

**Joint High-level segment of the Sixteenth session of the
Conference of the Parties (COP 16) and of the
Sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the
Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 6)**

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Mr. Vice President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure to be here today and to make brief remarks on behalf of the International Organization for Migration.¹ Founded 60 years ago in 1951, IOM is the world's leading international migration agency with 132 members and extensive field presence worldwide.

IOM's objective is to promote humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. We are here today to make sure migration is not forgotten as the world debates what to do about the impact of climate change.

I would like to make three key points:

First, the future is now. Today's reality is that climate change and environmental degradation are already triggering migration and displacement. In the past decade alone, for example, IOM undertook some 500 projects for a total of \$280 million to assist victims of environmental degradation.

We are witnessing the consequences of the gradual deterioration of the environment, such as coastal erosion and desertification. These slow-onset disasters generate less attention than extreme climatic events; yet these very environmentally-induced crises have a more profound impact in the long run. In these contexts, people are learning to use migration as a strategy to adapt to their changing environment.

Second, the time for action is now. While there are still many knowledge gaps, what we do know provides clear evidence that action is urgently needed. What we know for certain is the following:

- (a) We do know that there is likely to be a steady rise in the scale of migration and displacement, in particular within certain countries--as a result of climate change;
- (b) We also know that it is the poorest and most vulnerable who will bear the brunt of the impact of climate change; and

¹ More information on the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is available on www.iom.int. For the information on IOM's engagement in the area of climate change, environment and migration, please see www.iom/envmig

- (c) We cannot afford to delay assistance to vulnerable groups and affected populations.

My third point is that migration should be part of our response to climate change. Environmentally-induced migration need not be a worst case scenario. Even this type of migration does contribute to development in countries of origin and destination.

The key is to be proactive, and to direct support to vulnerable communities before migration becomes a matter of sheer survival.

We must develop now integrated solutions—solutions that link climate change adaptation with disaster risk reduction and development policies. Migration needs to become an integral part, at global level, of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

With respect to the UNFCCC framework, the implications of climate change for human mobility are still not considered in any of the existing agreements. This is unfortunate and needs to change, starting here at COP 16 in Cancun. In this regard, I am pleased to note that migration and displacement are mentioned in the current version of the negotiating text. It is important that this reference remains and that the migratory consequences of climate change be given due recognition in all future international discussions on climate change as well.

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