration culture. Mexico reiterates that is necessary to foster a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon which could serve as a basis to build positive inputs. It is of the utmost importance to avoid treating migrants as goods to be exchanged, or even worse, as criminals.

Madame President,

We should focus our efforts on fostering a better understanding of this phenomenon. There is a pressing need to include migration in the global agenda. Quick fixes should be replaced with medium and long-term responses.

Mexico believes that it is crucial to privilege the approaches aimed at enhancing the management of this phenomenon. Throughout this process, it is important to adopt policies addressing the root causes and the impacts of migration and above all, policies that are migrant-centered and that consider the migrant as a person with

unassailable dignity. At the same time, it is important to advance an open and inclusive discussion that could objectively analyze the challenges that migration poses to all States, either if they are, origin, transit or destination countries.

The new vision should be based on the principle of shared responsibility. If we want to overcome the challenges and seize the opportunities that migration brings, we must all address our own share and act in a co-responsible manner.

Madame President,

Mexico is simultaneously a country of origin, transit and destination of migrants. Mexico's participation in this High-Level Dialogue is based on our commitment with the principle of shared responsibility and the need to strengthen international cooperation to address international migration. The Government of Mexico acknowledges its responsibility to provide the basic domestic conditions so Mexicans can be granted with greater and better development opportunities in their own country. If these conditions are guaranteed, they would not feel the need to migrate.

In Mexico's opinion, an efficient global migration strategy should include the following four elements:

First, it should fully respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, including their labor rights as well as their dignity. The migrant as a person with human and labor rights should be at the core of our common thinking and action. We should not forget that behind the migrant there are men, women and children with faces and names. They see migration as a need, not as a choice. Each migrant deserves a humane treatment, not only due to its dignity as a human being, but also because of his or her significant contribution to both their receiving societies and to their communities of origin.

We cannot confine migration to the issue of security. Mexico favors a comprehensive approach that takes into account the economic, social, cultural and evidently, the security aspects. We should reject those approaches that envisage the migrant as a criminal. The new vision should consider migration as a development factor. It is time to cherish the great opportunities in terms of knowledge, labor and shared development that international migration provides.

Greater international cooperation focused on fostering development and increasing economic competitiveness of countries of origin, should be the second element to be included in the strategy. If included, the odds of a decrease in the migratory flows are very high.

Third, it is necessary to acknowledge the increasing linkages among the labor markets and the need to develop new schemes that allow for the mobility and circularity of people as well as the legalization of the migratory status of those that have resided for long periods of time in their destination States.

As a fourth element, Mexico proposes a reform of the international organizations currently dealing with the issue of migration. Such reform should be aimed at approaching the migratory phenomenon from a long-term and holistic perspective. Mexico promotes a democratic and inclusive approach that requires the participation of all stakeholders as well as an open, inclusive and comprehensive dialogue with the participation of all the United Nations funds, programs and specialized agencies.

Last July, Mexico hosted a meeting of the Helsinki Process on International Migration where the representatives of various States, international organizations and civil society as well as scholars and experts on migration, held a dialogue that reiterated the feasibility and benefits of fostering an approach as the aforementioned.

Madame President,

I am certain that this High-Level Dialogue is a great opportunity to address the migratory phenomenon from a holistic approach, highlighting the issues that will consolidate the migration agenda and agreeing on the necessary modalities for an adequate follow-up.

Mexico favors the establishment of a forum on international migration linked to the United Nations whereby all stakeholders could participate and promote international cooperation for the benefit of countries and migrants alike. My Delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Peter Sutherland, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Migration for his efforts and initiatives on this issue. Mexico supports his proposal as a good basis for our ongoing deliberations.

This High-Level Dialogue should lead us to build up a conceptual and institutional framework so that the United Nations and the International community could deal with migration with a coherent approach.