

# SWEDEN



## NATIONAL STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Mr. Tobias Billström**  
**Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy of Sweden**

at the

**General Debate of the**  
**High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development**

**United Nations**  
**New York**

**3 October, 2013**

**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sweden associates itself with the intervention made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Much progress has been made since the first High level dialogue in 2006. We have been moving towards a common understanding of the positive development impacts of migration. It is clear that migrants and diasporas can become crucial actors for development. They do not only send remittances to families and communities, they connect countries by investments and trade. Their skills and ideas enrich economies and societies.

Development is about expanding the choices of the poor and vulnerable. Today we can claim with certainty that millions of people who move, contribute to that process. In fact, they are intrinsically part of it. Mobility brings prosperity.

The potential for even greater contributions is, nevertheless, immense. Better tuned government policies and cooperation can make that difference. Therefore, I believe that we should focus on making further progress in a few issue areas at this High level dialogue:

First, as one of the main outcomes, I hope to hear strong commitments on the role of migration in the post-2015 agenda in line with the proposal by the Secretary General. The new development agenda needs to recognize migration as an enabler of relevant development goals and we need to develop global partnerships to that end. This will help

national planning commissions, bilateral development cooperation agencies and multilateral development agencies to incorporate migration in their development analysis, plans and monitoring efforts.

Second, governments, employers and civil society should make stronger and more systematic efforts to empower migrants. Migrants will bring more development if their fundamental human rights are respected, and when they are protected against exploitation, discrimination and abuse. We need to enable and facilitate access to rights and ensure the effective implementation of the existing human rights-frameworks.

Third, governments should assist migrants so they can bring value to foreign labour markets at the actual level of their skills and qualifications. If we want to bring greater, positive development outcomes, governments should work closer together on validation and recognition of skills. We need to make commitments to reduce the transfer costs of moving, and the costs and risks of recruitment. Working with employers, we also should improve the match between the demand and supply of labour so that migrants respond to relevant national labour market needs.

Fourth, when we invite migrants to our labour markets, we need to make sure they have the means to integrate. We should better inform the general public about the migrants' positive contributions. If we want settled immigrants and members of diaspora communities to bring more back to their countries of origin, we as governments need to facilitate their engagement and provide the adequate tools and frameworks.

Fifth, for the sake of the migrant's and their families' well-being, in parallel to increasing the portability of skills, we also need to facilitate portability of earned pension rights.

These are five areas where tangible progress is needed and possible. Those governments that put in place enabling legal frameworks and embrace partnerships, are likely to facilitate mobility and positive development outcomes in all these areas. Well-managed migration can, thereby, bring greater mutual benefits.

Measures are certainly important at the national level and I will provide you with just one example. In Sweden, a reform has opened up the Swedish labour market to people from outside the European Union, praised by the OECD as one of the most liberal among the organization's members. We are also preparing proposals on enhancing circular migration for mutual development gains.

National action can feed into regional and global cooperation. Sweden has taken an active part and provided leadership in the Global Forum on Migration and Development. As the current Chair of the Forum, we build on the experiences and progress made during six previous chairs. In fact, setting up the Global Forum after the first High level dialogue was its most tangible result. I fully support the Secretary General when saying that the Forum has become indispensable. Today, it is the only global platform for frank, open and trust-building exchange of experiences and good practices.

In this context, I would like to acknowledge the significant contributions by the Secretary General's Special Representative, Mr Sutherland. I take this opportunity to call on the Secretary General, through his Special Representative, to continue his work on identifying priorities for international cooperation on migration, stimulate the global debate, and initiate a broader analysis and proposals regarding migration in the post-2015 development agenda. Sweden is ready to contribute actively in such an initiative. I would also like to call on the co-chairs of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development to bring the issue of migration into the group's discussions.

All relevant UN agencies and IOM, as the lead migration agency, should have migration and development firmly on their agendas. Strengthened coherence and cooperation within the Global Migration Group should be encouraged not only in New York and Geneva, but also in the field.

To conclude, we as governments can take significant steps forward, together with all stakeholders, to further improve the potential contribution of migrants to development. It is up to all of us. Let's move ahead in partnership.

Thank you!