



PAKISTAN

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STATEMENT
BY

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FOREIGN SECRETARY

AT THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY DEBATE ON
“VALUING MIGRATION: THE COSTS, BENEFITS,
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF
MIGRATION”

AT 88th IOM COUNCIL SESSION

Geneva,
30 November 2004

His Excellency Mr. Brunson McKinley, Director General of IOM
Fellow Panelists
Honorable Delegates

Allowing me to begin by thanking Mr. Brunson McKinley, Director General of the International Organization for Migration for organizing this panel event. It is a timely and well considered initiative on an issue with important global ramifications. Over the past decades, migration has emerged as a central issue on the international agenda. The various sub-themes of the topic afford a balanced approach to our interlocution. The costs, benefits, challenges and above all the opportunities of migration need to be identified, analyzed and where possible remedial measures taken to enable the realization of sustained mutual benefit for sending and recipient countries.

2. The IOM is making a valuable contribution to the migration debate. Its role in raising global awareness of its various aspects is recognized and appreciated. In Pakistan the Organization is effectively engaged. The Consultations on Asian Migration, held in Colombo last year, in which we participated, was instrumental in spotlighting Asia's unique migration trends. Last month, in collaboration with my government, the IOM successfully arranged for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan to participate in the country's first ever Presidential election. This was an honourable contribution to the promotion of peace and stability in our region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. This debate offers a welcome opportunity to examine the issue of migration in its proper perspective. We need to make an earnest effort to distinguish between

perception and reality as the former appears to have clouded the latter. It would be unfortunate to let the impact of some negative events, no matter how abhorrent, shape the migration discourse. We hope that this distinguished panel will define the parameters for a rational and objective treatment of an increasingly important phenomenon which has the unique potential to bring peoples and civilizations together.

4. Two recent events have had a profound impact on the migration issue. These are (1) the economic crisis of 1997-1998 in South-East Asia and (2) the abominable events of September 11, 2001. The former negatively affected South-South migration for mostly economic considerations while the latter, for understandable reasons, placed security concerns at the center of South-North migration. In both cases, the image of migrants has suffered. This needs to be set right.

5. Although irregular migration is triggered by the vast differential between the deprived and the affluent regions of the world, it is a serious problem and needs to be addressed. Previously, the level of tolerance for irregular migration was determined by the economic cycle in the receiving states. To this has been added an overriding security dimension. We do not want to diminish the significance and legitimacy of this concern which we fully share. It should be addressed collectively, through close cooperation and partnership amongst the countries of origin, transit and destination. As you are aware, Pakistan has taken major steps to counter the threat of terrorism at home and abroad. Our whole hearted commitment to curtail and eventually eliminate this scourge will continue. We would, however, urge that these concerns should not be allowed to overshadow the positive impact of migration. That would be detrimental to the interests of everyone.

6. Let us now talk briefly about the costs and benefits of migration. I do not believe it would be possible or indeed desirable to place the costs and benefits in compartmentalized boxes. For example brain drain is considered a cost for the countries of origin. Yet it cannot be counted as a major concern in states with massive surpluses of skilled manpower striving for limited job opportunities in the local economy. In the receiving societies the costs include competition with the local community for employment, downward pressure on wages, over stretching of social services and social discord and tension. At the same time, considerable body of evidence suggests that these costs are largely offset by migrant contributions to the economies of the industrialized countries. Introduction of new skills, enrichment of the local culture with the intermingling of foreign customs, investment and spending on consumer goods and housing more than compensate for the costs. This is borne out by the following findings:

- A study in New Zealand in 2003 found that migrants had generated a positive net fiscal impact of \$ 1.7 billion.
- Research has shown that Australia has been benefiting from skills and education of migrants without having to pay for it. Interestingly, research has also shown that during periods of recession, migrants have been less reliant on social security than people born in Australia (mainly because all migrants are ineligible for receiving social security benefits)
- According to a study by British Home Office Research, in 1999/2000, migrants in UK contributed pounds 31.2 billion in taxes and consumed pounds 28.8 billion in benefits and state services, a net fiscal contribution of approximately pounds 2.5 billion.
- According to official statements, British economic growth rate would be almost 0.5% lower for the next two years if net migration ceased. It would have an adverse impact on family income and revenue generation, leading to curtailment of expenditure on public services

