



***Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe
to the United Nations***

STATEMENT
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AT THE
HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT,
UNITED NATIONS

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Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly,
Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan,
The President of the Economic and Social Council,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates.

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly and express my confidence that this High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development will have a fruitful outcome under your able stewardship. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the subject under discussion today.

Madame President,

It is indeed a welcome development that the international community has awakened to the importance of international migration, not only as it relates to the globalization process but also as it affects development in both the countries of origin and those countries of destination. The phenomenon of international migration presents opportunities and challenges when examined in terms of development. It is therefore our hope that this Dialogue will assist us in our collective efforts to map out concrete and practical strategies to turn international migration into a developmental tool that is beneficial to all, and, in particular, to developing countries.

Madame President,

The perceived benefits of international migration to developing countries should not only be limited to remittances. While remittances can go a long way in improving the livelihoods of the recipient families, they do not constitute a financial resource upon which long term development strategies can be based on. Moreover, remittances do not compensate for the loss of much needed skilled and professional personnel that developing countries lose almost on a daily basis to developed countries.

Zimbabwe, like many developing countries invested heavily in education and training of its personnel. However, a study done in 2005 shows that the country lost 60% of state registered nurses and half of medical doctors. Such massive loss of skilled personnel, arising in part from aggressive recruitment methods employed by agencies, public and private organizations in developed countries calls for a more systematic approach in addressing this problem at a global level, in which compensatory mechanisms from developed countries to developing countries should be at the core.

On our part as developing countries, we should put in place policies and take measures that allow us to benefit in terms of development from the phenomenon of migration. Such measures, which should also target our citizens abroad, should include making the cost of remittances cheaper, creation of development funds into which non-residents can contribute, and encouraging non-residents to invest in designated sectors of the economy through appropriate measures to facilitate such investments.

Madame President,

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe embarked on an initiative known as Home link, which not only seeks to make the cost of remittances cheaper, but also to channel funds from non-residents into housing projects that benefit them and their families. However, the focus of policy on the part of the Government of Zimbabwe will continue to be with on-going efforts aimed at retaining skilled and professional personnel and even luring back those who have emigrated, through various incentives such as affordable accommodation, easy access to land on which they can build houses and attractive conditions of service at the work place.

Madame President,

The other side of migration is the one that relates to irregular and undocumented migrants involved in illegal border crossing or "border jumping" as it is known in our region. These migrants constitute a group that is more vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation and human rights abuses and they form the bulk of economic refugees. It is therefore vital that measures be put in place to ensure their protection and humane treatment. Bilateral and multilateral initiatives are needed to ensure better treatment of these migrants. Alongside such efforts should be

measures to address the problem of xenophobia through public awareness. Indeed xenophobic tendencies have become one of the biggest challenges of our time.

Madame President,

The Zimbabwe Government is currently working with UNICEF, the International Organisation for Migration and the International Labour Organisation to provide humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants who face deportation from neighbouring countries. This initiative, which the Government of Zimbabwe appreciates, is one example of the role that the United Nations system and other international organizations can play to assist those who find themselves away from home and in difficult circumstances.

Madame President,

Let me conclude by pointing out that to the extent that migration is the unfinished business of globalization, Zimbabwe will continue to encourage global dialogue on migration. Our considered view is that only internationally agreed strategies and programmes will address the challenges posed by international migration and maximize on the opportunities for development that it presents for the benefit of all.

I thank you.