

# PRESS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Migrants' Rights Groups Applaud Governments' Focus on Protecting Migrants, but Urge Greater Consultation**

Migrants' rights groups, in New York today for the opening session of the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development at the United Nations headquarters, congratulated governments on recognising the importance of protecting the human rights of all migrants in the development of migration policy.

The two-day dialogue, the first inter-governmental forum devoted exclusively to discussing migration and development, saw representatives of regional organizations and States in the developed and developing worlds call for greater protections of migrant workers and stronger efforts to combat the scourges of human trafficking and human smuggling. As Mr Ali Hassani, the President of the UN Economic and Social Council reminded delegates: "Migration can only be beneficial if the rights of migrants are respected."

The HLD is expected to be only the first step in an ongoing international dialogue on migration to determine how to maximise benefits and minimise negative impacts of international migration. The Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, has recommended the creation of a permanent global forum that is consultative and non-binding for sharing new research and successful practices. The proposal for a permanent forum was supported by a number of States and will be discussed over the next two days.

Governments also stressed the importance of international cooperation on migration and for involving non-governmental organizations and the private sector in any future global forum on migration.

Noting the sensitivity of migration in many States and policies that too often are not based on reliable data, Mr Annan called on all States to oversee the future Forum: "The HLD will succeed to the extent that it ushers in a new era of migration policy...it is now time to turn to the evidence and use it to create a common understanding for how migration can be of benefit to all."

Mr William Gois of Migrant Forum in Asia, a regional migrants' rights group based in the Philippines, commented: "We are pleased to hear the commitment of member States to protecting the rights of migrants and combating exploitative labour practices. We hope this will be translated into action, for example by easing discriminatory border protections and replacing exploitative temporary worker programmes with programmes that respect migrants' rights to economic, social and cultural rights. It is imperative that any follow-on forum includes the voices of migrants and their advocates". Mr Gois reminded all States of the United Nations treaty event on migration-related treaties, which is being held concurrently in New York, and the need for more states to sign and ratify the 1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

The HLD will continue with roundtable discussions and a closing plenary session on 15 September.

Written by Eleanor Taylor-Nicholson, Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) on behalf of **the** Community Dialogue on Migration, Development and Human Rights.