

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS



Te Māngai o Aotearoa

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HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

PLENARY STATEMENT

STATEMENT BY MS ROSEMARY BANKS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

15 SEPTEMBER 2006

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame President,

Tena koutou katoa,

New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to participate in this exchange on international migration and development. We recognise that immigration issues and their impact require a long term strategic dialogue. We are also here to learn about what has worked for other countries so that your ideas can contribute positively to our immigration programme and our thinking on how immigration interacts with development.

We want to learn best practice from a range of countries and to better understand the perspective of sending countries.

The short term migration of workers has significant development potential and can benefit both origin and destination countries by helping meet labour market demand, providing remittance flows and the potential for skill development and knowledge transfer, while enabling migrants to return home. More permanent migration can alleviate population pressures in origin countries.

Although there are benefits from labour flows, there are also a number of economic and social risks to the sending country. These include ensuring open and transparent selection to minimise corruption in selection processes, gender issues and the impact of family separation. Deskilling is also an issue.

In New Zealand we are currently undertaking a full review of our immigration programme, recognizing that migration contributes to our development both economically and socially.

I would like to briefly touch on New Zealand's immigration programme; labour mobility in the South Pacific region; and what we hope to gain from our participation in this forum.

New Zealand is in the midst of the biggest overhaul of immigration legislation in 20 years. We have recently undertaken a wide consultative process about some of these changes.

From this High Level Dialogue, we want to learn more about the immigration changes underway globally that can help in the development of the New Zealand Immigration Change Programme.

Like many modern countries, New Zealand's immigration programme has a strong emphasis on attracting the skilled labour we need.

We currently face critical skill shortages in key areas of industry. Immigration is vital to ensuring New Zealand has the skills, labour and talent it needs for continued economic growth.

Positive settlement outcomes for new migrants, along with robust border security, are priorities within our immigration change programme.

Our immigration programme already includes a highly successful settlement strategy, which acknowledges that migration is an end-to-end process and productivity comes through ensuring the best settlement outcomes for migrants.

The settlement strategy also extends to our 750 UN mandated refugees.

In summary, we have to balance the pressures of globalisation and development goals, while ensuring that immigration does not diminish opportunities for those already in New Zealand.

While New Zealand's focus is on attracting skilled labour, we recognise that we are a developed country located in the South Pacific region.

As part of the Pacific region, New Zealand recognises that there needs to be opportunities for Pacific Islanders, skilled and unskilled, to access permanent employment in New Zealand. In addition to the mainstream immigration policy options, we have two dedicated permanent immigration schemes: the Samoan Quota (for Samoan nationals) and the Pacific Access Category (for nationals of Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu and Kiribati).

The International Organisation for Migration, as well as regional forums like the Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference, are important in encouraging useful discussions on international migration issues.

New Zealand believes that open dialogue between countries is an effective way of addressing global migration issues. This has been demonstrated in regional processes like the Bail Process on people smuggling and related transnational crime.

It is important that the complex link between migration and development is more deeply explored and debated.

Looking to the future and the way this High Level Dialogue is taken forward, New Zealand would be cautious about establishing a new global forum on migration. We think that the avenue to address migration issues already exists in various structures. Any new forum that may be agreed should not duplicate existing forums and should have the potential to add value to the existing debates. New Zealand believes that if there is consensus to establish an informal forum it should be voluntary and be driven by States. It should build on the work of regional forums and allow for consultation and the exchange of good practice. It should not lead to negotiated outcomes.

In closing, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his thought provoking report, and all the delegations who have contributed so generously to this dialogue.

My delegation came to share its experience and to learn about the different models and frameworks used in other countries.

We shall leave with fresh ideas and new contacts.

Thank you Madame President