

**Open Letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on the
Occasion of the Global Forum on Migration and Development,
Brussels, 9-11 July, 2007**

Your Excellency:

Civil society organizations representing migrants, rights-based groups, faith-based organizations, and trade unions are highly appreciative of your presence here in Brussels for the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Representatives from these organizations have come together to hold an inclusive parallel event, the “Global Community Forum on Migration, Development and Human Rights,” on July 10 and 11th to place the human rights of migrants and their families at the heart of all strategies and initiatives related to migration issues.

We appreciate the efforts made by the Belgian government to carry this process forward after the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development held in September 2006. However, we are critical of the intergovernmental forum which concentrates discussion on temporary forms of migration and remittances as contributions to development without giving adequate consideration to the interests and rights of migrants themselves.

Millions of migrants are suffering under inhumane conditions of work and life. The promotion of human dignity and well-being must form the bedrock of migration policy and be the starting point for discussion.

For these reasons, we are convinced that the global debate on migration, development, and human rights should be returned to the United Nations, where it started. This will ensure that the UN normative framework of rights-based conventions and agreements will be systematically incorporated into evolving global migration policy.

Foremost for such a framework are the following instruments, which must be universally respected and implemented:

- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families 1990;

- ILO Conventions C97 and C143 and ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD);
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- The UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and Protocol;
- The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism.

The UN framework offers benchmarks against which national and regional migration policies and legislation could be measured. Further, the voice of civil society and migrants' organizations will be enhanced through the consultative arrangements for stakeholder participation within the UN.

We urge you to use the convening authority of the United Nations to reclaim this process so critical to sustainable economic growth and well-being and to the lives of millions of migrant workers and their families.

Sincerely,

Migrants Rights International
December 18
International Trade Union Confederation
Public Services International