

SWEDEN



STATEMENT

by

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Sweden
High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development

United Nations
New York

14 September 2006

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PERMANENT MISSION OF SWEDEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Migration is strong positive force. When people travel, meet and exchange ideas – societies can make leaps forward in development. This force contributes to eliminate poverty in the world – to reach the millennium development goals.

Migrants are not victims. They are made victims by human smugglers and traffickers. To reach the whole development potential of migration we must fight those who treat people – men, women and children - as if they were goods on a market and can be sold to the highest bid. We must fight discrimination and exploitation.

Let me high light five important issues for the Swedish government:

Fristly, people living and working in a country, regardless if they are migrant workers or citizens, should have the same rights and the same obligations. To achieve this we need regular migration.

Irregular migration leaves people in our societies with limited rights and no safety. Irregular migration also reveals the existence of a dual labour market: one for citizens and those with a work permit – and one for those without.

Therefore we must increase the options for legal migration. Only when a person legally resides in a country can he or she be guaranteed the same rights as citizens of that country. This should include the right to family reunification, full access to the labour market and to the social security system.

If employers or we, the rich countries, need labour we should be ready to pay for it. This is not only about managing migration. It is about values. It is about human rights.

Secondly, the root causes of forced migration cannot be solved by migration policy. Neither by border control.

We need progressive development policies. We all know that a freer and more fair trade would have a far-reaching effect on development and poverty reduction in the world.

It is every government's obligation to create a society where women and men can build a future. It is also an international responsibility to create a more equal world. I am proud that Sweden this year reaches the target of one percent of GDP to development assistance.

Thirdly, the right to asylum must be preserved.

Those in need of international protection must have access to a safe haven. Our borders must stay open. We must ensure that the measures taken to curb irregular migration do not prevent refugees from gaining the international protection that they are entitled to.

Fourthly, it should be easier for people to move from one country and than back again.

People bring knowledge. There is a brain gain. It is a huge challenge to make sure that all countries will benefit from this — and not only the receiving countries. To promote this circular migration is key.

Migration also, very concrete, brings prosperity. Money is sent back to families. Kids are sent to schools. Houses are renovated. Food is put on the table. We can do much more to make the transmissions easier, safer and, above all, cheaper.

Finally, the High Level Dialogue is not the end of a process, but the beginning.

The cooperation within the UN-system must increase. The Global Migration Group is a welcome initiative.

But it isn't sufficient. We cannot handle migration only nationally or even regionally any more. The tools we have at our disposal aren't enough. I believe it to be crucial for the States to have a forum where we can continue this process in a constructive way also on a global level. It should be intergovernmental, open-ended, consultative and nondecision-making. Sweden fully supports the idea put forward by the UN Secretary General.

Thank you.