SPEAKING NOTES

1. Gracias al Gobierno del Perú por su generosa hospitalidad.

2. I have now exhausted my fluency in Spanish and must switch to English.

3. Peter Sutherland would have loved to have been here. He had a previous commitment to attend the Global Forum meetings this week in Geneva.

4. I'd like to frame our discussion this hour by offering three sets of observations:
   a. First, on where the global debate on migration stands today versus 2006.
   b. Second—and principally: SRSG Sutherland’s goals for the High-Level Dialogue (HLD).
   c. Third, very briefly, on the role of the RCPs.

[2006 v. 2013]

5. In 2006, the HLD was in trouble. SG Kofi Annan appointed SRSG Sutherland to help ensure that it would not become a mud-fight between countries of origin and destination.
6. SRSG Sutherland believed that only if the HLD produced a positive outcome would it be held in a positive spirit. So he proposed the Global Forum and designed it in such a way that it would respect both the desire for state sovereignty and for universality.

7. It was not an easy proposition to sell. The US fiercely opposed it. But the idea eventually prevailed.

8. The migration and development framing eased its acceptance, since it allowed states to cooperate around positive goal. Its state-led nature also was critical.

9. Today, we enter the summer before the HLD are in a very different place.

   a. A casual observer might compare 2006 with 2013 and conclude that the context is much worse for multilateral cooperation on migration.

   b. They would cite the global financial crisis, soaring unemployment in the West, and the toxic politics of migration—just look at what’s happening this week in Sweden.

   c. And yet, as has been evident in this room and in Geneva this week, the desire for cooperation has only grown.

   d. The Global Forum has learned to tackle hard topics, such as illegality and human rights.

   e. The Domestic Workers Convention is now a reality. US immigration reform is making strong progress.

   f. So we enter the runup to the HLD with a yearning for greater cooperation.
g. The Global Forum, the Global Migration Group, the Special Representative for Migration, the IOM, and the RCPs all need to consider how their roles should evolve to meet this growing demand for substantive leadership.

10. This brings me to the HLD.

[INTRODUCTION]

11. In SRSG Sutherland’s view, the HLD is not just a critical milestone. It can and should be a historical inflection point in how the international community cooperates on migration.

12. It can and should produce very specific, very practical outcomes that help guide us over the next decade.

13. And when we look back—in five or 10 years—we should be able to say that, through our actions at the HLD and beyond, we succeeded in making the lives of migrants safer and better in measurable and meaningful ways...

14. ...That we strengthened the capacity of governments to manage migration and integration in ways that produce better social and economic outcomes...

15. ...And that we have significantly improved how publics perceive migrants and migration.

[HLD OUTCOMES]

16. What should those outcomes be? This, of course, is for Member States to determine. But SRSG Sutherland does have some ideas of his own—which I would summarize as follows:

   a. First, the HLD should produce a robust consensus on how
migration can feature in the post-2015 development agenda.

b. Second the HLD should produce a vigorous debate—and the outlines of a consensus—on the specific migration-related problems that we believe can be effectively addressed through greater cooperation at the international level.

c. Third, the HLD should tackle the needs of migrants affected by acute-onset crises, like civil wars and natural disasters. Specifically, we could leave New York with a set of guiding principles and a process for producing a framework for action on this issue.

d. Fourth and finally, the HLD should allow us to take stock of the GFMD, to reflect on why it has succeeded, and to further cement its future.

17. As I mentioned, this is an ambitious agenda. But we must be ambitious, because the challenges related to international migration continue to grow.

[THE CONTEXT OF OUR WORK]

18. The past few years have not been positive ones for migrants. Far too much migration continues to take place in the shadows, controlled by criminals who put migrants at grave risk. Discrimination is rising throughout the world.

19. Historic shifts, meanwhile, are taking place. States no longer can be neatly divided into countries of origin and countries of destination. Migration flows south-south as much as it goes south-north.

