



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

*Migration and Development:
Integration of the migration phenomenon in development
strategic objectives*

Opening Speech

of

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International Organization for Migrations (IOM)

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Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors,
Distinguished participants

I should first like to welcome you to Geneva for this inter-sessional workshop organised by IOM in collaboration with the UK Department for International Development and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. I should like to thank them sincerely on your behalf for having agreed to finance this endeavour, which centres on a topic that is of particular interest to all our Member States.

Ladies, gentlemen,

The topic of the impact of globalisation on migration flows arises sporadically in international forums, as current events dictate and almost invariably from the perspective controlling migration flows, toughening the legislation or even under Mode 4, which is to say closely bound up with economic and trade policies.

As we have all seen over recent days, however, neither the World Economic Forum at Davos nor the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre really examined these issues, as though the movement of goods and services were today more important than that of people.

Yet most migration movements are triggered precisely by uneven development, and it is therefore important to look in depth at the interaction between migration and development. It is true that these issues are not new, but some United Nations resolutions adopted during the 1960s could again be adopted word for word today, which is evidence that there has still not been sufficient ACTION.

IOM itself has changed in recent years and is more determined than ever to approach migration issues in a global, orderly and humane manner. This of course entails moving beyond emergency humanitarian activities, so that the countries in the South can draw on migration as part of their **endogenous** strategies for advancement, this being indispensable to their development.

It is relatively easy to mobilise the international community in times of natural disaster or conflict, for these are situations of emergency and solidarity. This was most eloquently demonstrated in recent weeks through the aid extended to the countries hit by the tsunami tragedy in Asia and Africa.

A truly long-term process that involves tapping the expertise of migrants is an equally important priority, even though it obviously means a commitment that entails substantial and repeated financial outlays. Besides, development partners are beginning to show interest in programmes such as MIDA, which reflect this dimension.

Gone are the days when lamenting the brain drain was enough to excuse scant progress on the path of development. We believe that governments can harness the positive aspects of migration to better offset the negative impacts on which public opinion often tends to dwell in developed countries.

This is one of the main justifications for this workshop, which should provide an opportunity for us to examine, *inter alia*, the need for greater coherence of development policies. This we must do at country level and at that of the various bilateral and multilateral cooperation endeavours, whether in terms of conception or implementation in the field.

In our view, this improved coherence will require that migration policies are made an integral part of development policies so as to contribute added value that will improve the basic indicators as presented each year by the United Nations Development Programme and which have included migration-related elements since last year.

The fight against poverty, and more broadly, achieving the aims of the Millennium Goals are very much a challenge to us all. Yet it must be admitted that the commitments made at Monterrey are a far cry from fulfilment and that only a handful of countries are effectively earmarking 0.7% of their GNP for official development assistance.

By no means should the various and much-needed initiatives to tap into some part of remittances by migrants to support development projects lead us to adopt the idea that these funds, which are private funds, can even partly substitute for development assistance.

It seems important to me to repeat it at this juncture, even as I indicate that an international meeting on remittances will be held in the coming months in Benin, following various contacts made at the last session of ECOSOC and in coordination with the United Nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our meeting forms part of a continuum, and I sincerely hope that it will help provide governments with food for thought in the context of the High-level dialogue envisaged for 2006 in the United Nations framework. To achieve this, I consider it important for us to share information on the best practices being followed in the various regions and on the innovative tools you are testing, and hence for your interventions to be as practice-oriented as possible.

Ideally, and without wishing in any way to formulate prescriptions, I believe that we could draw up some basic recommendations that would be included in the report of the meeting and which would guide our discussions and your future actions so as to make a stronger link between migration issues and the Millennium Goals.

More generally speaking, I note that at the various events that we organise, be they workshops like this one, informal consultations with our Member States and observers or even Migration Dialogues in the framework of our Council, participants often commend the quality of the work done by IOM and welcome the opportunities for discussion.

Yet, when I participate in deliberations in other international bodies, including the United Nations, I notice that the work of IOM is mentioned only rarely by representatives of our Member States in connection with topics germane to the migration issues that we discuss here.

For the sake of consistency of policies and the coordination of activities of international organisations, I would wish to see your respective national delegations mentioning the

importance of the issues being discussed within IOM and incorporating into their interventions in other forums the proposals they consider relevant.

In that way we could boost awareness of the significance of migration movements in development policies, as their crosscutting nature often means that they are not fully taken into account.

Personally, I have high expectations from the discussions that will take place over the next two days and I trust that your active participation will move us toward sharing our respective experiences and toward providing suitable tools for worldwide migration management.

Thank you.