7. To determine the full extent of economic impact of migration, we need further studies on:

- a) The extent to which major destination countries have benefited from the contribution of migrants over a certain period of time.
- b) Short-term and long-term impact on the economies of some key countries if they were to shut their doors to migrants completely or partially.

8. Migration, needs to be seen in the context of a rapidly globalizing world. A protective approach predicated on building high walls around areas of global affluence would be short sighted if not counterproductive. These walls would not be able to bear the strains generated by rising deprivation. Migration provides a powerful tool for stemming poverty. According to the World Bank, remittances sent home by international migrants through official channels increased from US\$ 2 billion in 1970 to US\$ 93 billion in 2003. The injection of these funds into some of the most poverty stricken regions in the world may well have prevented serious social upheaval. Ironically, for exactly the same reason, remittances have failed to become an engine of development and growth generating investment. For many recipients, remittances are merely a means of survival, spent on meeting the exigencies of daily life. These do not contribute to savings and cannot be viewed as a substitute for direct foreign investment, concessional financial flows and fairer terms of trade for the developing countries.

Mr. Director General
Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. Let me now turn to the second part of the topic, “ Opportunities and Challenges of Migration”. By the year 2050, the world population is projected to increase by nearly 50 percent. This presents a monumental challenge, particularly

since the preponderance of this increase will occur in the developing world. More than 3 billion souls are likely to be added to the present 5 billion in these countries. Accordingly, the number of migrants is bound to increase substantially. The projected population growth could also mean corresponding increase in trafficking in persons, estimated between 600,000 to 800,000 a year at present.

10. Our common goal, therefore, must be to search for solutions that would minimize irregular and maximize regular migration. In my opinion, the answer partly lies in addressing the root causes of migration such as poverty, conflicts, human rights violations including in occupied territories, and cultural and religious intolerance.

11. A balanced approach to managing migration, representing a blend of traditional and non-traditional policies and tools, and making optimum use of opportunities through close cooperation among countries of origin and destination could be useful in achieving our objectives. Let me make a few suggestions in this regard:

- a) Educational programmes for the migrants as well as the receiving societies to prepare both for a life of cultural diversity so as to inculcate a spirit of tolerance and harmony, respect for the rights of the migrant and disavowal of racist and xenophobic tendencies.
- b) Counter-trafficking projects must be balanced by projects to identify communities or categories of people in countries of origin who are prone to trafficking. This should be followed by projects to provide self-employment opportunities to such people or communities, as a decent alternative.
- c) Compilation of data concerning the ageing population and declining birth rates in developed countries with a view to projecting the impending labour deficits and consequent job availability. Allocation of migrant quotas on the basis of population size, available skills and economic conditions in the prospective sending states. Advance planning and preparation to address security concerns.

- d) Country or region-wise identification of causes of irregular migration such as poverty, population pressures, lack of absorptive capacity in countries of origin of their own educated and skilled manpower and dissemination of this information to destination countries with a view to finding appropriate solutions, including temporary migration.
- e) Mainstreaming of forced returnees through projects in their countries of origin undertaken with funding from sending states.
- f) Allocation of quotas for migrants as an incentive against irregular migration. Progress in this sphere is likely to facilitate readmission.

12. I would conclude by underscoring the value Pakistan places on tolerance, and interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue and harmony. It is at the heart of our foreign policy. We firmly believe that by working closely with each other with open minds and addressing our mutual concerns in a civilized manner, we can make the world a better place for everyone, including migrants. This is the philosophy behind our President's concept of Enlightened Moderation.

Thank you.