

STATEMENT

by

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Madam President,

We also need to develop better indicators to measure the impact of migration on development, how it is contributing towards the achievement of the MDGs and the reduction of poverty. Managing migration means having the correct data for mitigating skills shortages in both sender and recipient countries. In this manner, the human capital of both countries of origin and receiving states can be enriched and the flexibility and productivity of all national economies can be enhanced. The orderly and selective management of labour markets can and will fill in the gaps between supply

A specific example of the value of migration is its ability to deal with shortages in skills in countries which are developed and abundant in natural resources. Although migrants fill this gap in the receiving country, they cause a shortage of skilled personnel in their home countries which are often less developed and vulnerable. These same developing countries have often invested heavily in fostering a small base of technical expertise for their key areas of development in the sectors of health, education and information technology. The remittances sent home by their nationals cannot substitute for the brain-drain caused by their dislocation.

The Commonwealth addressed this issue in 1990 when it developed a positive and yet balanced response to targeted recruitment campaigns which led to the loss of highly skilled personnel within countries of origin, specifically those in health and education. The Commonwealth was perhaps the first international organization to develop a Code of Practice for International Recruitment of Health Workers for its members. This was followed by the adoption in 2004 of the Commonwealth Protocol for the Recruitment of Teachers.

These instruments have received attention from regional organizations. They are also becoming a reference framework for non-Commonwealth countries confronted with similar challenges in preventing the large scale and unmanaged recruitment of highly skilled personnel from the smaller and most vulnerable countries, while at the same time protecting the rights of the individual migrant workers and the integrity of health and education systems of the countries of origin.

Through the adoption of the Protocols on the recruitment of teachers and health workers, the Commonwealth has introduced a model of good practice which can be examined for its value in other parts of the world. It can also be examined to determine if policies and programs from one setting can be effectively applied in different environments and sectors.

The Commonwealth today consists of 53 independent member countries, widely distributed over the globe and accounting for nearly a quarter of the population of the world. The Commonwealth is a cross-section of the world itself and as such it reflects global realities.

Within the Commonwealth, there are member states which are hosts to millions of refugees displaced by war and conflict in other third countries. There are also member states that are dealing with their internally displaced persons. Then, there are countries in the Commonwealth which are neither big nor rich in resources, but whose geographical location makes them an unenviable transit point for people who leave their homes for jobs and better economic opportunities abroad. There is also a need to maintain demographic and labour balance for economic growth within the developed countries of the Commonwealth.

Despite all these variations within our membership, and perhaps precisely because of them, the countries of the Commonwealth have an unparalleled experience that shows conclusively the value of widespread mutual cooperation. Across the Commonwealth men and women of many different races, faiths and national cultures have lived in peace and harmony and have worked together for the common good of all.

The Commonwealth's work on democracy and development contributes to peace and stability across all of its members. Such work ensures that migration for political and economic reasons is minimized by creating opportunities within the countries of origin for people to pursue happiness and realize their full potential at homes. More and more democracy brings more development, and the existence of both these conditions diminishes the pressure on outward migration from the developing world.

At their meeting in Malta in November 2005, Commonwealth Heads of Government underlined the need to deal with the challenges and opportunities that migration presents to countries of origin, destination and transit alike. In an interconnected world, growth and prosperity increasingly rely on the global flow of people, for travel, work and study. Heads in Malta agreed that when migration is managed effectively, it can have a substantial positive impact both for host and source countries and for migrants as well.

Commonwealth Heads of Government have urged better management of migration flows as a matter of priority. They have urged member countries to participate actively in the high-level dialogue to deliberate its multidimensional aspects. They have also reaffirmed their resolve to take measures to ensure respect for, and protection of, the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and members of their families, as enshrined in international law.

We in the Commonwealth recognize that the peace and prosperity of the free world cannot be assured while millions live in poverty. Our association therefore strives to build international consensus for improving the standards of life of people so that they do not need to leave their countries in search of livelihoods.

The development arm of the Commonwealth, known as the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation - or CFTC for short, has provided technical assistance to thousands of Commonwealth citizens – both men, women and young persons, and empowered them to start their own small businesses and train others in service delivery.

Commonwealth Governments which contribute to the CFTC have also benefited from this capacity building programme in building the skills of public servants, trainers and practitioners to become better catalysts of change, locally and abroad.

Effective development is promoted not just by aid and trade in goods and services, but also by expanding the exchange of experience and skills across countries and regions. Migration reflects the interdependence of the countries of the world as one of the most effective ways of promoting respect and understanding amongst communities and the elimination of causes of friction.

Some of the benefits of international migration: are exposure to globalization through study visas and short term work permits for skills' enhancement internationalization of production involving movement of labour and management; promotion of fundamental political economic and social

