

Ambassador Eva Åkerman Börje, Chair of the GFMD 2013-2014
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Geneva 4-8 November 2013
High level panel on the follow-up of the HLD; implications for ILO

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking the ILO for inviting me to this important event, which is in fact the first occasion to discuss the follow-up of the High-level Dialogue on migration and development.

Since the first High-level dialogue in 2006, we have been moving towards a common understanding of the positive development impacts of migration. 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. I believe that the recent High level dialogue brought us a few steps further in this direction. It was a significant achievement that all governments managed to reach consensus and adopt a declaration on migration and development. The non-confrontational atmosphere was also a relief to all believers in constructive dialogue. In addition, the contributions and interactive discussions highlighted a number of important issues – I would like to highlight these following five:

First, as one of the main outcomes, we heard overwhelming and strong commitments towards including 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.

Second, governments, employers and civil society called for more systematic efforts to empower and protect 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. This kind of work also lies in the interest of employers and we are seeing some encouraging example of how it has been integrated into their business models.

Third, the HLD saw many governments expressing support for the efforts that seek to 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. Partnerships between governments, the private sector and unions can support the decent work agenda. We should step up our efforts to improve the match between the demand and supply of labour so that migrants can respond to relevant national labour market needs.

Fourth, the HLD made clear that when we invite migrants to our labour markets, we also need to make sure they have the means to integrate. This also requires a closer working relationship between the national governments, local authorities, the private sector, unions and civil society. We should strive to highlight the positive contribution of migrants to our societies and work more actively with the public perception of migrants and migration.

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. The ILO could continue to contribute with their valuable technical advice to governments in this regard.

These are five areas where the HLD called for tangible progress. I am convinced that such progress is needed and possible.

Madame Chair,

Sweden has taken an active part and provided leadership in the Global Forum on Migration and Development. As the current chairmanship of the Forum, we build on the experiences and progress made during six previous chairs. I fully support the Secretary General when he said at the HLD that the Forum has become **indispensable**. It enables frank, open and trust-building exchange of experiences and good practices on migration and development.

Sweden also welcomes that the Secretary General asked his Special Representative on migration and development to convene regular meetings with the leadership of the Global Forum and the Global Migration Group (GMG) to identify shared priorities.

Modalities need to be worked out for such meetings. While governments will continue to set the agenda for the state-led Forum process, there is indeed scope for identifying shared priorities, capacity building needs of governments and cooperation with the GMG. Sweden looks forward to engage in such exchanges with the ILO under its 2014 chairmanship of the GMG.

This brings me to **the key question for this meeting**: How can the HLD outcomes best be followed-up by the ILO in its reinforced attention to migration issues?

First of all, the ILO has an essential role in labour migration by virtue of its constitutional mandate on the protection of migrant workers, enshrined in the relevant ILO Conventions. The ILO could encourage labour ministries and social partners to engage in more comprehensive national discussions and more coherent policy frameworks on migration, employment, education and development.

Sweden recognizes the ILO's value added in providing technical assistance to its Member countries as well as contributions to other international organizations with the aim of promoting a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to labour migration. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda must be a reality also for migrant workers and thus be mainstreamed into the future discussions and activities on international migration.

Moreover, I believe that the ILO could contribute in a number of specific areas where it maintains expertise and can bring added value:

- The ILO could further assist governments with measures to improve the portability of skills, achieve a better job matching, reduce recruitment costs, and develop labour market information systems.
- The ILO could help to identify and spread information on good practice in the area of skills assessment and recognition, assisting Member States in designing their national systems in relation to main partner countries and shortage sectors.
- To further document and disseminate best practices, and to foster new initiatives for regional integration and international cooperation, the ILO could assist governments and constituents through knowledge-sharing opportunities and capacity building with practical tools.
- The ILO could also help to add to our policy-oriented knowledge of bilateral labour migration agreements through systematic mapping, analysis and assessment.

Finally, I hope that the ILO will continue to show leadership and facilitate fair and well-functioning migration and mobility across borders. We as governments can take significant steps forward, together with the ILO and all its stakeholders, to further improve the potential contribution of migrants to development.

Thank you!