



**Statement by the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality
Catarina Marcelino, at the *International Dialogue on Migration 2016***

Assessing Progress in the implementation of the migration-related SDGs

Palais des Nations, Geneva, 11 and 12 October 2016

***Session 2 - Reviewing progress on the migration-related targets:
identifying gaps and promoting responses***

Panel 2: Capacity-building for achieving the migration-related targets

Mr. Director General of OIM, William Lacy Swing

Mr. Executive Director of UNITAR, Nikhil Seth

Dear Speakers at the 2nd IDM 2016

Ladies and Gentlemen

Here, today, at the Palais des Nations, my first words couldn't fail to be for the new UN Secretary-General - António Guterres. It is an honor and a great joy for our country, to have a Portuguese as Secretary-General of the **United Nations** – a Portuguese who, for a decade, has worked for refugees from around the world.



Migration is today one of the most current and relevant topics and also one of the most challenging. So, I would like to thank IOM for the invitation to participate in the second International Dialogue on Migration 2016 that has, at its base, one of the most important issues when it comes to migration: the effective and efficient management of policies related to the integration of migrants, including the refugees, in a logic of integrated governance, based on a holistic approach.

Portugal, for its history, has an extensive experience in the dialogue with other cultures, whether in its construction as a nation and in the Age of Discovery, or in the long journey of emigration, where it is estimated around 5 million Portuguese and their descendants spread all over the 5 continents. But Portugal also became, in the late 20th century a country of immigration - **currently, people of over 170 nationalities make up about 4% of the resident population in Portugal.**

Today, however, **migration in Europe and the in world**, are not only composed by flows of those who leave their countries to search for a better life, but more than that, they **are deeply marked by migratory movements of people who flee from the war and extreme poverty.**

This is the topic that I would like to focus on, because this is truly the biggest challenge of today's Europe, the challenge of integrating those fleeing wars in Syria, Iraq, Eritrea and South Sudan, among others.

People who, along their migratory path, go through unimaginable situations for most of us, people who have a face, a story, a life. People who are men, women, children and elderly, to whom age, gender and physical condition strongly influence their path often made of thousands of kilometers, during which they cross seas to look for a place where they



can live in peace and security, until one day they can return to their homes and their countries.

We are talking about diversity in integration, we are talking about people like the Yazidi, the most persecuted of the persecuted people by the self-proclaimed Islamic State, we are talking of Syrians who come from one of the most complex and modern societies in the Middle East, or the Eritrean Christians who speak one of the rare languages of the world – the Tigrinya.

This is a real challenge, a challenge that the Europe of the Human Rights and consolidated democracies have an obligation to integrate. This is how the Portuguese Government considers the answer to this humanitarian crisis, with a sense of responsibility and solidarity, because for us it couldn't be otherwise.

In the framework of the European Agenda of Migration, the active policy of solidarity of the current Portuguese Government in the relocation of refugees has **doubled the capacity of host**, which means not only the 5.000 agreed under the EU Relocation Program, but, in addition, 5.000 more that the Portuguese Government also proposed to the States with greater pressure, through bilateral programs: Germany, Sweden and Austria.

Today, one year after the approval of the EU Relocation Program of 160,000 refugees, only about 5.600 were sent to the Member States and **Portugal is among the four countries that have received more refugees under the Program** - 600 people, highlighting Syria, Eritrea and Iraq among the countries of origin.



Even though Portugal has only recently become a country of destination, contrasting for example with most northern European countries, quickly **stood out among the countries of the world with the best integration policies.**

The large investment made in the last two decades in Portugal has resulted in national and international acknowledgment, illustrated by a set of **good practices, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the Agenda 2030** that we defend, assuming that integration is the key of development and social cohesion in all societies:

- 1. The importance of the recognition of the equality of human dignity, but also the strengthening of equal rights and duties, regarding equal opportunities to access to work, housing, health and education.**

Portugal has been identified by the United Nations 2009 Human Development Report, in which Portugal appears as a vanguard country at the level of its integration policies. And also at the MIPEX level where Portugal is in 2nd place since 2007, position that has been consolidated in the last report in 2015, where Portugal stands out first at the level of Family Reunification, as well as Access to Nationality, due to a change in legislation in 2007.

- 2. Encouraging civic participation of migrants in host societies, by being part of the design, implementation and evaluation of migration policies, seeking to create conditions for migrants to be part of the policy design and not just mere subjects of policies.**

We do strengthen their sense of belonging and their co-responsibility in building a common destiny.



