

Intervention by the Netherlands
on the occasion of the
High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development,
New York, 15 September 2006

**Speech by Joris Demmink, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice of
the Netherlands,
also on behalf of the Ministers for Immigration and Integration and
for Development Co-operation**

Thank you Chair, Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, let me stress that this HLD is a very timely event. As the UN Secretary-General stated in his report (I quote); "Each of us holds a piece of the migration puzzle, none has the whole picture. It is time to start putting it together". The Netherlands attaches great importance to this global dialogue and firmly believes it should be the beginning, not the end, of a global process of discussion and co-operation. It is only through open and constructive dialogue about the positive and negative aspects of migration and with respect for each other's views, that states can achieve mutually beneficial co-operation. It concerns both South-North and South-South co-operation, since the problems linked to South-South migration are as important as those linked to South-North migration. These days, most states are countries of origin, transit and destination. My own country is no exception. Migration should therefore be addressed as a global phenomenon.

We align ourselves with the intervention by Finland on behalf of the EU, especially as regards the relationship between migration and the MDGs, brain drain, circular migration, reducing transfer costs for remittances, smuggling and trafficking, and the protection of refugees.

Migration and Development

Chair,

There is a clear relationship between migration and development.

Migration has both positive and negative consequences on the economic and social environment of the country of origin as well as on the country of destination. Development can influence the need to migrate. The Netherlands annually spends 0,8% of its GDP in the fight against poverty in the world, thereby contributing to the removal of root causes of migration.

Coherence

Two years ago the Dutch Minister for Development Co-operation and her colleague for Immigration and Integration presented a joint paper on migration and development to parliament. An English version is

available in this room. In our view, this is a good example of policy coherence. Coherence has to start at home in order to be effective internationally.

The Netherlands is also a strong advocate of coherence, co-operation and policy co-ordination between states and international organisations — in our own region (the EU), between regions and globally. At the same time we organise regularly meetings with representatives of migrant organisations to enable them to give input in policy formulation.

Capacity building

Countries benefit from managing flows of migrants. Creating migration management capacity can make a major contribution. The Netherlands actively supports projects, especially in Africa, helping immigration agencies and other authorities to register and assist migrants and protect refugees.

Brain gain

Temporary labour migration can have significant advantages for migrants themselves as well as for their countries of origin and destination. The Netherlands is examining how temporary labour migration from developing countries can serve the interests not only of the Netherlands and the migrants, but of their countries of origin as well..

The Netherlands works to promote brain gain by stimulating migrants to temporarily return to their countries of origin to contribute to development. Migrants can act as a bridge between countries of origin and destination. For instance, in Ghana we developed a project for the temporary return of Ghanaian doctors qualified in the Netherlands.

Last April, we started a new project for the temporary return of qualified migrants to Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Human rights and gender

Every country should protect the rights of migrants, particularly women and children, and combat xenophobia and racism. The special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, acting under the mandate of the new Human Rights Council, has a vital role here.

For many women and their families, migration is the all-important step towards a better life. Not only because it means more income, but because of the possibilities of empowerment. But migration also poses risks for women. Migrant women often do work that is dirty, difficult, demeaning and dangerous. Trafficking is the dark underside of globalisation and must be exposed and rooted out.

Follow-up

Chair,

It is essential that this dialogue is continued. We call upon this High Level Dialogue to support the Secretary General's proposal of a global, informal and voluntary forum where states can discuss common problems, exchange best practices and find common

solutions; a forum that is supported by the GMG. We warmly welcome Belgium's offer to host the first meeting of the Forum.

In the meantime, countries will have to continue working together in every conceivable way. This week we have made a good start.

Thank you.