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The Permanent Mission of Egypt  
to the United Nations  
New York

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لدى الامم المتحدة  
نيويورك

**Introductory remarks by  
H. E. Ambassador. Hisham Badr  
Assistant Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**Fourth informal thematic session of the GCM  
24-25 May 2017**

**Panel 1: Contribution of migrants and diaspora to all dimensions of  
sustainable development:  
The Linkages between Migration and Development**

**Check Against Delivery**



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Dear Co-facilitators Mr. Juan José Gomez-Camacho & Mr. Jurg Lauber

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is really my pleasure to be among you today to moderate this session of the Fourth Informal Thematic Meeting on: "Contribution of Migrants and Diaspora to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits". I would like first of all to thank the African Group for the recommendation and our two Co-Facilitators for the efforts done so far to maintaining the momentum of the consultation phase on the New Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and wish them fruitful continuation.

In fact, The UN summit on Migrants and Refugees has launched a new momentum and spirit, in a way to affirm that migration can bring great benefits for all, but this can only happen if we are ready to commit ourselves to a real partnership and to work, side by side, towards the achievement of commonly shared objectives. We need to work together to develop a joint approach of the new Global Compact Migration to be comprehensive and to be based on tangible and active solidarity.

Managing migration is a shared responsibility of countries of origin, transit and destination. Shared responsibility but differentiated calls for enhanced cooperation between States to better manage migration, taking into account the interests and concerns of all countries involved, as well as the migrants themselves should be our guiding mantra.

There is no doubt by now that well-managed migration is of benefit to all. It can promote closer ties between countries of origin, transit and destination and help meet existing and future labor needs and contribute to the development of all countries. It is vital that we continue through our endeavour towards a Global Compact on



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migration to seek comprehensive ways of fostering the links and synergies between migration and development. IOM role in the journey is vital.

In 2015, Migration was included for the first time in the global development framework, recognizing well-managed migration's integral role in and immense contribution to sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup> recognize international migration as a multidimensional reality of major relevance for

<sup>1</sup> Specific SDG targets that relate to migration are the following:

- SDG target 4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing states and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries;
- SDG target 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment;
- SDG target 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies;
- SDG target 10.c: By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent;
- SDG target 16.2: End abuse, exploitations, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children;
- SDG target 17.18: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts;



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the development of countries of origin, transit and destination. They stipulate the commitment to cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants. The SDGs are now driving policy planning and implementation across borders and across sectors, recognizing the interlinkages between migration and development and the fundamental contributions of migrants. This is a good sign.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) there were approximately 250 million international migrants dispersed globally in 2015. They comprised about 3.3% of the world population in comparison to 2.8% in 2000. The number of international migrants has grown faster than the world's population.

Beyond this global picture, international migration features a strong regional dimension. Contrary to popular conception, most migration occurs indeed within regions For example: about half of all African migrants do still live in Africa, for instance, in Western Africa more than 70% of emigration took place within the same sub-region.

Let us agree that we need to address the root causes, if we are truly serious about a sustainable solution. Let us agree that there is no single root cause behind migration. There are complex and overlapping motivations creating the phenomenon often mutually reinforcing. However, the socio-economic factors are undeniably key drivers of migration. It is imperative to attach the greatest importance to addressing the developmental aspect of the problem. Our efforts will not bear the desired fruits if not accompanied with a wide array of socio-economic projects that can channel the ambitions and goals of our young generations away from the deadly journey of irregular migration. In



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this respect, technical cooperation between countries of origin and countries of destination, jointly managed technical assistance projects based on ownership and self assessment of needs, as well as mutual dialogues can play an important role.

In this context, the following concrete interlinkages between Migration & Development are to be mentioned:

- Regarding the transfer of knowledge and skills, for example, there can be on the one hand a massive brain drain from countries of origin, which can be very problematic for developing countries. On the other hand, countries of origin may also benefit from migrants acquiring new skills abroad and bringing these back home with them when returning temporarily, permanently or virtually, which we call brain gain. Furthermore, brain waste can happen if migrants are working in jobs below their qualifications - at home or abroad.
- Another important contribution by migrants/diaspora to the development of their countries of origin is remittances. These can be either social transfers (such as ideas, innovations) or financial transfers (like direct contributions to household income or investments).

Remittances will be further discussed in another session constitute the main way in which migrants contribute to sustainable development in their place of origin. Therefore, we should highlight the importance of reducing the transaction costs of remittances, particularly by fulfilling the following concrete commitments included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda:

- Reduce to less than 3 per cent including the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent (SDG 10.c);
- Lower the costs of recruitment for migrants and combat unscrupulous recruiters (AAAA para 111 , and SDG 10.7.1);
- Ensure that adequate and affordable financial services are available to migrant men and women as well as their families in host countries (AAAA para 40, SDG targets 1.4, 2.3, 5.a, 8.3, and 8.10); and
- Promote financial literacy and inclusion (AAAA para 40, 2030 Agenda para 27).

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Though, while today there is greater appreciation of remittances by governments and the international community than ever before, there are still many barriers that prevent remittances from meeting their development potential. There is a need for more proportionate regulations and a more enabling regulatory environment for remittances. In particular, payments systems should be more integrated and adapted for transfers of small amounts of money.

