

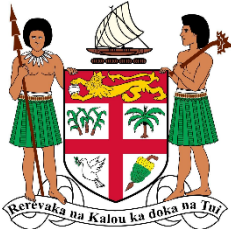
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Permanent Mission of the Republic of Benin to the United Nations



MISIÓN PERMANENTE DE EL SALVADOR ANTE LA ORGANIZACION DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS



PERMANENT MISSION OF MEXICO TO THE UNITED NATIONS



Kingdom of Morocco



12 June 2020

Excellency,

We have the honour to transmit the attached **Joint Statement on the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants** on behalf of 103 signatories across all regional groups.

The statement is an expression of our commitment to promote and protect the human rights of migrants. It is a recognition of the invaluable contribution of migrants in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, a recognition of the negative impact of the pandemic on migrants, an expression of concern over the vulnerabilities that migrants face in this context and a call for solidarity to ensure that no one is left behind during these trying times.

The statement welcomes your report *Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity: responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19* on the negative impact of COVID-19 on migrants and on economies heavily dependent on remittances.

The statement also welcomes your *Policy Brief: COVID-19 and People on the Move* and supports the four (4) basic tenets stated therein, in particular: (i) exclusion is costly in the long run whereas inclusion pays off for everyone, (ii) the response to COVID-19 and protecting the human rights of people are not mutually exclusive, (iii) no one is safe until everyone is safe, and (iv) people on the move are part of the solution.

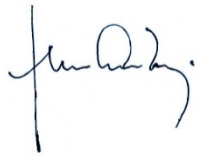
In recent years, the United Nations has made important advances in migration governance. We are convinced that the 271 million migrants around the world today are agents of sustainable development and instrumental to our collective recovery. In this light, we will count on your continued support in ensuring the protection of the rights of migrants and mitigating the impact of the pandemic on migrants globally.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Rabab Fatima
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
Bangladesh




Jean-Claude F. do REGO
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
Benin




Egriselda López
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
El Salvador



Satyendra Prasad
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
Fiji



Geraldine Byrne Nason
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
Ireland



Juan Ramón de la Fuente
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
Mexico



Omar Hilale
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
Morocco



Kira Christianne D. Azucena
Ambassador,
Charge' d' Affaires
The Philippines



Francisco Duarte Lopes
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
Portugal

H.E. António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations

Copy to:

H.E. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the General Assembly

H.E. Mona Juul, President of the Economic and Social Council

H.E. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization

H.E. António Vitorino, Director General of the International Organization for Migration and
Coordinator, UN Network on Migration

Joint Statement on the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants

The COVID-19 pandemic heralds a human crisis of unprecedented scale, causing devastating impacts on the health, livelihood and wellbeing of people across the world. It adversely affected global economies, businesses and workers.

The International Labor Organization estimates that nearly 164 million migrant workers are living in countries with recommended or required workplace closures, with nearly half of them being women. In many countries, migrant workers represent a significantly larger share of the workforce, making positive and important contributions to their countries of destination.

Migrant workers often face specific challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic due to a variety of factors, including inadequate living and working conditions, limited local knowledge and networks, xenophobia, discrimination, lack of access to health and related services, and exclusion in host countries' responses to the pandemic.

We recognize that many countries rely on migrant medical and health personnel as front-line workers. They invaluablely contribute to their host countries' response to the pandemic. Many have lost their lives. We express our gratitude to those migrants who have continued to contribute to their communities in countries of origin and destination at this difficult time. We recognize that migrant workers are also among the most vulnerable and high-risk groups during this pandemic. They make up a disproportionate share of the workforce in sectors that have remained open and active throughout the crisis, such as in agriculture, construction, logistics and deliveries, personal care and health care provision, garbage collection and cleaning services. They are thus disproportionately exposed to health risks posed by the pandemic.

We note that migrant workers are also over-represented in sectors hardest hit by the pandemic such as in food services, tourism, textile, retail, domestic work and the gig economy, more generally. They are vulnerable to loss of employment and wages due to the negative economic impact of the pandemic.

We are concerned that many migrant workers participate in the informal economy and therefore have minimum protection in the face of job loss and loss/reduction in income. It is estimated that over 60% of the workers at the global level, especially in the informal sector, will see a decline in income after the first quarter in 2020. The migrant workers in the informal economy are inherently in a vulnerable situation and these vulnerabilities are likely to exacerbate by the COVID 19 pandemic.

We note that some of the measures implemented to contain the virus such as lockdowns and stay-in-place orders have at times worsened the living conditions of migrants by restricting their ability to move, to have access to health and other basic services, food, and income, to send remittances, which can negatively impact their families and may encourage new migratory flows, and to engage with fellow migrants or

the wider community for their wellbeing. Border closures have also put pressure on migrants' job security.

We recognize that it is in the interest of all countries to ensure that all relevant public health information is made available to migrants, and that migrants are able to access, where necessary, all available preventive, testing and treatment services.