20. The most important consequence of this is that the dividing lines
among states have blurred—they no longer stand in opposing camps when it comes to migration. More and more, countries recognize the value of, and urgent need for, greater cooperation.

21. Despite the global economic crisis and the parallel rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, it is noteworthy that we saw the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention in 2011. The current sea change in America’s politics around immigration also stands as a revealing counterpoint.

22. So we stand at a moment of real opportunity, even while states still guard their sovereignty zealously—in part (though not only) because of how toxic migration can be in domestic politics.

23. There are critical lessons we can draw from the success of the Global Forum and from the other signs of progress we have seen.

24. The main conclusion, in my view, is that cooperation must be built from the ground up, in an environment of confidence and mutual trust.

25. It will not be imposed from the top down.

26. The shortcomings in the international migration system are legion. The capacity of states and other stakeholders to address them is grossly insufficient. And the inescapable truth is that states cannot solve migration-related problems on their own.

27. This is what makes international cooperation relevant and valuable. It is what makes the UN system relevant and valuable.

[P2015 & MIGRATION]

28. In my view, by far the most important opportunity we have now is also the most obvious one: Ensuring that migration is given full
consideration in the post-2015 development agenda.

29. For those who believe that migration should be brought more firmly under the UN’s aegis, the post-2015 development agenda is the near and present way to achieve this.

30. It is understandable that the original MDGs did not mention migration. It’s a politically sensitive topic, for one; also, at the time, our empirical understanding of how migration interacts with development was limited.

31. Yet migration is the original strategy for people seeking to escape poverty, mitigate risk, and build a better life.

32. Its economic impact today is massive. You know the details of this.

33. As we consider the next-generation development agenda, it is also critical to understand that migration was a vital force in achieving the original MDGs.

34. Beyond the data, there is no greater symbol of the world’s growing interdependence than the movement of people.

35. If we are to make meaningful economic progress in the coming generations, one of the pivotal reasons will be that people are allowed to move more freely.

36. One ideal result would be for the post-2015 debate to focus attention on the need to reduce barriers to all kinds of human mobility—both internal and across national borders—by lowering its economic and social costs.

37. Such an agenda includes simple measures, like reducing fees for visas, and more complex reforms, like allowing migrants to switch employers without penalty and increasing the proportion of
migrants who enjoy legal protections and labor rights.

38. Many of us in this room have been working very hard in recent months to ensure that migration is prominent in the post-2015 debate. I trust that all this effort will lead to a meaningful consensus at the HLD.

[CRISIS MIGRANTS]

39. We also have been making progress on another important issue.

40. Nearly three years ago, SRSG Sutherland began urging states to focus on migrants in crisis.

41. His goal has been to show that the international community is willing and able to range beyond the migration and development frame, and to tackle migration challenges from a different perspective.

42. SRSG Sutherland believes that all migrants in distress are worthy of the world’s attention, whether trapped by a conflict like those in Syria or Libya—marooned by a flood in Thailand, a hurricane in the United States, a nuclear meltdown in Japan—or abandoned by venal smugglers in Mexico, or long forgotten in camps in East Africa.

43. They are all suffering. Over time, we need to chart a course that will allow us to help them all.

44. In the short term, however, we can generate a strong consensus around the issue of migrants caught in what I would call acute crises, in the immediate aftermath of civil conflicts or in the wake of a natural disaster.

45. We need to look to countries of origin and the practices they are
putting in place and that should be emulated. Countries of
destination also have a crucial role to play, whether in ensuring
emergency policies do not discriminate against migrants, for
instance, or in issuing exit visas that include the right to return.

46. Employers must take responsibility, too, to protect and to help
evacuate migrants during such crises, and also to provide back
pay, for instance. Of course, the role of international agencies,
especially IOM and UNHCR, as well as of civil society, is critical in all
of this.

