

**PHILIPPINE STATEMENT**  
delivered by

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at the  
**International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) 2016:  
Follow-Up and Review of Migration in the SDGs**  
**Panel 1: Migration and Sustainable Development – New opportunities**  
**CR 4, UNHQ New York, 29 February 2016**

The opening panel will discuss the implication of migration being included in the Sustainable Development Goals, and what that might mean for development.

The following questions are among those proposed to guide the discussion:

- What impact does migration have on sustainable development?
- What are the new opportunities with including migration in the SDGs?
- What is the international community already doing to achieve migration related targets?
- What remains to be done? What are the challenges ahead?

During the negotiations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, the Philippines, together with several like-minded countries, strongly advocated for the recognition of the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development in source, transit and destination countries. The Philippines also strongly supported the promotion and protection of the human rights of all migrant workers, regardless of migration status.<sup>1</sup> Corollary to this, the Philippines also sought to include migrants in the listing of vulnerable groups whose needs must be reflected in the Agenda and who must be empowered.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 35. We recognize the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. We also recognize that international migration is a multi-dimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses. We will cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants regardless of migration status, of refugees and of displaced persons. Such cooperation should also strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees, particularly in developing countries. We underline the right of migrants to return to their country of citizenship, and recall that States must ensure that their returning nationals are duly received.

<sup>2</sup> 23. People who are vulnerable must be empowered. Those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80% live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants. We resolve to take further effective measures and actions, in conformity with international law, to remove obstacles and constraints,

The 2030 Agenda, along with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, endorses improvements in migration policies under several Goals and Targets, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of migration. These include Targets 5.2 and 16.2 (on efforts to end human trafficking), 8.7 (on elimination of forced labour and modern slavery), 8.8 (on labour rights and promoting decent labour conditions safe and secure working environments), 10.c (on reducing the costs of remittances and recruitment), and 17.18. (on data, monitoring and accountability). Target 10.7 is the principal provision on migration, by providing that states shall “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the Implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”

With the 2030 Agenda, migration is now fully integrated into the global development agenda, and consequently into regional and national development schemes, since the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda will have to be done at all these levels.

This is unprecedented. It is a firm acceptance that migration is not just a social or an economic issue that should be addressed only at national or bilateral levels, but an issue that fully encompasses the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and that has to be addressed at all levels. With migration fully embedded in the 2030 Agenda, we now have new opportunities of addressing migration in an “integrated, coherent, and indivisible” manner in developing policies, and in the provision of funding and means of implementation.

With 247 million international migrants making up 3.3% of the world’s population, this means that we will be able to fully achieve sustainable development only if we integrate migration issues in our discourse. If the Agenda and the SDGs are to be truly effective and transformative, they must be fully “owned” and implemented not just by member states, but by all stakeholders.

Many studies have shown the contributions of international migration to origin, transit and destination countries. The positive benefits migrants bring with them, including skills, resources and diversity are generally acknowledged. According to the World Bank, migration is good because workers can move to places where they are most productive.

But perhaps the most tangible link between migration and development is the money or the remittances migrants send home to developing countries – an estimated \$436 billion in 2014, a 4.4 percent increase over the 2013 level. Remittance flows are expected to reach \$479 billion by 2017. However, the true scale of remittances, including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels, is believed to be even larger.

Remittances from migrant workers play an effective role in reducing poverty. Since remittances are personal flows from migrants to their friends and families back home, they directly augment the income of recipient poor households. In addition, remittances are associated with increased household investments in education, health, and small-

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strengthen support and meet the special needs of people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and in areas affected by terrorism.

scale entrepreneurship—all of which have a have a positive effect on economic growth and high social return in most circumstances. Remittances tend to rise when the recipient economy suffers an economic downturn, natural disaster, or political conflict, as migrants may send more funds during hard times to help their families and friends back home.

