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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT PART II OF THE 17th MEETING
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**“Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and
environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the
OSCE region”**

Session I: Managing migration in a changing global environment

**Elaboration of a model migration policy combining migration management,
socio-economic development and the observance of human rights**

Distinguished colleagues,

The current financial crisis, which is posing a serious challenge to the entire system for the international exchange of labour, has more acutely than ever raised the question of elaborating a model migration policy to effectively regulate migration processes in the interests of the sustainable socio-economic development of States and the observance of human rights and freedoms.

It is clear that fair and effective management of migration flows is possible only through constructive international co-operation and dialogue that takes into account and observes the balance of interests between the host society, the migrants themselves and their family members, and the needs of the economy and labour market of the countries of destination and origin.

The migration policy should envisage improving migration processes as part of humane, streamlined and systematic migration management. In this connection, the interests of the countries supplying the labour should not be put to one side, especially when the host country shares a border or maintains historical ties with them.

We believe that one effective mechanism for managing migration flows would be to create more favourable conditions for legal labour migration. We are grateful to the migrant workers who, according to experts, deliver more than 8 per cent of Russia's gross domestic product.

Changes made to Russian migration laws in 2007 to simplify and make more transparent the procedures for registering migrants and obtaining work permits have made it possible to greatly increase the number of foreign citizens working in Russia legally and to protect their labour rights.

At the same time, in late 2008 when the crisis began to have a direct effect on the real economy, a significant increase was noted in the termination of contracts with foreign workers.

With a view to reducing tension on the Russian labour market, it is proposed that the laws on migration be supplemented in the near future with the following new features.

It is proposed that migrants be issued with a work permit initially for up to 90 days, in other words the regular period for temporary residence. Once the migrant has confirmed that he or she has found employment, the period of residence in the country will be extended for the duration of the contract.

There is also the idea of the giving the migrant worker a chance to find a new job within a specified period if he or she becomes unemployed.

Another innovative idea is the possibility of a special permit for migrant workers employed privately (domestic staff). This document would be issued without any regard for established quotas. Between four and six million migrants are employed in this sector.

None of these measures are intended in any way to restrict the rights of migrants to employment on Russian territory. We are seeking to ensure that we can respond more flexibly to the changing situation within the labour market.

I should like to point out in particular that we regard the crisis as a temporary phenomenon, and in the long term we are interested in attracting foreign labour.

The conceptual framework for the long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020 provides for the organization of centres abroad for the vocational training and retraining of foreign workers and for their study of the Russian language, Russian culture and laws. In the future, qualified personnel from among migrant workers will be able to obtain a Russian work permit in their own country without having to meet any kind of quota.

At present, we are working with our partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States to improve the system to attract migrant workers, first and foremost on the basis of temporary or circular migration. This system should include a whole range of measures, including vocational and language training, medical care and cultural orientation programmes for migrants.

We believe that a scheme of this kind would make it possible to respond flexibly and effectively to economic and social development needs, providing a more attractive alternative for those migrants who still work in the shadow economy.

At the same time, these mechanisms will make it possible to make more effective use of the professional potential of migrant workers and their investment capabilities for the socio-economic development in their countries of origin.

The management of migration flows should also provide for decisive measures to counter illegal migration. Every year, the Russian economy loses billions of roubles in the form of the taxes it does not receive from employers for work carried out by illegal migrants.

Providing the cheapest form of labour, illegal migrant workers distort the labour market and reduce the overall cost of labour. Simultaneously, an informal employment sector develops, characterized by violations of the labour rights of workers, including the right to safe work and the right to timely and complete payment of wages. As a result, social tension intensifies and provides a platform for xenophobia, ethnic hatred and racial discrimination.

I should like to mention in particular that in the fight against the negative consequences of illegal migration we rely not only on tough measures but also on assistance from non-governmental organizations, representatives of the business community, national diasporas and migrants' associations, without whose active and responsible involvement effective and humane migration management will be impossible.

When formulating a model of effective migration management, attention should be paid to the fact that the situation in different countries may vary considerably in terms both of the structure and the volume of migration flows.

In a number of Western European countries, the proportion of migrant workers in the overall migration flow does not exceed 10 to 20 per cent, while foreigners entering the country for reunification with their families may account for almost 50 per cent. In Russia, on the other hand, the goal of the overwhelming majority of migrants entering the country is to work. In that connection, we note the uneven nature of the distribution of migrant workers across the territory of the country. There are parts of Russia as big as a large European country where this potential labour is not utilized to the full.

There are also differences in national migration policies. Some countries are interested in receiving migrants to live there permanently, while others are interested in temporary or circular migration.

In this connection, we should not be seeking to create some kind of universal migration policy model, but rather to carefully weigh up and analyse to what extent, taking into account the specific features of the migration situation, the recommendations and the experience of OSCE partners are applicable to each specific country. This is particularly true in the case of mass legalization, assistance in voluntary return and reintegration.

In conclusion, I should like to express the firm belief that as a result of our joint efforts the concept of "economic migration" will not be so much a case of forced cross-border movements of persons who leave their countries for economic reasons but rather of voluntary, co-ordinated and systematic exchange of labour resources between States in the interests of developing the countries of origin and destination, and also of the migrants themselves and their families.

Thank you for your attention.