

**Statement by Ambassador Nassrollah Kazemi Kamyab (Islamic Republic of Iran),
on behalf of the Group of 77, on Agenda Item 100: International migration and development**

New York, 5 October 2001

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on item 100: International migration and development, including the question of the convening a United Nations conference on international migration and development.

Let me begin by expressing our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for the preparation of the report contained in the document A/56/167, summarizing national policies on international migration and the views of governments regarding the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development. The report also describes recent activities carried out by the relevant organizations at the regional and international levels, highlights the lessons learnt, and addresses the possible mechanisms within the United Nations to examine the issues related to international migration and development.

Mr. Chairman,

The question of international migration is as old as humanity itself. Human beings have always yearned for finding elsewhere what could not be found at home. Man in his natural quest for a better life seeks new horizons. Failure in realizing such aspirations in the countries of origin is one of the fundamental root causes of migration. Among a combination of economic and social factors, continuous spread of poverty and underdevelopment in many developing countries which has further widened the existing enormous gap between the South and the North is also an important contributory factor to the wish to migrate. Marginalization and a host of other challenges faced by developing countries as a result of rapid globalization and the consequent economic imbalances have as well led to an increase in the number of people wishing to migrate to the industrialized world. Despite all these, it is rather a sad fact that most population movements take place between developing countries themselves and not exclusively from the South to the North, due to a number of reasons and factors, including restrictive policies and measures of developed nations.

International migration is linked to a variety of elements; it both affects and is affected by the development process. Migration, seen as a global phenomenon, has both benefits and costs for receiving countries as well as for countries of origin. Rapid rates of population growth in some regions, population decline in others, migration into some regions and out of others, and other critical demographic trends including ageing and urbanization, are impacting social, economic and political parameters in almost all countries. The inter-relationships between international migration and development are numerous and extremely complex and mutually influence one another. As we all remember, the International Conference on Population and Development identified international migration as an important aspect of social and economic development, further reckoning that would remain a key issue on the development agenda in the future and that it would presents new and major challenges to the international community as a whole.

Mr. Chairman,

Although there is considerable national policy interest in exploring the root causes of international migration and the impacts on the countries of origin, countries of destination and those in transit, understanding of the direction and magnitude of such effects is still in its infancy. Several recent trends, however, have led to increased attention to these issues. Many developing countries are encountering the loss of skilled human resources as well as intensification of brain drain phenomenon. They also face difficulties in taking advantage

of the positive consequences of migration through effective use that can be made of the potential contribution that expatriate nationals can make to the economic development of their countries of origin.

Migration, is no longer a topic of secondary concern. Many governments, particularly of receiving countries, are now paying close attention to policies that could affect the size and type of migratory movements. There are many factors that can justify the increased adoption of immigration policies in different parts of the globe. All states seem to address two principal policy formulation issues concerning migration: regulating the number and type of migrants; and influencing the conditions of migrants within their respective territory. The first area generates questions about immigration in terms of intake, while the second entails a set of questions dealing with the nature of incorporation.

With this overall picture in perspective, the Group of 77 and China would like to draw attention to the importance of proper consideration for international concerns, both in national migration policies as well as in other development policies. Put in very general terms, it appears that any successful policy on and durable solution for migration should be based on due consideration for a number of extremely vital elements, including economic realities beyond national borders particularly the worsening poverty situation in some developing regions, their further marginalization, and also the growing tremendous imbalances between the developed and the developing countries. Approached as such, it follows that the issue of migration and development needs to be addressed on the basis of common responsibility of all nations and the imperative of international cooperation to ensure the narrowing of existing economic disparities between the South and the North. Moreover, it is only through comprehensive, coherent and effective policies on international migration, based on the spirit of genuine partnership and common understanding, that the benefits of international migration could be maximized for all those concerned. To achieve this objective, and in order to reconcile conflicting interests of the countries of origin and destination, it is necessary to adopt and put in place a set of coordinated practical measures at national, regional and global levels. As differences in the level of economic development and social conditions can create contradictory objectives among states, it is important to find a common denominator to make international migration work for the benefit of the all concerned, taking into account the urgency of difficulties which the developing countries are faced with.

Mr. Chairman,

In the final analysis, the international community needs an overall global approach to such a complex phenomenon – whose multi-faceted dimensions and implications go far beyond the confines and scope of this Group statement. To this end, the need for a more result-oriented dialogue to accommodate divergent interests has become more visible. Progress in such a dialogue would hopefully help tackle the numerous issues which are yet to be resolved. A first step towards such a dialogue and practical cooperation is to increase mutual understanding of the nature, causes and impacts of international migration. And to promote such an understanding, sharing of experiences and exchange of information concerning current migration movements and an assessment of future migration flows are imperative. But beyond such an understanding, desirable and useful as it is, it is practical constructive dialogue among countries of origin, transit and destination that would ultimately lead to a better management of the issue of migration and development. The current irregular migration indicates inadequate or failed migration and development policies and also demonstrates the pressing need for strengthening of international cooperation. Needless to say, equal opportunities for participation of all interested nations, particularly countries of the South, in the process of international cooperation is of paramount importance.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the question of the possibility of convening an international conference on migration and development. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, out of a total of 78 responses received prior to the preparation of the report, a relative majority of 47 governments seem to be generally in favour of

convening a conference while 26 have expressed reservations. The remaining 5 governments have expressed only partial support for the proposed conference. Thus, taking the result of the survey into account, it appears that the matter needs further consideration before a definitive conclusion could be reached. The Group of 77 and China believes that this situation should not, however, undermine the imperative of international cooperation in this regard. Instead, while the intergovernmental body continues its discussions on convening the conference, our Group would like to emphasize the importance of continued and even enhanced efforts by the relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other international organizations in the field of international migration and development.

Within this context, let me add that the Group of 77 and China appreciates the related activities of the Population Division, Statistics Division and the United Nations Regional Commissions. We are very grateful for the researches, surveys, studies and data collection carried out by these bodies and also for the workshops and meetings held in this regard. We encourage further studies aiming at elaborating the impacts of poverty and underdevelopment, as well as articulating contribution of labor migrants of developing countries to industrialized world.

The Group of 77 takes note with appreciation of UNITAR's inter-agency programme called "the International Migration Policy Programme (IMP)" We take note that the inter-disciplinary approach of the programme has provided governments with a comprehensive picture of the complex nature of international migration and on best practices concerning migration and human displacement. The experience of IMP indicates that the provision of suitable venue and ambiance for open dialogue can help governments to achieve a level of familiarity and confidence that is necessary for migration management cooperation. The Group of 77 and China also recognizes the leading role of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in promoting population programmes and its activities on data collection as well as policy-oriented studies on international migration. The Group of 77 also notes the activities of organizations outside the United Nations System, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM). According to the lessons drawn from the wide range of activities carried out by IOM, recent experiences of many industrialized countries seem to indicate that control measures cannot regulate migration. Orderly and managed migration offers a viable alternative to irregular migration and can counter possible consequences. Voluntary return programmes would also be more successful if greater resources are dedicated to sustainable reintegration in countries of origin, through effective international cooperation. Let me also add that the Group notes the approach taken by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in which development cooperation policies in support of increasing employment opportunities in developing countries are encouraged to prevent outflow of skilled labor force from poor countries.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, and with an eye to the final part of the report before us, the Group of 77 and China is of the view that the United Nations' mechanisms to examine international migration and development needs to be strengthened to promote international cooperation and to provide support to developing countries to help them address the challenges they face. In the course of the collective international endeavour ahead of us all, the United Nations and all other partners can rest assured of the full cooperation of the Group of 77 and China.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.