



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

STATEMENT

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Ninth GFMD Summit Meeting - Opening Ceremony
10 December 2016, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Distinguished participants, Ladies and gentleman;

It is a great honour to be asked to join this august gathering today. It is always a joy to be back in Bangladesh. I want to thank in particular the Foreign Secretary, Shahidul Haque, for his visionary and inspiring leadership that has brought us together here today -- in what I have no doubt will be a singular event that will bring us forward in this important mission. I have had the great good fortune of taking part in eight of the nine gatherings of the Global Forum. The first one I was still deep in the Congo doing other matters before I joined IOM.

I wanted to make use of the few minutes I have to address three points: the three kinds of worlds in which we live.

I. A World on the Move

One has already been addressed -- the world on the move. According to UN DESA statistics, we have about a billion in our seven billion world on the move. Unfortunately, we know that at least 65 million of those are forced to move either by crossing borders as refugees or displaced within their own countries. We know there are another 75 million who are living just a metre or two above sea level.

We know that the international migrants alone would be almost twice the population of Bangladesh, slightly smaller than that of Indonesia and slightly larger than that of Brazil. With remittances -- and I know we have some World Bank remittance colleagues here today, such as Dilip Ratha -- can tell you that we are approaching a point of more than twice as much as foreign aid, and roughly beginning to equal that of all foreign direct investment of the last year, which came in at about 654 billion dollars, only slightly less than that. This is the world in which we live.

II. A World in Disarray, Denial

There is a second world in which we live -- a world in disarray, or a world in denial. We have at least eight or nine armed conflicts and disasters stretching from the western bulge of Africa to the Himalayas, in what I call an “arc of instability”, pushing more and more people on the migratory path. We know that we have demographic imbalances with an aging North in need of workers and a youthful global South in need of jobs. We know that climate change is becoming a major driver of migratory movement. We have a digital revolution with instant access to information; distance shrinking technologies and other drivers will ensure that many people will be -- either by choice or not -- heading somewhere else.

III. A World of Shared Responsibility

There is, however, a third world out there and that is a world of shared responsibility, which is why we are here today. We have been slowly -- all of us -- building the structure of that world. We started with the Global Migration Group and I want to again to pay tribute to Peter Sutherland. He has been the driving force and the inspiration that has kept us coming together every year since 2007. We can only wish Peter Sutherland all the best because he has been really a guiding light for all of us.

We know that we have Global Forum on Migration and Development, the first global body that discusses migration. We have today 18 regional groups that discuss migration. We want to make sure that we keep the GFMD and the regional groups working, with the inspiration that Peter has given us. We know that we have had two high level dialogues, one in 2007 and the other in 2013. We are heading towards a third one somewhere before the end of 2019. We have also created the regional economic commissions.

All of these are mechanisms that exist already to guide us forward as we seek to put in practice the New York Declaration by moving toward a Global Compact on Migration.

But how do you create orderly, safe and regular migration in an unsafe, irregular and disorderly world? That is our challenge. We can do it though, and we know we are moving ahead to the Global Compact.

I will leave you with the thought that migration is here to stay. It is as old as human kind. It is inevitable. It's necessary, if we are going to have the skills available, the jobs filled and our economies to flourish. It is absolutely desirable -- if we have the right foreign policies. And it is not an issue that we have to resolve, it is a human reality, we have to manage it and that is why we are here today.