

International Dialogue on Migration
"Enhancing the Role of Return Migration in Fostering Development"
Geneva, 7-8 July 2008

Welcome Remarks by Brunson McKinley,
Director General of the International Organization for Migration

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Let me start by extending to you, on behalf of IOM, a very warm welcome to the second intersessional workshop of the IOM International Dialogue on Migration in 2008. This workshop is organized with the generous support of **the Governments of the Netherlands and Italy**. Their contributions have made possible the participation of many officials from developing countries who are the experts in their governments on these issues.
- Following the IOM membership's selection, the International Dialogue on Migration this year is focusing on the issue of return migration and its challenges and opportunities. The other IDM workshop addressing this issue, which took place in April earlier this year, was on the theme of *Managing Return Migration*. As those of you who attended that event will remember, it focused on return migration in the broader context of international migration. The topic of the workshop today is *Enhancing the Role of Return Migration in Fostering Development* and its objective is to explore the return –development nexus.
- **In recent years, there has been a growing interest in exploring the dynamics and links between return migration and development** not only by States but also by various national and international actors, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, migrant associations, and the private sector.
- **Return migration, whether temporary or permanent, can contribute to reducing the negative impacts of human capital outflows for countries of origin.** Skill shortages in critical sectors such as health care and education are of particular concern. Return migration may not only replenish and enrich the human capital of countries of origin but it can also contribute to the transfer of technology and of scientific, technical and economic expertise as well as political, social and cultural exchanges. **Other potential benefits of return migration result from capital inflow and productive investment associated with returnees.**
- Yet, we know that **migrants' return doesn't automatically have positive results for the development of their home countries unless a broad range of factors are in place to ensure this**, including enabling social, political and economic conditions in countries of origin and destination, as well as migration management policies and mechanisms.
- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships are important means by which the development benefits of return can be maximized.** Intra-state coordination as well as inter-state consultations play an essential role in ensuring that policies in host countries and countries of origin effectively facilitate return and maximize its development benefits. Coordinated partnerships among diasporas, migrant workers and home town associations, business and the private sector, civil society organizations, and national and international organizations are equally important.

- This workshop brings together representatives of States and non-governmental stakeholders to **examine the links between return migration and development and to explore the specific tools and measures to facilitate and encourage return**. In doing so, it provides an opportunity to **identify practical approaches at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels that are effective in supporting returnees' contributions to home country development, whether through their skills and knowledge or financial resources**.
- During the next two days we will have the unique opportunity to **engage in an open dialogue with different States, civil society and private sector actors and migrants themselves** on these topics. I challenge you to seize this opportunity to find innovative ways to make return migration work for development.
- My colleagues and I look forward to a **rich exchange of views and experiences** on the important topic of return migration and development, and to facilitating your efforts to develop practical approaches.

Thank you.