

## WELCOMING REMARKS

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**Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning**  
*Assessing the Evidence, Continuing the Dialogue*

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), it is both my honour and pleasure to welcome all of you here to this conference on “Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning: Assessing the Evidence, Continuing the Dialogue”.

Let me at the outset thank our partners at the Center for Migration Studies, and Mr. Donald Kerwin in particular, for their faithful collaboration on what is now our third major Conference together since 2008. We are also very grateful to our partners at UNDP with whom we implement the mainstreaming project at the national level – as you will soon hear -- and of course to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation without which this conference and much of the concrete work in this area would not be possible. We thank you both for your continuing partnership and steadfast commitment to the success of mainstreaming migration into development planning. I also would like to thank Colgate University, which has made tonight’s reception possible.

The 2006 UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development was a watershed event. While nervously anticipated as a debate that could have degenerated into a North-South divide, instead the Governments participating in the HLD clearly recognized that the phenomenon of migration cannot be seen categorically as either an obstacle to development or as a strategy for its achievement. At the global level evidence clearly shows that migration has a net positive impact. However, the impact of migration on development in individual countries and communities depends on the political, social, legal and economic environments in which the migration takes place, as well as on the characteristics, resources and behaviour of individual migrants. Member States came away from the 2006 HLD recognizing that while migration is in no way a panacea for development, the relationship between migration and development is a critical one.

Migration has become a defining feature of economic, social and political life in a world characterized by powerful forces of globalization with the liberalization of the movement of goods, capital and services, dramatically changing demographics, persistent disparities in wages and opportunity, continued conflict and increasing natural disasters. The reality of migration as a contemporary mega-trend is

increasingly embraced as evidenced by, amongst others, the meetings of the Global Fora on Migration and Development since 2007, which have also recognized the protection of the human rights of migrants as essential for fostering the human and societal development potential of migration. It was the GFMD in 2008, hosted by the Government of the Philippines, which first emphasized the human face of migration and the centrality of the protection of the human rights of migrants, bringing to the forefront the importance of the protection of migrants as a core component in enhancing the development effects of migration. It also introduced for the first time the concept of "shared responsibility" of governments and other concerned actors in protecting and empowering migrants and their families.

The idea of mainstreaming migration into national development planning began several years before the 2006 HLD, when the Government of Ghana was rethinking its migration policy and approached IOM for assistance to achieve concrete development gains from migration. As IOM began formulating policy guidance on how best to tap into this potential, we sought out our 15 partner agencies in the Global Migration Group for their feedback and endorsement, keeping in mind their particular competencies and mandates to add to this support.

The final product, the GMG Handbook on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning for Policy-Makers and Practitioners, was officially launched in Puerto Vallarta at the Mexican-hosted Global Forum on Migration and Development in November 2010. The idea of mainstreaming migration into development planning was further incorporated in the regional thematic meetings of the GFMD through the Swiss chairmanship in 2011, which included a workshop on "Mainstreaming Migration into Strategic Policy Development" in Moldova. We are pleased to see the Government of Mauritius has also welcomed this practical initiative in its chairmanship of the GFMD this year, with a planned June workshop on "Factoring Migration into Development Planning." Since the launch of the GMG Handbook, IOM and UNDP have jointly co-chaired the GMG's Working Group on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning to roll out the Handbook in pilot countries such as Bangladesh, Jamaica, and Moldova, with interest from Mauritius and Tunisia, working through the UN country team to provide as coherent and comprehensive expertise and support as possible from the international community. You will hear more from those particular pilot countries as well as from the donor – Switzerland -- in the course of this conference.

What we have learnt since the first High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development is that for this critical relationship to bloom and generate real human developmental dividends, there is much work to be done: work on bringing key stakeholders together, on identifying specific national challenges and priorities, and on translating national migration dynamics into concrete actions in the relevant national planning and development tools. Consequently, we will be exploring the cornerstones of mainstreaming migration into development planning and will hear about the experiences of various countries in their mainstreaming efforts to date.

Over the next couple of days, you will have the opportunity to hear about and discuss how a mainstreaming approach looks at migration not simply from the perspective of examining migration as a problem for which the only solution is development. Furthermore, it will also be clear that migration is not simply an

economic phenomenon, that migrants are certainly not commodities, nor are the remittances they send the sole measure of the value of migrants or of migration. The social development angle must also be highlighted as the migratory process means so much for so many, in so many societies.

Mainstreaming migration into development planning offers two fundamental opportunities:

First, it can mobilise all actors and stakeholders -- governmental and non-governmental -- in order to create understanding and cooperation on the multi-faceted and cross-cutting phenomenon that migration is today.

Secondly, by rallying these stakeholders to contribute migration-related factors, considerations and strategies to the main national development planning tools, it can generate critical synergies to enhance the social and economic developmental dividends from migration.

Mainstreaming thus allows us to identify concrete measures to enhance national capacity for humane and effective national migration governance. This I believe could also facilitate more balanced and genuine inter-state cooperation in the interests of countries of origin, countries of destination and of migrants and their families as the key stakeholders in these debates. Neither human rights nor national sovereignty need to be compromised in ensuring that migration is factored into national and international development planning. The rights and responsibilities of migrants and of states are fundamental to achieving migration that is dignified, safe, and beneficial to all. This understanding is at the core of IOM's mission and outlook and I hope will be a view that is shared and embraced by all of you here today.

As the principal intergovernmental organization on migration, IOM is pleased to see how the debate on migration and development has evolved over recent years: migration is recognized as a cross-cutting issue for achievement of other development goals. This is and needs to be discussed in the context of the Rio+20 sustainable development conference, in reflections on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 and in consideration of the post-2015 development framework. Migration's impact on human and societal development cannot be overstated, nor can its fundamental relevance to policy and debates on the environment, climate change, human rights, security, trade and more be overlooked.

I look forward to a stimulating and rewarding conference over these two days, filled I hope with active discussion and reflection on these matters. It is now my pleasure to introduce to you the Executive Director of the Center for Migration Studies, Mr. Donald Kerwin.

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