



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MS NOSIVIWE MAPISA-NQAKULA, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT, UNITED NATIONS (New York, 14 September 2006)

Madame President,
Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan,
The President of the Economic and Social Council,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you on your election as President of the 61st General Assembly of the United Nations. It is indeed a pleasure to see you presiding, and on behalf of the Group of 77 and China I wish to express our commitment and support to work constructively with you during your Presidency.

Madame President,

In 2003, the General Assembly took a decision to devote a High-Level Dialogue to International Migration and Development to focus on the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development in order to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize development benefits and minimize negative impacts. Several meetings have taken place all over the world in preparation for this important meeting. During these consultations, we in the Group of 77 and China stressed the importance of this dialogue to be continued within the United Nations as part of the efforts by the international community to promote a balanced and comprehensive approach to international migration and development. We particularly emphasized the need to build partnerships and to ensure coordinated action to develop capacities of developing countries in addressing these challenges. We believe that conducting this dialogue within the framework of the United Nations will help contribute to the strengthening of the multilateral system.

In 2005, the High-Level Summit of the General Assembly that met in New York further acknowledged the important nexus between international migration and development and the need to deal with the challenges and opportunities that migration presents to countries of origin, destination and transit, recognizing that international migration carries with it both advantages and disadvantages.

There was an acknowledgment that globalization has highlighted the inequalities within and among States. Therefore, for us to successfully address the challenges brought about by migration, we would have to again highlight the need for globalization to become a positive force for all, and for its opportunities and benefits to be evenly shared between the developing and the developed countries.

The effects of international migration on economic and social development highlight the complex relationship between underdevelopment, poverty, social exclusion and migration. In pursuing our goals to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we must intensify our focus in addressing foreign direct investment, trade, foreign aid, and debt relief so as to reverse underdevelopment, poverty and skills flight. Meeting the MDGs is central to eradicating poverty and unemployment, placing developing countries on a path of sustainable development, reducing recourse to forced and irregular migration and thereby facilitating migration out of choice.

We also have to ensure good governance at all levels, and implement our commitment to international transparency in financial, monetary and trading systems which are open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory.

Madame President,

Migrants should be located at the center of the migration debate. The protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families as enunciated in the UN as well as in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions is a central component of comprehensive and balanced migration management. Migration facilitation and enforcement must not compromise the rights and dignity of migrants. The exploitation of migrants through mechanism such as trafficking, as well as migrant smuggling, should be criminalized under domestic and

international law. Social pathologies such as racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of related intolerance, as well as inhuman and degrading treatment, impacts negatively on development and must be eradicated.

Forced migration and its economic effects on host countries should be given due consideration. This includes situations of refugees and displaced persons that result from foreign occupation and armed hostilities.

Madame President,

When debating migration we should acknowledge the very important contribution made by migrants to the development of countries of destination. We should also continue to recognize the increasing feminization of international migration which requires that we must be sensitive to the circumstances and experiences of female migrants who tend to be disadvantaged in the migration experience. We must therefore adopt measures to reduce the vulnerability, exploitation and abuse of female migrants.

We also should endorse migration policies that empower migrants. Such policies should enable migrants to capitalize on entrepreneurship programmes through micro-finance and simultaneously enhance their role in the Diaspora.

The issue of remittances within the context of migration and development will surely be further debated within the next two days. It nevertheless remains important to highlight the need to address and promote conditions for cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances. Remittances must not be considered as a substitute for investment, trade, foreign aid and debt relief.

The need to further consider and analyze how the migration of highly skilled persons and those with advanced education impacts on the development efforts of developing countries remains.

Madame President,

There is a need for a comprehensive and balanced approach in the implementation of migration policy and service delivery. The respective roles and responsibilities of stakeholders regarding migration policymaking, management and development planning must be clearly defined. Capacity in migration policy formulation and migration management should be strengthened, and coherence must be pursued within and between states and also in the formulation of social and economic policies and migration policies.

Cooperation between State and non-State stakeholders, and between States, is critical in optimizing the developmental impact of migration. The roles of stakeholders such as government, the business sector, civil society and inter-governmental organizations, in the migration-development nexus must be understood and be enhanced.

Madame President,

We cannot conclude this debate without focusing on the close and complex relationships between migration, infectious diseases such as HIV and Aids, Malaria and Tuberculosis, on the lives of migrants. The impact on the health of migrants does not only compromise lives but affects our efforts at addressing poverty and underdevelopment.

It is clear that this dialogue that we are engaged in cannot be the last word on the challenges of international migration and development. We would need to continue with this dialogue within the multilateral context because it is too important not to have it within the United Nations.

I thank you.