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Statement

by

Mr. Sven ALKALAJ

United Nations Under-Secretary-General

**Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission
for Europe**

at

the 103rd Session of the IOM Council

**Panel discussion with the current, previous and future Chairs of
the Global Migration Group (GMG)**

Work, Priorities and Future Directions

28 November, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Migration, Mr. Peter Sutherland,

Director General of IOM, Mr. Lacy Swing,

Director General of ILO, Mr. Ryder,

Distinguished Delegates,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you Mr. Lacy Swing for introducing some elements of the achievements reached by the Chairmanship of the Regional Commissions during the first semester of 2013. ESCAP, on behalf of the UN Regional Commissions, chaired the Global Migration Group from 1 January to June 2013.

During the Regional Commissions' chairmanship, we focused on the following key outcomes: (i) Strengthening the GMG to improve its substantive coordination and collaboration function; (ii) improving the visibility of the GMG through outreach towards Member States and other stakeholders; (iii) Implementing the ongoing GMG internal review process (iii) Coordinating preparations of the GMG for the High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly on International Migration and Development, held on 3 and 4 October 2013.

Before going into further details of our activities related to strengthening the GMG to improve its substantive coordination and collaboration function, let me clarify why we have undertaken this process of review.

The GMG achieved a measure of interdisciplinary collaboration in recent years that could not have been foreseen years ago. We reached a more open and constructive climate for inter-agency debate and exchange on international migration and development. We reached a more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approach to international migration among ourselves. We reached a common understanding of the interactions between migration and development and the need for coordinated response strategies.

But we also realised that we had to increase our efforts to bring our diversity of perspectives, our technical capacities to Member States and the international community, in order to better support Member States in managing such a complex, cross-cutting subject as international migration and development.

Therefore, our commitment to a strong process of review, taken by the GMG Principals in November 2012.

We are pleased that at the High-level Dialogue in October 2013, Member States have recognised the efforts made by the GMG to strengthen our coherence and working method arrangements.

In paragraph 32 of the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration member states welcomed, I quote, “ ... the recent efforts made by the Global Migration Group to undertake measures to enhance its functioning and to promote coherence and coordination among its member organizations,...”.

The review process was successful in addressing a number of long standing issues related to the institutional strengthening and coherence within the GMG.

- (i) We established more predictable chairing arrangements with a rotational system by alphabetical order. This will help us in planning for the allocation of human and financial resources by the entities concerned. We also changed the chairmanship from 6 months to 1 year cycles. As of 2014, the new GMG Chair, ILO, will serve for a period of one year. ILO will be followed by UN Women in 2015 and by the World Bank in 2016.
- (ii) We established a GMG administrative support team to support the Chair and to facilitate and ensure continuity in the work of the GMG. This will help us, for instance, to update our website management; to keep the GMG institutional memory and facilitate wider access to our products; to organize more regular meetings to capture and review areas of common interest and to plan joint actions, where possible, also in support of member states, and to

coordinate periodic information sessions with Member States, civil society and other partners on the work and priorities of GMG.

- (iii) We organised our programme of work by setting up working groups and task forces (with clear terms of reference) to ensure greater depth in the treatment of substantive issues, and coherence and coordination in key thematic areas.

In addition to the already existing Working Groups on mainstreaming migration in national development strategies and on data and research, we established an additional Working Group on Human Rights, Gender and Migration. Two time-bound task forces on Capacity Development and on Migration and Decent Work were also established.

- (iv) We formulated a three-year work plan from 2013 through 2015, as part of efforts to move towards a results-based approach. The framework adopted includes two overarching work streams: (1) GMG coordination and visibility; and (2) migration and the post-2015 development agenda.

The framework also includes work plan activities related to the five thematic work streams, namely (1) data and research; (2) mainstreaming migration in development planning; (3) human rights and gender; (4) capacity development; and (5) decent work.

The ILO representative who will take the floor after me will illustrate the future principal streams of work that will be undertaken in 2014 under ILO Chairmanship and by the following GMG Chairs in 2015 and 2016.

Finally, distinguished Delegates,

The GMG is still consolidating itself. Given the long histories and diverse mandates of its member agencies, the GMG is likely to be a long term endeavour.

The actions taken in 2013 to streamline the structure and actions of the GMG reflect the behaviour of a community of UN international entities plus IOM that share an interest in working coherently and effectively on common global migration and development challenges.

In bringing together agencies willing to pool their expertise and resources and deliver joint outputs and results, the GMG has become an effective working mechanism for coordination, consensus building and cooperation on migration.

We hope that our process of reform will provide a solid basis for future work with governments and other partners to implement the outcomes of the 2013 high-level dialogue and pave the way for a migration-inclusive post-2015 development agenda.

Thank you for your attention.