Nevertheless, the promise of remittances is not without pitfalls. A significant proportion of total recorded remittances, which may well be between one-third and half of the total, continues to be sent to developing countries through informal channels. These transfers do not add to the official foreign exchange reserves of the country nor can they be easily geared to its development policy priorities. In times of political and financial instability, they encourage uncontrollable capital flight just as they help money laundering and funding of criminal and terrorist activities. The issue of de-risking<sup>2</sup> will remain an area for future work.

Clearly, undue reliance on remittances as an engine of development entails some potential risks, such as postponement of essential economic reform, enhancing remittance dependency, vulnerability of the home country economy to sudden external shocks, and distortion in economic priorities. It is very important to fostering sustainable development in countries of origin by moving beyond remittances-dependent and consumption-led economic models, and ensuring that both the benefits and the costs are equitably managed.

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<sup>2</sup> De-risking is the closing of bank accounts of money transfer operators, which they need to operate, by banks due to perceived legal, regulatory sanctions and anti-money laundering/countering of financing terror measures.



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Indeed, there is a real danger in overrating its importance or portraying its development potential in an unqualified manner. By giving wrong guidance or lopsided signals, this could lead to faulty policy formulation and make the tasks of promoting sustainable development and fighting poverty more difficult.

This is not to deny that the development impact of remittances can be significantly enhanced by encouraging and facilitating increased use of the official channels at lower transfer costs, financial inclusion, and financial literacy training. Sound and forward-looking policies and better institutional practices alongside a better awareness of both the potential of remittances as well as the possible pitfalls involved can help avoid or at least minimize many of these risks.

**However, remittances transfers are not a substitute for official development aid, they are complementary and should look to fill the void left by the inefficiencies of international aid.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While there is a need to maximize the contribution that migrants may make to poverty reduction and development in their countries of origin, the positive contribution that migrants make to the country of destination must also be recognized and enhanced.

Migrant workers can contribute more easily to the development of their country of origin as well as of destination, when their human and labor rights are respected. We need also to address the needs of migrants once they arrive in a country of destination. The nexus between migration and integration is a further priority. Policies are needed to facilitate integration including resolute action by governments against discrimination, racism and xenophobia. Furthermore, Labor migration policies need to be supported by measures to prevent abusive practices and promote decent and productive work for all migrants.



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An interesting tool to facilitate labor migration is inter-state cooperation through the adoption of bilateral agreements. Bilaterally organized labor recruitment can reduce the cost to destination countries of managing foreign workers programs. The cooperation between labor sending and receiving country ensures safe and orderly recruitment by preventing the payment of high recruitment fees and reduces market failures (such as mismatched labor market supply and demand, underemployment of the migrant worker abroad) resulting from lack of information.

In short, bilateral labor migration agreements are an alternative measure to facilitate labor migration. They formalize each side's commitment to ensure that migration takes place in accordance with agreed principles and procedures.

Among the issues to be addressed as well in this area, is the importance of opening legal channels of migration, and the question of how to effectively regulate and manage forms of circular, temporary and seasonal migration. Temporary and Circular migration can play a useful role in fostering the transfer of skills to developing countries. Mechanisms and channels that facilitate circular migration as well as recruitment policies that take into account the specific need of the countries of origin should be considered.

At this point of my introductory remarks, I would like to seize the opportunity to share with you some insights on the Experience of Egypt.

Egypt has endorsed both the global 2030 Agenda and the regional African Union Agenda 2063, which strives to enable Africa to remain focused and committed to the ideals envisaged in the context of a rapidly changing world.



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The year 2016 marked a convergence of strategic planning for Egypt. At the national level, Egypt's Vision 2030 was endorsed by the parliament as the nation's sustainable development strategy. It aims to promote a competitive, balanced and diversified economy based on justice, social integrity and participation.

We have already taken a number of important steps as aligning national policies with SDGs, the Government of Egypt has worked on specific projects that address the needs of youth, women and individuals with special needs. Some of the projects include the *Social Housing Programme*, which hopes to benefit 3.6 million people by providing affordable homes to low-income households and the *Takaful and Karama* social protection programme, which encourages children school attendance and health monitoring. Improving the quality of education is an important pillar in our quest to enable a thriving environment for Egypt's youth to stay in their country. We place a major emphasis on technical education as a critical field that can generate enormous job opportunities.

We also work on creating partnership with micro, small and medium enterprise development agencies in Egypt to highlight the jobs available for the youth in a sector that has been an engine for growth and job creation in numerous other countries and that bears a real potential for Egyptians.

Egypt's commitment to achieve the SDGs are also expressed through its building of partnership and knowledge sharing. The Egyptian Government promotes successful experiences in sustainable development through partnering with the Egyptian Agency for Partnership for Development (EAPD) and with the Cairo Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA) in an effort to provide "African Solutions to African Problems".

Also we have established a new office for Egyptians Expatriates to help those wishing to invest in Egypt. We are considering as well the issuing of a Consulate Card to Egyptians residing outside Egypt in order to facilitate any procedures when they come to Egypt, including investment and housing.

**Excellencies,**



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This Panel is dedicated to exploring links between migration and development, and covering the full spectrum of practical means to fostering the economic and social benefits of migration including through the mainstreaming of migration into development policies and enhancing cooperation within and amongst states. The mainstreaming process would be based on whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, including through meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders. The session will also examine those barriers limiting positive development contributions, and discuss innovative policies and measures to enhance such contributions including through the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development.

Our deliberations today should reflect a common understanding of how we can make migration work for the benefit of development and what concrete steps we can take to make this a reality in our countries.

Thank you,,,

