



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. JOKETANI COKANASIGA, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, NATIONAL SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT, AT THE SIXTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 3 October 2013)

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the Rio+20 Conference, member states agreed to include population and migration factors in their development strategies. They had also resolved to promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants and to avoid practices that might increase the vulnerability of international migrants.
3. Migrants and migration are relevant to all countries of origin, transit and destinations. These are global issues, with economic and structural imperatives. The economic causes of migration, concentrations of wealth and dual labour markets, benefit powerful interests and reinforce power structures that often blame, penalize and criminalize migrant workers who are caught in this web. The organizational and political challenge is to overcome these biased approaches and work towards facilitating orderly and safe mobility, recognizing that greater mobility is inevitable in the twenty-first century.
4. Migrants are responsible persons who are trying to earn a living and provide for their families. Migrants should be aware of their rights and be protected by states, as states exercise their sovereign right to determine who enters, leaves or remains in their territory. The root causes of migration need to be openly discussed and addressed so that migration becomes a matter of choice rather than a desperate necessity. International economic imbalances, poverty and environmental degradation, absence of peace and security, human rights violations, weak judicial and democratic institutions are but some of the factors affecting migrants and international migration.
5. Dialogue between all actors and agencies on the link between migration and development needs to be clearly presented and openly discussed at public and policy-making levels, including with the media and civil society. Such discussions should lead us to the construction of lasting solutions based on an understanding of the shared problems and common goals as well as coordinated policies and frameworks. The positive impact of migration on development hinges on orderly migration governance that inter alia, protects human rights and migrants well-being. More focus should be placed on the human development potential of migration, including the potential of improving the lives of migrants and their families, as well as migration's contribution to the economic and social growth and the development of countries. In this regard, more should be done to address the negative public perceptions of migrants and to combat xenophobia and discrimination directed against migrants.
6. In the context of migration, countries of origin and destinations should recognize their role and

responsibilities in providing access to social services, health, education and cultural identities. This broad scope reality in migration and development dynamics should be developed for lasting, just and effective national, regional and international measures.

Mr. President,

7. The theme; 'Identifying concrete measures to strengthen coherence and cooperation at all levels, with a view to enhancing the benefits of international migration for migrants and countries alike and its important links to development, while reducing its negative implications,' opens the door to define the role of migration in development. It also promotes policy coherence and institutional development, including the factoring of migration into national development policies and plans and into the post-2015 Development Agenda. It should offer us an understanding of the opportunities and obstacles and ways to explore solutions.

8. Migration should not be separated from the broader issues of national security, regional labour markets and development and economic policies. Migration and the development agenda therefore go beyond the local context. So when we try to integrate poverty and development issues, it must be translated into coherent public policy, especially in the crucial area of employment within the bilateral relationships.

Mr. President,

9. The Group wishes to stress the importance of co-operation and dialogue on migration matters, including labour mobility. Unprecedented global human mobility has direct development prospects for migrants and their families as well as for the development of countries of origin and destination. The Group reaffirms its commitment to strengthening existing cooperation mechanisms to ensure development policies are coordinated in both sending and destination countries to build employment opportunities in sending countries.

10. It is acknowledged that international migration often entails the loss of human resources in countries of origin and contributes to the political, social and economic tensions in countries of destination. To resolve this, international migration policies need to take into account the economic constraints of the receiving country, the impact of migration on host countries and its effect on the countries of origin. The reintegration process of returning migrants by countries of origin has the potential of facilitating the transfer of skills, knowledge, new ideas, products, information and of contributing to cultural enrichment to countries of origin. Diaspora and migrant associations have an important role to play, and their involvements should be encouraged and facilitated.

Mr. President,

11. All countries of origin and destination should provide accurate and easily accessible information on safe and orderly channels for migration. This should include assistance available to migrants such as various government services, legal aid and those provided by women's groups and human rights organizations, as well as information on health and legal risks associated with human trafficking.

12. Women, girls and young migrants are more vulnerable to human trafficking, sexual exploitations, exposure to health risks and violence. It is stressed that the protection of human rights of women, girls and young migrants and their access to social, legal and health services should be enforced through a 'life cycle approach' throughout the entire migration process. This should involve examining the situation of women and girls and young migrants before they migrate,

when they are migrating, their situation abroad, and upon their return to their country of origin. On this note, the Group calls for the removal of legislative and administrative obstacles that discriminate and criminalise migrants.

13. Remittance flows constitute one of the important aspects of international migration. Member states should encourage formal transfers of remittances by reducing costs through competition and diversification of financial sectors, and to adopt policies that would enhance the impact of remittances. It must be stressed, that voluntary remittances are no substitute for the commitments by developed countries to step up development aid and cooperation, particularly to LDCs.

14. The international statistical community should consider assisting member states with production and analysis of evidence-based migration data for policy decision-making. This work should be guided by the internationally agreed standards and principles of privacy and data protection.

15. Families are the foundations of all societies. The Group calls upon member states to take appropriate measures in accordance with their international and national commitments, to ensure family reunification and the protection of the unity of family migrants in origin and destination countries.

16. The protection and empowerment of women and children to reduce their vulnerabilities, is important. Their access to basic services like social, education and health care, including finance, small business and entrepreneurship should be addressed. Migrants' development contributions to countries of origin and destinations in the stimulation of job creation, technology and knowledge transfers, as well as the exchange of social and cultural values, should be acknowledged and respected.

Mr. President,

17. In conclusion, the increasing economic disparities, climate change, environmental challenges and demographic changes are factors that will continue to influence migration flows into the future. Therefore it is imperative to address these challenges and to maximize the benefits of migration, and minimise the negative impacts to migrants and their families, through constructive dialogue and cooperation and genuine bilateral partnerships.

I Thank You.