We express increased concern about the spread of misinformation and the use of stigmatizing narratives in the present context, exposing migrants to increased hardship and hampering the collective effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

We express deep concern over reports of forced return of migrants that do not fully account for the health risks. Such practices have far reaching implications in countries of origin, transit and destination. We encourage governments to consider alternatives, such as temporary permits for stay under humanitarian grounds, alternative lodging in non-custodial settings or suspension of removals. Forced return places additional strain on the countries of return where most health systems are already stretched and may lack capacity to protect returnees and their families. Returnees also face additional risks during transfer and upon return, including lack of access to testing and quarantine facilities, adequate health care, poor water and sanitation systems, and transportation. Returned migrants may also be at risk of trafficking in persons and extreme financial hardship.

We welcome the Secretary-General's *Policy Brief: COVID-19 and People on the Move* and we support its four (4) basic tenets to advancing safe and inclusive human mobility during and in the aftermath of COVID-19, in particular: (i) exclusion is costly in the long run whereas inclusion pays off for everyone, (ii) the response to COVID-19 and protecting the human rights of people are not mutually exclusive, (iii) no one is safe until everyone is safe, and (iv) people on the move are part of the solution.

We also welcome the Report of the Secretary General entitled "Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19", which notes that migrants account for 30 per cent of the workers in some of the most affected sectors in OECD countries. It also recognizes that massive job losses among migrant workers will have knock-on effects on development on economies that are heavily dependent on remittances, which may decline by as much as USD 100 billion over the course of 2020, according to the World Bank.

We further welcome the efforts of the UN System, and in particular, of the International Organization for Migration, to address the impacts of COVID-19 on migrants.

We also welcome the international cooperation demonstrated by many Member States in ensuring the return of migrants who have been stranded as a result of travel restrictions to their countries of origin. We urge stronger international cooperation, including amongst consular authorities, to ensure that such operations are safe, orderly and dignified. We further urge States to refrain from collective expulsions of migrants and

to observe due process and the rule of law in the individual evaluation of cases of migrants for purposes of their return, if necessary, to countries of origin and to facilitate their safe, orderly and dignified repatriation.

We urge States to protect and promote the human rights of migrants, regardless of migration status, including by providing them access to life-saving health and essential services.

We call on States to abide by the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel in the recruitment of migrant health professionals, amidst increasing demand for health workers globally.

We also call upon States to incorporate the health needs of migrants in national and local health care policies and plans, such as by strengthening capacities for service provision, facilitating affordable and non-discriminatory access, reducing communication barriers, and training health care providers on culturally-sensitive service delivery, in order to promote physical and mental health of migrants and communities overall, including by taking into consideration relevant recommendations from the WHO Framework of Priorities and Guiding Principles to Promote the Health of Refugees and Migrants.

We urge States to show greater solidarity during these trying times and strengthen bilateral, sub-regional, regional, and multilateral cooperation to enhance the protection, well-being, safe return and effective reintegration into labor markets of migrant workers, and to ensure that in combating and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, no one is left behind.

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| 1. Afghanistan | 17. Canada | 33. Gambia |
| 2. Albania | 18. Chad | 34. Ghana |
| 3. Andorra | 19. Chile | 35. Guatemala |
| 4. Angola | 20. Colombia | 36. Guinea |
| 5. Antigua and Barbuda | 21. Comoros | 37. Guyana |
| 6. Armenia | 22. Congo (Republic of) | 38. Haiti |
| 7. Azerbaijan | 23. Costa Rica | 39. Honduras |
| 8. Bangladesh | 24. Côte d'Ivoire | 40. Ireland |
| 9. Belarus | 25. Cyprus | 41. Jamaica |
| 10. Belize | 26. Djibouti | 42. Kazakhstan |
| 11. Benin | 27. Ecuador | 43. Kenya |
| 12. Bolivia | 28. Egypt | 44. Kyrgyzstan |
| 13. Burundi | 29. El Salvador | 45. Lesotho |
| 14. Cabo Verde | 30. Equatorial Guinea | 46. Liechtenstein |
| 15. Cambodia | 31. Eritrea | 47. Luxembourg |
| 16. Cameroon | 32. Fiji | 48. Madagascar |

49. Malawi
50. Mali
51. Marshall Islands
52. Mauritius
53. Mexico
54. Monaco
55. Montenegro
56. Morocco
57. Mozambique
58. Myanmar
59. Namibia
60. Nepal
61. Nigeria
62. North Macedonia
63. Norway
64. Pakistan
65. Palau
66. Panama
67. Paraguay
68. Peru
69. Philippines
70. Portugal
71. Republic of Moldova
72. Rwanda
73. Saint Kitts and Nevis
74. Saint Vincent and the
Grenadines
75. Samoa
76. San Marino
77. São Tomé and
Príncipe
78. Saudi Arabia
79. Senegal
80. Serbia
81. Sierra Leone
82. South Africa
83. Spain
84. Sri Lanka
85. Sudan
86. Switzerland
87. Tajikistan
88. Timor-Leste
89. Togo
90. Tonga
91. Tunisia
92. Turkey
93. Tuvalu
94. Uganda
95. United Republic of
Tanzania
96. Uruguay
97. Uzbekistan
98. Vanuatu
99. Venezuela
100. Viet Nam
101. Yemen
102. Zimbabwe
103. State of Palestine