47. During the HLD we hopefully can reach a consensus on the most
basic guiding principles with respect to migrants affected by acute-
onset crises—and that we can chart a course for developing
a framework for action.

[POLITICS of THE HLD]

48. All this will not be easy. Tensions do exist. The run-up to the HLD
has witnessed some unfortunate potential cleavages. Some of this
tension continues to revolve around the question of whether
migration should somehow be brought more firmly “inside” the UN.

49. In SRSG Sutherland’s view, the time is not yet right to reconsider
institutional arrangements regarding international migration. Ahead
of the HLD, certainly, we do not need to kindle this debate.

50. This is not an argument against progress on this front. Quite the
opposite. As I said earlier, SRSG Sutherland believes a great deal
of progress can be made in the coming years, including on the
governance of migration.

51. But we need to start from the ground up, not top down.
52. This is why SRSG Sutherland has been encouraging states and stakeholders to come to October’s dialogue prepared to debate the priorities we should set in the coming decade: What are the problems that we believe can be solved through greater international cooperation?

53. There is certainly no shortage of such challenges. We need, above all, to work tirelessly to prevent and reduce abuses that violate the human rights of migrants.

54. We need, also, to urge states to end the most extreme uses of detention; it is unforgiveable that children are ever detained at all.

55. There are less eye-catching challenges as well. We need to find better ways to connect labor migrants with jobs, so that they do not fall prey to exploitative middlemen and employers. We need to ensure that the credentials of these migrants are recognized, that they are free to move from job to job, and that they are protected by the laws that safeguard other workers.

56. The agenda ahead of us is a long one. We need to debate it.

57. Once we can reach a consensus on priorities, we can then assess where progress can best be made—at the bilateral, regional, or international levels—and what kinds of structures and processes we need to establish, including potentially within the UN system.

[THE GLOBAL FORUM & THE GMG]

58. As we look ahead to the HLD, we also need to protect the gains we already have made.

59. The Global Forum is perhaps the most important one. We seem to have struck the right balance—at least judging by the states’ own
assessment—between the state-led nature of the Forum and its links to the UN.

60. The Forum has created common ground among states by focusing on the practical problems they face.

61. It has built a common understanding of these challenges and fostered cooperation among stakeholders, including between states and civil society.

62. It has allowed, in a context of mutual trust, for difficult issues to be discussed.

63. Because the Forum was grounded in the practical realities of migration, it has allowed states to discuss even the most sensitive of issues—absent the cant and the posturing that had been habitual before the advent of the Forum.

64. Critically, the Forum has helped place the human rights of migrants at the center of the international conversation on migration. I don’t think anyone in 2006 would have predicted this.

65. The Global Migration Group also needs strengthening. It is excellent news that GMG members have worked hard in the run-up to the HLD to deepen their cooperation.

66. The creation of a GMG support unit will play a critical role in improving coordination. So, too, will the establishment of a multi-annual work plan, and the appointment of year-long GMG chairs.

67. This brings me to the RCPs.

[Closing]

68. The RCPs are an ideal tool for the coming era of greater
international cooperation.

69. They serve as a laboratory for how to foster cooperation, and help us better understand where progress can best be made through cooperation. This is critical given the political and substantive complexity of migration and immigrant integration.

70. There is no silver bullet. One size does not fit all.

71. The RCPs function at variable speeds, gradually growing from declarative statements to operational actions, as we heard yesterday. Perhaps the next step will be their evolution from informal non-binding to informal binding actions, as one participant noted.

72. This is a form of mini-multilateralism that we should welcome.

73. SRSG Sutherland looks forward to the presence of the RCPs at the HLD, in the form of your statement and of your attendance.

74. Finally: I have spoken to several of you individually to underscore that SRSG Sutherland is very willing to contribute to the RCPs. Please keep us in the loop on your progress and meetings.

75. I hope these thoughts and observations might useful as we continue our deliberations today.

76. Thank you.