The 2030 Agenda creates new opportunities and partnerships for development, but at the same time, it also provides that we must build on existing processes, of which there are many in migration. Notable among these is the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which was one of the earliest state-led and multi-stakeholder initiatives to provide a platform for discussing the relationship of migration and development. When the Philippines chaired the GFMD in 2008, we chose as the theme “Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development”, highlighting the human face of migration in a debate that often only addressed the rational economic implications of migration for development. This year, and as a member of the GFMD Steering Group, we welcome Bangladesh’s theme of “Migration that Works for Sustainable Development of All: Towards a Transformative Agenda”, which aligns the GFMD with the 2030 Agenda and adopts an “SDG Plus” approach by looking at the SDGs in relation to the economics, sociology and governance of migration.<sup>3</sup>

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Coordination Meeting on International Migration held last week here at UNHQ, it was very heartening to hear the wide range of initiatives and programmes that UN funds and programmes and civil society are already doing to achieve the migration-related targets.<sup>4</sup>

For our part, we highlighted the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative, a government-led initiative that aims to improve the ability of States and other stakeholders to prepare for and respond to the needs of migrants caught in countries experiencing crises, whether as a result of conflict or natural disaster, including by protecting their rights and dignity and alleviating suffering. Together with our Co-Chair the United States, and in consultations with all stakeholders, we are working on developing the MICIC Principles, Guidelines and Practices, which we intend to launch at the High Level Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants on 19 September 2016. This will be discussed in detail by our government focal point, Secretary Imelda Nicolas at tomorrow’s panel sessions.

The Philippines is also a Member of the Steering Group of the Nansen Initiative, which adopted last October an Agenda for the Protection of Cross-border Displaced Persons in the Context of Natural Disasters and Climate Change.

For the Philippines, the MICIC, as well as the Nansen Initiative, is very much informed by our four (4) decades of experience in migration governance and management. The protection of Filipino migrants is one of the highest priorities of the Philippine Government. Hence in the Philippines, migration management and governance has always been grounded on the goal to make migration benefit the migrant workers themselves, their families, and society as a whole. We have developed laws,

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gfmd.org/docs/bangladesh-2016>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/14/index.shtml?A2017>

policies and programs that address all aspects and phases of migration, from labour and economic migration to migration in crises. We have implemented a migrant-centered approach to the entire migration cycle, from pre-employment, transit, on-site employment and eventual return and reintegration programs. These include the mobilization of the Filipino diaspora as a strategic partner in implementing our policy to assist Filipino migrants caught in crisis situations, and in framing and implementing our development agenda, through the Diaspora to Development Initiative (D2D)<sup>5</sup>. D2D brings together Filipino organizations from all over the world with government agencies and the private sectors and aims to highlight and exchange best practices of diaspora engagement. We have also worked with the diaspora in finding innovative ways to lower the costs of migration, particularly recruitment and remittance costs, and on financial inclusion of migrants.

At the forthcoming High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development this July, the Philippines has volunteered to give a National Presentation on the steps we have taken to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. We intend to highlight, among others, the challenges faced in such implementation.

For migration, foremost among these challenges is the need to have disaggregated data that will be crucial for determining if the global, regional and national indicators for migration are being achieved. To have that data, we need capacity building, both for the UN system and for member states, especially at local levels. Given that migrants and migrant flows are not confined within national borders, coherence and coordination between countries of origin, transit and destination is an imperative.

A most pressing challenge is what Special Representative Peter Sutherland and Special Adviser Karen AbuZayd have referred to<sup>6</sup> as the need to “change the narrative” on migration and migrants: a growing narrative of fear of migrants and aversion to migration, arising from the current massive movement of people forced to move to seek refuge from war, internal conflict and political instability. This narrative threatens to negate the transformative ambition of the 2030 Agenda and to undermine all our gains in protecting and empowering migrants over the past decades. We must all work together in bringing to the forefront the many positive contributions of migrants, as agents of development, change and innovation, so that they may continue to migrate under safe, legal and better conditions. We must see to it that gains in development through migration are not reversed and that the potential of migrants to contribute to development continues to be fostered and supported. The High level Summit in September is critical in this effort.

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<sup>5</sup> The Diaspora to Development Initiative (D2D) is an initiative of the Commission for Filipinos Overseas (CFO). Created in 2011, D2D provides the framework and strategies for mobilizing the Philippine Diaspora for development. The flagship program of the D2D is the biennial Global Summit of Filipinos in the Diaspora. First held in 2011, it brings together Filipino organizations from all over the world with government agencies and the private sectors and aims to highlight and exchange best practices of diaspora engagement. It is also a forum for these Filipino community organizations to network with each other.

<sup>6</sup> At the opening session of the 14<sup>th</sup> Coordination Meeting on International Migration, 25 February 2016.