

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**STATEMENT AT THE 103<sup>RD</sup> COUNCIL SESSION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)**

Geneva, 28 November 2013

***Check against delivery***

**Director General Swing,  
SRSG Sutherland,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Thank you for the warm welcome. I am very glad to be in Geneva and discuss with you the critical issue of migration, a subject of great importance to the United Nations and of great personal interest to me.**

**This annual meeting of the IOM Council is taking place at a crucial time, some two months after the General Assembly's High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development. The IOM played a key role in that historic meeting working closely with the UN in the extensive preparations and consultations, sharing its wealth of information and experience.**

**Director-General Swing has shown great leadership and vision. I thank him for his unswerving and sharp focus on the needs of the world's migrants and on the power and potential of migration on today's world.**

**Migration by its very nature is a global issue. Human mobility, whether for basic livelihood, employment, study, family reunion or indeed to escape persecution or violence, is one of the most prominent features of today's global landscape.**

**Looking beyond 2015, our deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, the forecasts suggest that human mobility will continue to rise. Migration should be an integral part of our future sustainable development agenda.**

**The Secretary-General's report, "A Life of Dignity for All," outlines his vision for the road ahead. One of the transformative actions he identifies is to recognize and enhance the contributions of migrants to economic and social development.**

**The report points out that more than a billion people rely on international and domestic migration to improve the income, health and education of their families, to escape poverty and conflict, and to adapt to environmental and economic shocks.**

**It also emphasizes that countries receiving and hosting migrants benefit significantly.**

**During the High-level Dialogue, we identified several practical measures to amplify the contributions of migration, both to migrants and to societies. Some of these measures can be implemented immediately; others will require continued efforts and sustained commitment.**

**First and foremost, we must ensure that migration takes place in a legal, safe and orderly fashion under conditions where the human rights of migrants are respected.**

**It is intolerable that thousands of refugees, including many children, die each year in the understandable pursuit of a better life. The tragedies at Lampedusa early October and in the deserts of the Sahel just a few weeks later are shocking reminders of how urgently and compassionately we must act.**

**It is important to ground all migration policies firmly in fundamental human rights. This means protecting foreign workers from discrimination, ensuring the rights of migrant domestic workers and protecting men, women and children from exploitation and abuse.**

**I commend the IOM's launch yesterday of an information campaign to change negative perceptions of migrants. This is a campaign to which we all must lend our voices. We must stand up for basic values and principles, recognizing all human beings' equal value and right to life in dignity.**

**We also need to be aware that the dividing line between forced and voluntary movement is increasingly blurred in the complex reality of today's world.**

**We continue to be confronted with millions of people who are displaced across international borders due to conflict and violence or natural disasters. We are increasingly seeing the plight of migrants who are caught up in crisis situations, without a clear source of assistance. The problem of "stranded migrants" is one to which I know the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Migration, Peter Sutherland, is paying particular attention.**

**Any migration policy must be firmly built on human rights standards. And long-held humanitarian principles such as the right to seek asylum, must never be eroded.**

As an international community, we have several instruments to protect and promote human rights. I would urge all States to ratify and implement all international treaties related to migration. This includes core human rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, relevant ILO conventions and protocols against human trafficking and migrant smuggling, as well as the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since the landmark discussion on migration in 2006 at the General Assembly, we have been building trust and collaboration within and outside the United Nations as well as between Member States and international organizations.

In particular, the relationship between IOM and the United Nations has grown increasingly positive and mutually fruitful. On the ground, we work closely together to deal with migration issues in all their aspects. This cooperation, I know, is appreciated by you as member states – member states of both the United Nations and of IOM. I understand a Working Group is being established to look in greater depth at the relationship

between the United Nations and the IOM. I welcome this initiative and look forward to the continued dialogue between the United Nations and IOM.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last month, the General Assembly took a historic step by adopting its first-ever Declaration on international migration and development.

We need increased commitment to work together to strengthen international partnerships in this field. We have a historic task to come together and increase the benefits of international migration, for migrants as well as for host societies. We must do more together, rather than acting alone.

You, in this Hall, understand the issues and challenges. You know the numbers. Many of you were in New York last month for the High-level Dialogue.

Among the attendees was Mesfin Kibebew Erko, a young migrant from Ethiopia. He is a member of a group that works to end torture and support survivors.

He spoke about the difficulties of migrating to another country. But then he added, “After hearing what governments say [at the High-level Dialogue], I felt like maybe there is hope.”

It is our task to transform the “maybe” into “definitely” – so that we can provide hope to the many who live without hope.

Governments are coming together as never before. By endorsing the Declaration in October, the General Assembly decided to work towards what member states pledged would be “an effective and inclusive agenda on international migration that integrates development and respects human rights.”

This is a strong expression of common political will.

Now all of us – governments, the Global Migration Group (GMG) and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), as well as civil society – must join forces to transform this political will into lasting concrete results for millions of people around the world. In this mission IOM has an



indispensable role. The United Nations is grateful and proud of our partnership with you.

I thank you for your attention.

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