

As written

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) highly appreciates the opportunity to address this Forum, and pays tribute to UNFPA for arranging this review meeting of the Cairo Programme of Action in such an efficient manner. Our thanks also go to the Government of the Netherlands for hosting the meeting.

The ICPD Programme of Action remains, in the fifth year after Cairo, as relevant as when it was drafted. For IOM's work, it has taken on a special significance due to the comprehensive treatment of population distribution and movements - covering both internal and international migration - in chapters 9 and 10. IOM's own strategic planning through the year 2000 is largely built on the objectives of the Programme of Action.

A central objective of Chapter 10 on international migration is "to encourage more co-operation and dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination in order to maximize the benefits of migration to those concerned and increase the likelihood that migration has positive consequences for the development of both sending and receiving countries."

Regional intergovernmental dialogue on migration issues has indeed developed and strengthened in several world regions. Since 1996 governments in Central and North America, with substantive and logistical support from IOM, have been holding regular regional consultations known as the "Puebla Process". This multilateral dialogue on migration issues, which includes annual meetings at the vice-ministerial level, has helped develop ongoing communication and cooperation among the participating states aimed at fostering more orderly migration processes.

In East and South East Asia too, regional migration consultation processes have been set in motion. The "Manila Process" brings together seventeen countries for exchange of information on irregular migration and trafficking. Another series of meetings, known as the Asia-Pacific Consultations (APC), co-sponsored by IOM and UNHCR, focuses on refugee, displacement and migration issues in a somewhat larger region encompassing South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia and Oceania. The ongoing cooperation in the region is expected to receive new impetus and substance from a ministerial meeting on regional cooperation on irregular migration to take place in Bangkok in April 1999 at the invitation of the Government of Thailand and organized in cooperation with IOM.

Regarding the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and neighbouring countries, a United Nations Conference was convened in 1996 to address the problems of refugees, displaced persons, other forms of involuntary displacement and returnees in the CIS region. Main operational work in its follow-up consist of a comprehensive technical cooperation programme aimed at establishing, improving and harmonizing national migration legislation, policies and administrative structures. Activities also include measures to combat and prevent trafficking in migrants - especially women and children.

In addition to these existing regional processes, we are lending support to the creation of similar consultation mechanisms under discussion in several other regions, such as the southern cone of Latin America and Southern Africa.

Another objective set by the Chapter 10 of the Cairo Programme of Action is to promote efforts which make the option to remain in one's own country viable for all people. Interregional

initiatives, among them the Euromed Partnership between the EU and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries can play a useful role in bringing together sending and receiving countries, with the long term objective to generate development and opportunities in the countries of origin.

Addressing the root causes of migration is among the objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action as well. With substantial UNFPA input, we have recently concluded a major research project on "Emigration Dynamics in Developing Countries" which analyzed the determinants and consequences of migration processes. The project examined salient migration phenomena, their consequences and policy implications in four regions - sub-Saharan Africa; Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean; South Asia; and the Arab Region.

The findings of the project, just published in four volumes, indicate significant differences in the characteristics and determinants of international migration in the different world regions. In Sub-Saharan Africa, deterioration of political structures is a major root cause together with ethnic conflicts, economic and ecological deterioration. In South Asia, temporary contract migration to the Gulf States driven by poverty and search for better opportunities is the predominant feature. The main flows in the Arab region concern temporary economic migration to the Gulf States and towards Western Europe. In Central America and the Caribbean, poverty driven and opportunity seeking permanent migration into North America are the prevailing movements.

In terms of advancing international understanding of migration, a major event was undoubtedly the Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development, held here in The Hague eight months ago. It was prepared jointly by UNFPA, the UN Population Division, the ILO, UNHCR, the Economic Commission for Europe, UNESCO and IOM. This meeting assessed approaches to migration issues facing policy makers in countries of origin and those of destination and suggested ways of fostering orderly migration flows, paying particular attention to human rights and gender issues.

The Symposium provided new insight into the nature and magnitude of current international migration. It affirmed poverty, environmental degradation, use of migrant remittances, the development potential of return migration, trafficking in migrants and irregular migration, as well as fair treatment of asylum applications as key issues which needed to be dealt with in constructive cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination.

Mr. Chairman,

For the potential migrant, an important element in the decision making process of remaining at home or leaving is the availability of credible information about conditions in the target country. Too often do traffickers attract individuals with false information and fraudulent promises. Their victims are often women and children who end up in prostitution and other forms of exploitation. Mass information campaigns in a number of countries, including Albania, Romania, the Philippines, Ukraine and Vietnam, are among the useful tools we have developed to reach the individuals at risk, and so are return and reintegration activities for those who have fallen prey to the traffickers.

The increased participation of women in international migration, where they now comprise an estimated 57 million - or 47,7% - of the overall migrant population world-wide, is of special

note. Growing numbers of these women move independently, not as family members of male migrants. Their specific needs and difficulties require more attention.

Since the ICPD, NGOs, international organizations and some governments have increased their attention to the often precarious situation of migrants. They too are entitled to enjoy basic human rights, and pertinent legal instruments in this respect need to be observed. The slow but steady growth since Cairo in the number of ratifications of the 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families is part of the positive developments in this area.

Mr. Chairman,

Dealing with migration and migrants - for many countries a new or recent phenomenon - requires a framework comprising a number of elements including national and international legal instruments and adequate administrative structures. Private sector groups too play an important role. The last five years have seen increased efforts in the area of capacity building in migration management. This can take the form of national migration policy workshops, advisory services on migration legislation and training for migration officials. A notable initiative in this respect is the International Migration Policy and Law Course that United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UNFPA and IOM launched in 1998. Designed primarily as practice-oriented training for middle and senior level government officials, the first session was held in Budapest, Hungary, with the next one planned for April 1999 in Southern Africa. This initiative complements training sessions arranged on a yearly basis for officials from Latin and Northern America by IOM in Argentina, with funding provided by the Organization for American States (OAS).

Mr. Chairman,

Five years after the ICPD, migration issues receive daily attention. They remain on the agendas of governments and are reported on in the media. However, migrants are more often than not perceived as a problem, and this overshadows their potentially positive contributions to countries of origin and reception. The ICPD Programme of Action points to a number of solutions to redress this imbalance. Over recent years we have learned to appreciate that the success of many of these solutions requires international cooperation. At IOM, we remain committed to contribute to this cooperation for the benefit of States and of the individual migrants.