Portugal has been highlighted by the definition and implementation of bottom-up policies: (i) whether at the national level through the main communities represented at the Council for Migration (an advisory group of the High Commission for Migration), participating actively in the construction of national strategies; (ii) or at the municipal level through the Local Plans for Migrants' Integration, built on a partnership basis.

3. The management of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue is, nowadays, one of the biggest challenges when we talk about the integration of migrants.

The construction of unity in diversity is a fundamental pillar for social cohesion and reduction of inequalities of Host States, respecting the limits of law, as well as the cultural specificities.

Portugal has two decades of work in partnership with NGOs and Immigrant Associations, promoting an intercultural integration model in our society.

4. Regular monitoring of the policies and of the integration of migrants itself, as agents fighting against inequalities and promotion of better migration policies.

Portugal bet on the creation of an Observatory of Migrations in 2002, so important in producing studies and organizing data, which is really fundamental for the deconstruction of prejudices and stereotypes, as well as to strengthen the political consensus that exists in Portuguese society and the dialogue standing between academia and policy makers.



Nowadays, this experience is fundamental to face the challenge of hosting refugees, what we do in a close partnership with Portuguese NGOs and Municipalities.

With a view to promoting the full integration of people coming into our country under the international asylum law, Portugal has defined a model where people are welcomed throughout the country, and today 70 municipalities are already involved, from north to south of the country, in homes rather than shelters, with immediate access to education, health and learning of the language.

In the framework the realization of the right to education, and specifically regarding higher education, I would like to recall the importance of the **former President Jorge Sampaio's *Global Platform for Syrian Students*** that has already hosted dozens of students in universities of 10 countries through an emergency scholarship program.

It is true that the rhythm of adaptation of people coming to our country is different, as the context from which they come, their cultural and social background also differ, factors that, obviously, influence the integration process. But this is indeed our big challenge, underlined by the ***New York Declaration!***

The EU, in particular through the Stockholm Program (2010-2014) and the Declaration of Zaragoza (April 2010), has recommended to the Member States, as a matter of priority, that the consolidation of their systems of monitoring migrants' integration, including the use of indicators on integration, be defined.



In this context, the definition of "Integration of Common Indicators" has been proposed, developed from four major relevant areas: Employment, Education, Social Inclusion and Active Citizenship, recognized as key areas of integration process to be evaluated in the Member States of the European Union.

The SDGs and its associated indicators also reinforce these concerns at various levels, in particular to combat inequalities and ensure better migration policies.

We believe in a policy based on scientific facts and constant monitoring through a permanent system of collection of statistical information, which has been the subject of specific measures included in the Portuguese National Plans for the Integration of Migrants, since 2010.

Our calling, as a country that enjoys peace within its own borders and in the nearer region,

As a country with a migratory tradition, initially as a country of origin for decades, and more recently as a country of destination, where there is a total political and social consensus on the accommodation of refugees - all parties with parliamentary representation are in agreement on this issue.

As a country that promotes the diversity and interculturalism as building factors of Portuguese society, over the centuries:

Is that our doors are open, so that no one is left behind!



We know and recognize that migrants, who usually search for another project in a different country due to tragedy or misfortune, once well integrated, are an added value for the host countries. For example, in Portugal, foreigners have been responsible not only for the increase in effective working age, but also by the increase of births in our country.

In 2014 foreign women have been responsible for about 9% of the total national birthrate. This percentage is particularly significant if we consider that the foreign population represented only 3.8% of the total resident population in Portugal in 2014.

The Agenda 2030 and the SDGs are a challenge for countries and for the United Nations as it aims to, in a very unequal universe, to evaluate phenomena with a common set of indicators. This is not an easy task to accomplish.

The indicators, their measurement and monitoring are essential in this process, but are not an end in and of themselves, because what we want, and that is the real purpose and the real challenge, is that the world change for the better, that the human rights are respected, that the phenomena registered in all the 17 SDGs translate into significant improvements for Humanity.

Migrations referred to in Goal 10 should be a priority for governments in the world and particularly in Europe, they are a moral imperative in the European Union. Therefore the integration of migration indicators are part of those that Portugal will incorporate in its implementation of the 2030 Strategy.

Although it may seem a long way to go, we will do everything so that no one is left behind!



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Thank you very much for your attention!