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Concept note for the General Debate on *The moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration*

In today's interconnected world migration is increasing in scale, scope and complexity. Human mobility across borders level has considerable benefits in terms of positive development outcomes for countries of origin and destination and for migrants themselves.

Yet despite the obvious advantages, headline news about migration also point to its disadvantages. Xenophobia is on the rise in many parts of the world in the face of economic downturn, as well as the challenges to social cohesion and identity - perceived or real – experienced by migrants. Tragic tales abound about shipwrecked, drowned or otherwise helpless refugees and migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea.

These headlines underscore the “human face” of migration, the different motives compelling people to move, important developmental, social and economic factors that at play, as well as misconceptions and myths about migration.

Parliamentarians have a critical role to play in ensuring a meaningful, balanced and informed debate about migration and promoting fair and effective policies that maximize its benefits but also address the real challenges that host, transit and origin countries and migrants face.

The General Debate aims to foster discussion around the following questions:

- What are the hallmarks of fair and effective migration policies that make labour migration a win-win situation for all concerned? What are the responsibilities of host, transit and countries of origin? How can irregular economic migration be dealt with in a manner that is respectful of human rights?
- How can significant flows of refugees and others seeking protection be handled, in particular when they are part of mixed movements comprising economic migrants? Is the off-shore processing of asylum-seekers' claims and resettlement in third countries an effective way to prevent them from risking (further) perilous journeys to safety? What are the best solutions for absorbing large numbers of refugees and how does the principle of regional and international solidarity fit in? What lessons can be learned from past experience?
- How to do away with negative stereotypes attached to refugees and migrants in order to combat xenophobia and address perceived or real challenges to social cohesion and national identity? What are the responsibilities of migrants in their host country?

