

**Statement by Mr. Nikolay M. Smorodin
Deputy Director of
the Federal Migration Service
of the Russian Federation
At the Second Global Forum
On Migration and Development**

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Let me begin with our appreciation of the Government of the Philippines for the hosting of the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development in a hospitable city of Manila.

In recent years the labor migration has provided a significant push on economic expansion of many developed countries. Migrants likewise are making a valuable contribution to economic, political, social and cultural development of the countries of their origin. In this context it is extremely important to maximize the positive impact of migration and minimize its negative effects for the economic development and ensure the basic needs and rights of the migrant workers.

The current financial crisis is a great challenge to the emerging labor market. The perspectives of unemployment and continuous cutting demand on labour resources might seriously aggravate the situation at the international labor market including relations between the migrants' countries of origin and migrant-receiving countries. Only adequate crisis management measures and modern economic regulative instruments of labour market could create a win-win situation.

A comprehensive international dialogue on the migration and development issues is one of these instruments. Crucial element of such dialogue has always been and no doubts will be bilateral and multilateral cooperation. There are prospects in strengthening bilateral, regional and sub-regional mechanisms of regulating labor migration and suppressing illegal migration. These mechanisms are well fitted for detecting the arising problems, working out long-term solutions and coordinating their implementation with the international organizations and agencies.

Russia has signed a number of international agreements aimed at creating conditions to ensure mutual legal stay and employment of migrant workers.

We attach special importance to cooperation within the framework of Eurasian Economic Community. The member-states of this Community are jointly working on streamlining migration procedures for their citizens. This activity envisages developing the intergovernmental regulation system of overseas labour migration, data exchange, suppressing illegal migration and trafficking in persons.

At the last meeting of Heads of Migration Authorities of Eurasian Economic Community in 2008, Russia put forward the initiative to build a mechanism of “organized overseas labor recruitment” as an instrument regulating labor migration. “Organized overseas labor recruitment” plan implies that migrant workers shall undergo appropriate professional training in the countries of their origin, acquire basic language skills and go abroad after signing a contract for a specific job. In our view, this will better ensure the rights of migrant workers and enhance the responsibility of employers.

Effective cooperation on migration is going on within the framework of CIS countries. We can mention the dialogue within the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, activity of the Joint Commission on prevention of illegal migration and Advisory Council on Labour, Migration and Social Security.

We highly appreciate the level of cooperation on the migration issues with the European Union. Main areas of cooperation with EU defined by the “road map” of the common space of freedom, security and justice between Russia and EU are being implemented quite successfully. Bilateral executive protocols to the Agreement between the Russian Federation and EU on readmission are being discussed.

The efficient migration policy for the benefit of sustainable social and economic development, the ensuring of human rights and freedoms is one of the priorities of the internal and foreign policy of the Russian Federation.

Russia’s efforts are aimed at enhancing its attractiveness to the migrants while undertaking all steps to put a stop to illegal migration.

An excessive migrant regulation has forced foreign employees to seek other opportunities which were often far from the legal ones. Thus they turned out to be under control of dishonest employers looking for a cheap labour. The new legislation in the sphere of migration was enacted in Russia on January 15, 2007. It simplifies the hiring procedures for citizens of the countries enjoying visa-free entrance and encourages the legalization of their employment. Based on the year to year data, the number of the legally employed foreign citizens in Russia in 2007 was four times higher than in 2006, over two million work permits were issued, 85% of which refer to the foreign workers arriving in Russia on a visa-free basis. It is also important to note that, based on experts' findings, the number of illegal migrant workers has decreased more than twofold in one year from 7-15 million people in 2006 to 3-6 million people in 2007.

Main migration flows into Russia still come from the CIS countries. In comparison with the year of 2006, the number of foreign workers from these countries rose more than twice in 2007, and their share in overall number of migrant workers rose from 53% to 67%.

According to the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, legal migrant workers earned more than 206 billion roubles or \$8 billion in 2007. The significant part of this amount has been remitted to the countries of their origin.

While simplifying the hiring procedure, we have placed more responsibility on employers. The maximum penalty for each illegally employed migrant worker can reach 800.000 roubles(or more than \$30.000), while some violations can lead to the suspension of company's activity for a period up to 90 days.

In our view, this is quite a serious argument for the employers who wants to continue hiring migrants evading official procedure and who are not willing to bear responsibility and guarantee access to social security net.

I would like to stress that even though a penalty is being considered as an indicator of administrative effectiveness, it is not an end in itself. The aim is to make employers follow more carefully the official hiring procedure, sign contracts with them and ensure social packages and individual insurance.

Russia acts on the premise that the effective management of labor flows is possible only if it is based on the consisted, balanced and coordinated national, regional and international migration policy. Therefore, one of the most important issues is to maintain a balance of interests between the countries of origin, economic and labor market needs of the host states and the migrant workers themselves. Drawbacks in the labor migration regulations often lead to a tension within the society of a receiving country.

Encouraging the legal migration should be accompanied by the decisive coordinated actions aimed at curbing the illegal migration, especially if it is connected with international terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and trafficking in persons. We are confident that this is in the interests of the receiving countries, countries of origin and ultimately migrant workers themselves. The agreements on readmission are an effective instrument of countering the illegal migration.

Unfortunately, in practice, the countries of origin are often inactive in the international cooperation in this particular area, shifting the responsibility for their citizens onto the host states, though readily receiving benefits from their labour. We call upon all the stakeholders to take more responsive approach towards the cooperation in the spirit of partnership and fair burden sharing. It is also important for the migrant workers to observe the laws and respect traditions of the host countries.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again that in the matters of migration Russia regards itself as a part of the international community. We should join our efforts and do everything possible to maximize the benefits of migration for the process of globalization and integration.

Thank you for your attention.