

**Statement by Rabab Fatima, Regional Coordinator and Advisor for South and South West Asia and Regional Advisor for Climate Change and Migration, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, International Organization for Migration, Pattaya, 19-21 May 2014**

*Mr. Chairman, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates*

I am honoured to be here, and I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Organization for Migration.

Listening to the vibrant debate and strong statements made since yesterday, I am left with no doubt that this Forum will ensure that the Asia-Pacific priorities are well reflected in the discussions leading to the SDGs and to the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

[Distinguished Delegates] As you are aware, migration is a global phenomenon: over 200 million people in the world are migrants. Of that, over 34 percent of the world's migrants originate from this region; and 25 percent of the world's migrants live in Asia and the Pacific. The background document rightly notes the importance of international migration to the sustainable development of the region.

The significant contribution of well managed migration on development has been widely recognised, most recently at the Global Experts Meeting on Migration in the Post-2015 Development Agenda last month, and the Second High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development last year. Migrant remittances account for a large share of the GDP of many developing countries; and this is especially true for this region - 6 of the world's top 10 remittance-receiving countries in 2013 were from this region. Remittances have a multiplier effect on society and the economy. Remittances contribute to alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment, empower women, and to improve access to health care and education. Migrants contribute to growth, increase innovation and generate jobs both in the countries of origin and destination.

Migrants also contribute by transferring knowledge and technology, stimulate trade and investments, and promote cultural exchanges.

(That is however not the full picture) Alongside the benefits of migration, there are costs as well, both economic and social. Migrants routinely suffer from exploitation and abuse, and migration often leads to broken families, mental distress and other health challenges. (We heard this morning the Chairperson of the International Migrant Alliance, giving her first hand account of the plights of the migrant workers). Economically, the high cost of transferring remittances and costly recruitment fees means that a large proportion of migrants' wages are squandered. Indeed, dedicated attention is required from governments, the UN and other stakeholders to ensure safe, orderly and humane migration to harness fully the development impact of migration.

[Mr. Chairman] We cannot ignore the impact that climate change will have on human mobility, particularly on small island states and other climate vulnerable countries in the region. Slow and sudden onset disasters may lead to temporary or permanent displacement of people and many will be forced to migrate in search of livelihoods. (We have heard yesterday the concerns raised in this regard from Pacific Island representatives, especially the particular vulnerabilities of women impacted by climate change and displacement). Migration, if well planned and well managed, can be an effective tool for adaptation for areas affected by environmental and climate vulnerabilities which threaten the lives and livelihoods of millions.

We call upon this Forum to recognise the need to reduce the incidence and consequences of forced migration as this can have a deteriorating impact on sustainable development, peace and human security.

(Mr. Chairman) As the global migration agency, IOM strongly advocates that migration be incorporated into the post-2015 UN development agenda and the SDGs. (Ongoing discussions in the OWG) As the background paper notes: "The issue of migration is merely covered by the indicator: that 'by 2030, implement

planned and managed migration policies” under the focus area of *creating peaceful and inclusive societies.*” This does not sufficiently reflect the importance that migration has for sustainable development and nor does it mainstream migration into other focus areas such as health and population dynamics, sustainable cities and human settlements, climate change and very importantly, global partnerships for sustainable development. We hope that this meeting will recognise the contribution of migration as a cross-cutting enabler for sustainable development; and agree to *improve the quality of human mobility to enhance its benefits for human development; and to recognise migrants and migration as agents and enablers of sustainable development.*

Mr. Chairman, I wish to conclude by saying that concrete targets on migration within the SDGs could focus on:

- *planned and well-managed* migration through inter-sectoral collaboration and integration of migration into national and sectoral development policies;
- *lowering* costs and barriers of mobility & remittances;
- *addressing* trafficking, exploitation and abuse of migrants; and recognising the human rights of migrants, especially women migrants;
- *ensuring* access for migrants to education, health, and decent work;
- *reducing* and minimising the negative effects of forced migration; and finally
- *building* inclusive and effective global partnerships on migration.

Distinguished Delegates: goals, targets and indicators for the SDGs and the Post 2015 Development Agenda should recognise the role and contribution of migrants and their well-beings - (who make up) one billion of the seven billion on the planet. To be inclusive, the SDGs and the Post 2015 Development Agenda must therefore, include migrants.

Distinguished Delegates, IOM looks forward to a positive outcome of the APFSD. And we stand ready to work with member states, the UN and other partners in bringing migration in the APFSD outcomes, and in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

I thank you.