



**Address by Mr. Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as 2014
Chair of the Global Migration Group to the Open Plenary Session of the Global Forum on Migration and
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Mässhallen Room - Münchenbryggeriet Conference Centre, Stockholm, Sweden

Thank you Ambassadors, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Chair of the Global Migration Group (GMG), I want to thank you for this opportunity to take the floor on behalf of the 16 member entities of the GMG.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As international migration grows in volume and in complexity, I think it is fair to say that the multilateral system is often more fragmented than cohesive in its approaches to the governance of that migration. Yet the GMG has undergone significant transformation since its establishment by the Secretary General in 2006. And, today the GMG has 16 members with more joining us soon.

The Group has made a priority of following up on the Secretary General's 8-point action agenda and this together with the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, charts a clear path ahead for us, for the wider UN system, and for this Forum, and has striven to create bridges with other stakeholders including the private sector, workers' and employers' organizations, diaspora groups and other civil society actors. To date, five different working groups and task forces have been established and I believe that their work is producing concrete results. I think we should ask ourselves if this enough. And I think we must probably conclude that no, we need to do more, but that we are – and I think that this Forum illustrates it – moving very much in the right direction.

An issue that has been raised by many here and one that I believe warrants our greater attention, is how the post-2015 UN development agenda can advance more strategic cooperation and inclusiveness on migration and development. You will be aware that the Global Migration Group is advocating for inclusion of migration as an enabler of development in the post-2015 agenda. It has suggested targets for meeting a number of the goals which are under consideration and is now examining possible indicators. The feminization of migration - women make up half of the migrants today, and are increasingly migrating on their own for work - must be a component of these discussions as should the increasing migration of young people, of youth.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the need for a broader understanding of their importance to development has led the GMG to issue a brief on why migrants and protecting their rights are critical for the post-2015 agenda and to the report on youth and migration which was launched here at the Forum yesterday and is available to you. Migrants who are trapped in unfair or exploitative conditions are not able to realize their full potential.

GMG agencies are also helping Member States to extend protection measures to migrants and initiating programmes to provide direct support to them and to their families. I think that we have heard frequently here in Stockholm that the lack of evidence-based data on the impacts of migration on development presents a continuing and important barrier to effective policy and to effective



planning. And this has in part at least contributed to negative public perceptions about migrants. I think that to respond to these misconceptions, GMG agencies have been right to launch online consultations and educational programmes and campaigns. I want to stress the importance of this component of our work.

GMG agencies are also examining how best to improve the knowledge and tools for decision makers, for example, on accessibility and affordability of remittance transfers and other financial services, guidance on fair and ethical recruitment practices and reduction of the human and the financial costs of labour migration. Sharing good practices on bilateral agreements and designing innovative tools such as IT solutions to track human traffickers are also areas in which the GMG agencies are making some progress. An issue which is rising I think as a priority for the international community is the plight of migrants in crisis stranded by conflicts and climate disasters, and this needs targeted management strategies. Guidelines and principles are also being developed to assist states in adopting appropriate border governance measures.

Let me at the risk of stating the obvious highlight that globalization means that strategies on sustainable development cannot be fully realized, absent strong partnerships across borders. And this is the impetus behind a new goal for the GMG to work with this Forum on substantive challenges such as to design guidance for UN Development Assistance Frameworks on how to better integrate migration into development planning at the country level and to partner more closely with regional consultative processes.

Much can be achieved by bringing together governments, agencies, and civil society and by engaging the private sector, employers' and workers' organizations on labour mobility governance. This Forum has a large role to play in fostering new forms of dialogue with these stakeholders and our forthcoming discussion this lunchtime is an opportunity to explore further areas for closer cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me turn to the question of labour mobility in particular because it has been the subject of a considerable amount of discussion at this forum and also because the ILO knows something about it. Many of us took note of European Union Commissioner Malmström's call yesterday in this meeting for a new global agenda on economic mobility and we readily understand the need for new approaches which respond equitably to the interests of countries of origin and of destination, and those of migrant workers and workers in national labour forces. And I think on occasion, the fragmentation of the multilateral system that I mentioned earlier has not always helped us to respond to these challenges – and they are big challenges – as effectively as we would want. Let me say to you that the ILO is certainly ready to play its part.

How to construct an agenda for fair migration is an idea that I will be putting before the ILO's own tripartite constituents at our annual International Labour Conference which begins at the end of this month. I think that the elements of such an agenda should be clear to us. It must be rights-based, indeed rights-centred. Indeed, fairness in migration, fairness for all requires above all equal treatment of migrant workers in line with the precepts of decent work. If we don't do that, the rest will not follow. But we have also to promote decent work at home, in countries of origin, to give truth to the proposition that migration must be a choice and not an obligation. The large sums of money remitted by migrants to their countries of origin can, we know, play an important role, for example through small enterprise creation. Recognizing the experience and skills of migrants can contribute considerably to the potential prosperity in migrants' own countries. This will take more concerted multilateral partnerships to exploit to its full potential. And if labour migration is to be orderly, is to be

fair, in line with international human rights and labour standards, then government schemes have to be equitable for all migrant workers. We cannot restrict our field of vision to those filling high-skilled labour market positions. And here let me take the opportunity to commend to you the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention No. 189 because it offers very important guidance on how to protect one of those sectors of the global workforce which is the most vulnerable – it needs to be ratified, it needs to be applied.

Fair and ethical recruitment of migrant workers is another essential component of our agenda. Here I want to report to you that progress is being made to provide guidance within the ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative and to inform other initiatives, most particularly the IOM's IRIS (International Recruitment Integrity System) so that we can foster practices that are in line with ILO standards such as Convention No. 181 on fee-paying employment agencies, the fundamental precept of which is that agencies should not charge fees to workers.

Bilateral and regional agreements can also be improved to meet the dynamic changes in labour mobility, particularly in securing the economic and social protection of migrants. And there is real promising progress to report. The African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities, for example, are working with the ILO and with other GMG agencies to chart such a path for labour migration governance ahead of the Ouagadougou +10 Summit on Employment and Poverty Eradication this September. Ladies and gentlemen, a new agenda can only provide durable benefits towards development if also we recognize the value of social dialogue with representatives of employers' and workers' organizations and with other stakeholders. Agreements between trade unions in destination and in origin countries can serve as powerful tools to complement policies protecting migrant workers as has been shown by the work of the International Trade Union Confederation and its affiliates in a number of migration corridors. In the Southern African Development Community, workers and employers take part in discussions on labour migration through the SADC labour and employment structures and the ASEAN Forum on Migration and Labour, based on tripartism, is yet another example of where the ILO is supporting the efforts being made.

In summary, we can do a very great deal by promoting a multilateral system which is more proactive, more responsive to the challenges that we face in promoting fair migration. Certainly a new agenda of this sort presents ambitious goals and political challenges often in difficult circumstances. But I think I can say to you very clearly that the ILO and the GMG are ready to take their place shoulder-to-shoulder with governments and the international community to reorient labour mobility governance towards this vision of fairer and more equitable schemes of migration which truly contribute to fair and sustainable development. Collaboration with the Forum here has been and must be a genuine two-way process under the very able stewardship of the Government of Sweden, who I thank. I believe we made great progress and I am extremely confident that that progress will be continued under the equally committed and able chairmanship of Turkey in the year to come.

I thank you for your attention.