

Report on United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, United Nations, New York, September 14-15, 2006

Members of Delegation

Senator Delano Franklin	Head of Delegation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
Ms Hilary Williams	Foreign Affairs Officer, MOFA&FT
Mr. Emile Spence	Jamaica National
Mrs. Ariel Bowen	Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the UN
Mr. Easton Williams	Planning Institute of Jamaica

Special Guest

Mrs. Jacqueline Coke-Lloyd	Employers Federation (Invited by the UN as discussant for Round Table 4 on Partnerships)
----------------------------	--

Presentation of Statements

Senator Franklin presented Jamaica's Statement to the Plenary of the General Assembly on Tuesday, September 14. Each country was given four minutes for its presentation.

Round Tables

Interactive dialogues took place in four Round Tables. These are:

Round Table 1 Effects of international migration on economic and social development.

Round Table 2 Measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants, and to prevent and combat smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

Round Table 3 Multidimensional aspects of international migration and development, including remittances.

Round Table 4 Promoting the building of partnerships and capacity-building and the sharing of best practices at all levels, including the bilateral and regional levels, for the benefit of countries and migrants alike.

Jamaica was selected to participate in Round Table 4. Ms. Hilary Williams made a statement on behalf of Jamaica.

All round tables completed their deliberations according to the allotted time and presented summaries in the Plenary.

Comments on Selected Aspects

(1) High-Level Dialogue:

The choice of the word “Dialogue” as against “conference” or “summit” reflects the United Nations’ caution in hosting a meeting on international migration and development. The general perception was that international migration was a very sensitive topic which would create wide differences between and among countries and regions. The structure and procedures governing the operations of the round tables all reflected this. The actual dialogue, however, seems to discredit this perception. This is so for the reason that most delegations congratulated the Secretary General for the timeliness in hosting the meeting.

(2) Secretary General’s Report on International Migration and Development:

The report stresses the position that international migration constitutes an ideal means of promoting co-development, that is, the coordinated or concerted improvement of economic conditions in both areas of origin and areas of destination based on the complementarities between them. The report discusses the various ways in which international migration can contribute to co-development and presents a comprehensive review of the multidimensional aspects of international migration, including: migration trends; the impact of international migration on countries of destination and countries of origin; rights, gender, integration, benefits and the protection of migrants; and lastly, a discussion of the international normative framework and modes of intergovernmental cooperation that have been developed to improve the governance of migration.

(3) Secretary General’s Proposal for the establishment of an international Process/Forum on International Migration and Development:

Jamaica fully supports the Secretary General’s proposal for the establishment of an international process on international migration and development within the United Nations and according to the guidelines specified in his report. Most other countries, excluding the USA and Australia, supported the Secretary General’s proposal. This can be considered a major shift in international perspective on international migration. Prior to the High-Level Dialogue, most countries took the view that international migration was predominantly a regional phenomenon which requires a regional approach.

Prior to the High-Level Dialogue, Jamaica supported the proposal at the 1st meeting of ACP Ministers on International Migration, Mobility and Labour Migration, Brussels, April, 2006 and recommended that the Latin American and Caribbean Region supplemented their regional level approaches with a global forum in light of the emerging inter-regional character of international migration, Mexico City, December, 2005.

Jamaica has consistently over time supported the need for both a global and regional conference/forum on international migration. The rationale being that international

migration has both regional and global characteristics and should be addressed within their relevant contextual settings.

(4) National Presentations:

Delegations were allotted four minutes for making their presentations. The following are some of the issues highlighted in national presentations:

(i) International migration constitutes an ideal means of promoting co-development – the coordinated improvement of economic conditions in both origin and destination areas based on the complementarities between them;

(ii) Role of the diasporas in national development was considered critical and strongly promoted. Countries articulated their experiences in mobilizing their diasporas for national development;

(iii) Governments, private sector and civil society should play a more essential role in creating the conditions needed for migration to become a more effective development tool;

(iv) Migration of knowledge based and skilled persons (brain drain) from developing countries to affluent countries can severely impede development in poorer states. This was particularly relevant for countries in the Caribbean which have the highest rates of loss of tertiary level graduates in the world:

(v) destination countries were called upon to invest in both training and strengthening those sectors from which they recruited personnel in source countries;

(vi) Recognition that remittances play positive role in poverty, welfare and small business investments and encouragement of money transfer institutions to lower cost of making transfers so that developing countries could benefit more;

(vii) Trafficking in persons (particularly in women and girls for sexual exploitation) and smuggling of migrants were highlighted as major scourges to be eliminated and call for states to cooperate for solutions;

(viii) Need for comprehensive arrangements for the return, re-admission and re-integration of illegal immigrants to their countries of origin, and improved efficiency and effectiveness of border management;

(ix) Migration policy should not be confined to issues of security but to wider notions of how migration can benefit both sending and receiving countries. Migrants in no circumstance should be considered a criminal, even those without proper documentation. Migrants' basic human rights be protected;

(xi) Measures should be implemented to address effectively issues such as, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, racism and other forms of intolerance;

(xii) International migration should no longer be a scourge, but an important factor in the development of nations. International migration should be managed.

Conclusion

The perception that the High-Level Dialogue would have been contentious did not materialize. The vast majority of countries supported the Secretary General's proposal for a multi-lateral process for addressing issues of international migration and development. Some countries, particularly in Europe, which in the past adopted restrictive policies on international migration, have expressed a willingness to dialogue for freer movements. Some have even viewed international migration as a means for redistribution of wealth. Belgium has proposed the hosting of the first meeting for the Global Forum.