

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

Thank you for the invitation to speak as the Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Seven years have passed since the first UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development was held in 2006. At that time, the global community's response to the opportunities and challenges of migration led to the creation of the *Global Forum on Migration and Development*. **Today, states can meet at the Forum on equal terms to share experiences and lessons learned.**

The Global Forum also includes a platform for engaging civil society stakeholders and the private sector, recognizing that partnerships can help us to enhance the development impact of migration. Through the Forum, nations have **built a stronger platform for collaboration, dialogue and trust** in a domain that used to be characterized by polarization and lack of trust.

**That alone is a significant achievement.**

Over the years the Forum has held discussions around a wide range of migration and development related issues. **The non-binding nature of the discussions has been an important element of progress to date.**

At its heart, **migration is an enabler for development**, affecting outcomes at an individual, family and community level. As a result of migration people may be better able to improve their socio-economic situation, and enhance their ability to access their human rights.

While the benefits may be many, there are **human, social and economic costs** if we ignore, or mismanage migration. The costs are particularly high for the most vulnerable migrants – women and children, irregular and exploited migrants.

**Finding a way to balance** the needs and rights of migrants versus the interest and right of states to control and regulate migration into their territories is a challenge. **Migrants have rights but also responsibilities** as they cross borders. **States have a sovereign right to control entry** but they also have **responsibilities to safeguard the protection** of those within their territory.

Ultimately States will use their own legislation to determine a course of action. As **pointed out on the official website of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (and I quote)**“(t)he **domestic legal system** (...) provides the **principle legal protection of human rights guaranteed under international law.**”<sup>1</sup>

This is a pragmatic approach to addressing complexity, which is why the focus of the Global Forum is on **how States** in their national laws, policies and procedures can enhance positive development outcomes.

The theme of the Swedish chair of the Global Forum is *Unlocking the potential of migration for inclusive development*. By adopting this theme we wanted to **highlight the positive role migration can play for development.**

While the gains from migration are apparent, **it does not necessarily follow that all migrants are empowered or protected at all stages of the process.** Borrowing from the OHCHR’s understanding of empowerment as being *the ability to understand and to claim rights*, let me elaborate by reflecting on the work we have begun in the GFMD Roundtable 3 work stream where this is our central topic.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/hr\\_law.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/hr_law.shtml)

**Awareness of rights does not necessarily lead to the ability to exercise those rights.** Although we are born into a world where the majority of states recognize the inherent human rights for each individual, if the rights are not communicated and upheld by states in national legislation, respected by stakeholders, including the private sector, and claimed by citizens and migrants alike, a human rights framework is not implemented.

Awareness of the different roles and responsibilities of duty bearers and rights holders and removal of barriers to access rights is a first step towards empowerment and realisation of rights.

But we also need to ask: Have **adequate resources been set aside** by governments to **ensure that the laws** (or ratified conventions) **guaranteeing the protection** mechanisms and entitlements **for migrants** can in fact **be implemented**? Have **state officials been trained** to protect and empower migrants; and **have steps been taken to monitor the effectiveness of implementation** including combatting xenophobia? Are there independent bodies that migrants can turn to for redress **without fear of discrimination**?

Based on our first preparatory meetings, government participants and other stakeholders have indicated a desire to **explore barriers** to empowerment **and measures to enhance it**. We look at the **different experiences that migrants have** depending on their skills level. **Highly skilled migrants** recruited within their professional network move easily across borders, normally retaining full social and economic entitlements and in many cases portability of pensions. On the other hand, **low skilled migrants** are more likely to end up in **irregular situations**, trafficked or exploited – and that risk is greater for women and children.

**We consider the responsibilities of the sending state and of the receiving state towards the migrants within their territory.** Depending on whether a migrant enters a country at the responsibility of a company temporarily; as a labour migrant acting independently; or as an accompanying family member with or without legal status, we ask **what positive examples exist today that enable and facilitate access to rights and protection of migrants?**

**How can barriers to social and economic integration be removed?** How can countries of destination facilitate entrance to the labour market or access to financial credit for migrants? **By gathering evidence of what works, by finding ways to reduce the social costs of migration, countries can support the empowerment of migrants.**

**None of these are easy topics, quite the reverse.** The very act of striving towards **empowerment implies a challenge to existing norms and power structures.** It is our hope that the work we do within the Global Forum can benefit the work of others interested in promoting improved human development outcomes.

Based on the **successes of the GFMD process to date,** it is my belief that we should **continue to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation** and coordination through the GFMD, **enhance multilateral coordination** through the GMG and **promote policy coherence** by ensuring that migration is integrated into the post 2015 development agenda.

In our globalised world, we must **build partnerships that pave the way** not only **de jure** for the **acknowledgement** of rights and protection needs, but **de facto** that **implementation mechanisms at the national level** ensure that **protection is given** and **human rights are respected and claimed.**

In so doing, we will be making significant progress in our collective efforts to maximize the benefits of migration.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for this opportunity to speak.