



THIRD GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

OPENING ADDRESS OF GFMD 2009 CHAIR-IN-OFFICE, DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR, DECENTRALIZATION AND E-GOVERNANCE, MRS. THEODORA TZAKRI ATHENS, 4 NOVEMBER 2009

Your Excellency, President of the Hellenic Republic, Secretary General of the United Nations, Minister of Interior, Decentralisation and E-Governance, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you to the 3rd Global Forum on Migration and Development here in Athens, and I would like to thank you for the support you have extended to the Greek presidency here, your efforts, and to help us with preparing the ground for this meeting on questions of migration and development. Without these efforts, obviously, we would not have been able to establish the scope we have today, and we wouldn't have been able to establish what we have and hope to move forward in the future, with an open platform, to bring about the best possible policies and practices.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his total support for the forum. His presence here, I think, best expresses their full dedication to this institution. I would like to thank the representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Peter Sunderland, for his constant support for the forum.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, your presence here today shows that this non-binding intergovernmental dialogue on migration and development hasn't stopped, but on the contrary it is growing year on year, and is becoming one of the most important platforms for policy and for understanding at global level.

In the Global Forum we are dealing with various issues related to those questions of migration and development, and we will draw certain conclusions.

In the course of the Third Forum, we are going to look at various issues, with the hope that we will come up with some clear answers as well. The Forum is a gradual process, for building on past knowledge, and it is also a possibility for coming up with new ideas and putting thought into these. We need to come up with answers to this complex puzzle, so, that we can have an efficient policy on the question of migration and development.

There is no doubt that we have a long path ahead of us, but I think that we have brought people together already. We are building on what we already know steadily and gradually.

The Global Forum on Migration and Development is a process which is moving towards achieving clear results. It has a clear direction, so that we can find solutions to current-day challenges in the area of migration and development.

So I would invite you, in the few minutes I have to you, to maybe move apart from the specific issues before us today, but to look at a more general situation.

We are living in a globalised world. We see movements in people, and that is an integral part of globalisation. Globalisation, though, does not only have an economic dimension, on the contrary, it is also an economic, cultural, social, political and human process.

We see on the television pictures of ways of life from far away, and people travel from very far distant places as well, in search of a better life, in search of better opportunities. As long as that continues to be the situation, migration will continue.

Obviously, many of these leave their own homes and move in many different ways, in many different flows. They come towards the major cities of the developed world in particular, but we also see major movements from developing to developed countries, and the other way around as well.

We are talking about the global economic map. Now obviously there is a constant flow going on here. At this point I would also like to say that the way

in which we face this has to be as complex as the issue itself is. We obviously have to start thinking that when we think about ourselves we have to think about other people as well, about someone else, the other person. We have commitments towards them as well.

Obviously this works the other way round, too. And, I firmly believe that all of us within this room today should strive to see the world, our world, from a different viewpoint. We should try and involve others, and others' activities in our own activities, as well, because we are all interdependent on each other.

Migration and development are one of the most crucial issues in our policies, and I feel that all of us should strive to work closer together, and we should strive to be clearer in our service to the people we are working with. We should try and be so, in terms of other people who come into our states as well; more open to ourselves, more honest towards ourselves and others as well.

And the Third Global Forum on Migration and Development I think will be a small step in that direction.

And with these words, I would like to open the Third Global Forum on Migration and Development here in Athens. And I would like to invite the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. George Papandreou to take the floor.