International Migration and Human Rights

Challenges and Opportunities on the Threshold of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



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Global Migration Group



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UNITED NATIONS



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

FOREWORD TO THE GLOBAL MIGRATION GROUP REPORT, "INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS" October 2008

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose sixtieth anniversary we celebrate this year, remains the primary international articulation of the fundamental rights of all members of the human family. To mark the anniversary, the member agencies of the Global Migration Group have embarked on a timely, collaborative effort to analyze the challenges of protecting the human rights of international migrants.

This report is the product of that process. Among its main findings is the assessment that despite the many positive contributions migration makes to the development of countries of origin and destination, it is essential that migrants are seen not solely as agents of development. They are human beings with rights that States have an obligation to protect even when they exercise their sovereign right to determine who enters and remains in their territory.

Cooperation between governments in countries of origin, transit and destination, and among non-governmental organizations, civil society and migrants themselves, is vital for ensuring that international human rights instruments are implemented and that migrants are aware of their rights and obligations. Groups with special needs, including migrant children, female labour migrants in the informal sector, trafficking victims and irregular migrants, as well as refugees and asylum seekers, are particularly deserving of and entitled to effective protection.

I thank the United Nations Population Fund for initiating this joint project during its tenure as Chair of the Global Migration Group. The members of the Global Migration Group are to be commended for making this timely report a reality. I hope it will serve as a useful tool in our common quest to protect the human rights of migrants, and I recommend it to a wide global audience.

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BAN Ki-moon

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