



Address by H.E. Saqr Ghobash
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Global Forum on Migration and Development
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Madam Chair,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

The theme that has been chosen for this year's Global Forum on Migration and Development, "Integrating migration policies into development strategies for the benefit of all," is both timely and relevant.

In an increasingly inter-dependent world, the movement of people is not only possible but necessary to meet the goals of global development. The ultimate goal for governments should indeed be to manage it for the benefit

of all. But how and by which means can participants in this Forum contribute to the achievement of this goal?

In September this year, there was a spirited discussion among the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum colleagues, triggered by the current Chair's reflection paper on the "Future of the Forum", particularly on the issue of the desired outcomes of GFMD. Understandably, there is an interest on the part of all parties that this process be focused, that it be productive, non-redundant and sustainable. I should like to share with you our own thoughts about how this might best be achieved.

First, in common with many other stakeholders the UAE considers that the essential value of the Forum lies in it being a platform for open and non-prescriptive sharing of views, of ideas, and especially of policy experimentation. This openness of communication needs to be maintained. It has been an essential ingredient in the GFMD's success to date. Let us continue to hear, in a climate of mutual trust and respect, about what has been learned through research and practice, about policy initiatives that have been attempted and lessons that have been drawn.

Second, we, participants in this Forum, need to acknowledge that migratory patterns are very diverse and that policy responses must, in consequence be flexible and adaptable. Given the nature of its labour market needs, the UAE has a particular interest in models of migration that are labour-oriented and of a temporary or circular nature. Nevertheless, it recognizes that there is much that can be learned from good practices deriving from other, and sometimes very different models of migration. The important thing for us is not to play up the differences between migration models to suggest that "we have our unique circumstances and you have yours" but rather to promote a common and better understanding of the various contexts and particularities that need to be taken into account in the development of sound policy. In this regard, the UAE is particularly grateful to the Government of Argentina for the spirit of partnership it has demonstrated in co-chairing with the UAE one of two sessions in Roundtable Two on "Migrant integration, reintegration and circulation for development".

Third, I would emphasize that we must approach our conference theme with honesty and realism. The UAE is very conscious of the contribution contractual workers make to its economy and in return is committed to

protecting their rights and to empower them to fully benefit from their residency in our country. We would like to open an honest debate about the nature and scope of essential social services that could and ought reasonably to be provided to temporary migrant workers, bearing in mind the cost-benefit implications for all involved.

IOM's World Migration Report 2008 points to the dilemma inherent in the fact that if migrants enjoy the "full rights" laid down in international conventions, the costs to employers, governments and the migrants may well be higher, and fewer foreign workers may be sought by employers. This is particularly true of temporary and circular migrants. Perhaps one way of going forward in our discussions is to explore what might be a set of "core entitlements" for temporary and circular contractual workers as opposed to a broader set applicable to permanent migrants. We need to weigh up the costs and benefits of migration from the standpoint of all stakeholders if we are to make migration truly beneficial to all. It goes without saying that, in the course of doing so, the fundamental human rights of all people are not to be considered negotiable.

Fourth, our deliberations must pave the way for cooperative approaches.

In the past, States have often struggled with their migration challenges and priorities through individual effort, without considering the possibilities of inter-state cooperation, but they are coming to the realization that national-level efforts conducted in isolation reach much sooner rather than later a point of diminishing returns. The UAE is of the view that regional consultative processes continue to play an important confidence and consensus building role in this regard.

With this need for international solidarity in mind, I would like to signal the UAE's willingness to provide support for the development of a GFMD research agenda that would inform a healthy policy debate and that could result in the formulation of sound policies in the future.

We wish all the roundtables success in their work. It is a privilege for my Government to be actively involved in these discussions.

Finally, I would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Greece for hosting the GFMD 2009 and for the leadership it provided in chairing the Forum over this past year. And we look forward to cooperating with the Government of Mexico for the GFMD 2010.

Thank you and may God bless you all.