

OPENING REMARKS

**William Lacy Swing, Director General
International Organization for Migration**

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Introduction

Mayor Coderre, distinguished participants and panellists, ladies and gentlemen.

It's an honor to welcome you to the first in a series of meetings within the context of IOM's annual International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) -- a series in which we will reflect together on the specific role of migration and migrants in the 2030 Agenda -- as we move into implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

IOM firmly believes that a long-term vision is needed to develop comprehensive migration policies. With the SDGs, migration is now entering mainstream development policy. This offers us in the international community an unprecedented opportunity to change our perception of migration -- and to view human mobility as a necessary and natural component for our economies and societies -- and not as a "problem" or "failure of development".

IOM wishes to use its main platform for migration policy dialogue -- the IDM -- for an in-depth discussion with UN Member States, international organizations and other partners on how to ensure that migration receives the attention it merits as we launch the 2030 SDG agenda.

With this brief introduction, I wish to make three points.

I. Migrants as key development actors

First, a few words to set the scene for our two days of reflection.

We are living in the era of the greatest human mobility in recorded history: with more than one billion migrants -- some **250 million international migrants** and more than **750,000 internal migrants** -- migrants are thus one in every seven persons in the world.

Increased migration is (i) **inevitable** due to demography, disasters, demand for labor, North-South socio-economic disparities, environmental degradation and other driving factors; (ii) **necessary** for equitable and durable socio-economic development and growth; and (iii) **desirable** if well-governed.

Migrants are too often invisible -- or simply not accounted for -- in **local, national and regional development plans**. It is all too easy to forget that migrants' rights, dignity and needs count as much as those of nationals. Recognition of migrants as key actors in development is a critical first step towards harnessing the potential of migrants to contribute to the development of home and adoptive communities.

The message from the landmark agreement reached at the special SDGs Summit last September in this very city was crystal clear: business as usual is no longer possible. We cannot keep *talking* about the relationship between migration and development. Nor can we keep merely repeating that the development *potential* of migration needs to be unleashed. We have been saying that for the last 20 years or so. I for one have never understood the debate over whether migration benefits development. I know that this city that I now call home was built by migrants, and with their brains and talents. And the Mayor knows that that sister city just north of here -- Montreal -- likewise owes its development to migrants. Now we need action. We need to put into action effective mechanisms to achieve the migration-related targets in the SDGs.

Our series of IDM meetings this year will revolve around these realities. They will focus on:

- (i) The contribution of migrants to sustainable development and the obstacles that stand in the way;
- (ii) The policies needed to integrate migration into development planning; and
- (iii) The systems or mechanisms needed to measure and assess progress towards achieving the SDG targets.

During these two days we will be hearing experts on the new opportunities that inclusion of migration within the SDGs affords. We will discuss how we can gather information about migrants and migration policy that will support deliberations at the High-level political forum.

II. Migration and migrants as key to reducing inequalities

The main SDG reference to migration is under Goal 10 – a reference that focuses squarely on reducing inequalities within and among countries. In other words, migrants are at the centre of solutions to the growing inequalities that stifle growth and negatively affect social cohesion. Goal 10 calls on us to look beyond the current negative depictions and stereotypes of migrants in policies and the media – and the anti-migrant sentiments reflected increasingly in pronouncements of politicians. Goal 10 asks us to recall the many millions of migrants who are found in workplaces all over the world: those who keep construction industries running, who build roads, who provide health services; who provide aged and child care; who teach and who launch start-ups and create jobs -- not to mention all those who work in international organizations the world over. They are indispensable to our economies and they make our societies more vibrant.

III. Migration requires dialogue

Over the past 15 years, IOM's IDM has been engaging states, organizations, civil society and other relevant parties in regular open and non-binding dialogues on migration policy issues at stake. Last October the IDM set a new framework for the global dialogue on migration by involving all levels of migration governance in a Conference on Migrants and Cities (CMC) in which local authorities were the main participants. In 2013, an IOM global conference was held on "Diaspora".

At the CMC local authorities, central governments and relevant national and international actors, discussed the significant link between migration and cities and the key role local authorities have in migration policymaking. The Conference thus affirmed the key role of local authorities in the global migration governance and in provided them a voice in the global debate on migration. The Conference showed that -- through their daily management of cities and design and implementation of local policies -- Mayors are at the heart of the implementation of SDGs. Mayors in general understand and appreciate migrants better than national politicians. We will build today and tomorrow's discussion also on the important outcomes of the Conference.

Moreover, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) provides for a constructive dialogue among countries of origin and destination. We need to take this spirit of dialogue to the work that will now be undertaken to identify global indicators on migration-related SDG targets. We are looking forward to the outcomes of the work that is under way in the UN statistical Commission.

I would also mention that the IOM Council has adopted a Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) that provides a comprehensive overview of "well-managed migration policies". The MiGOF is a rich resource in helping

define migration-related indicators for the follow-up and review of the migration related SDG targets.

IV. Migration follow-up action essential

Lastly, the ultimate test of the SDG follow-up and review will be the extent to which it informs planning and collaboration on the ground. We have a window of opportunity as the UN System launches new planning tools for SDG implementation in more than 100 countries over the next three years. Our hope is that the discussions at this year's IDM will help the international community to derive greatest advantage from this opportunity.

Introducing the panels

Today, we will be looking in-depth at the opportunities surrounding the inclusion of migration in the SDGs -- and the key milestones for moving from policy development to implementation of the SDGs. We are truly grateful to all the panellists who have agreed to join us for this session of the IDM.

Tomorrow, panels will consider how progress will be measured on well-managed migration policies and other migration-related issues in the SDGs. These include labour migration, known trafficking and migrant health. On both days a wide range of key stakeholders have been invited to take part in the discussions.

We are organizing a second IDM in Geneva in October. The Geneva debate will give country representatives center stage to showcase how monitoring methods are working and the preliminary results.

Thank you.