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**STATEMENT BY SPAIN ON CIRCULAR MIGRATION AT PART I OF
THE 17th OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM
Session 2**

20 January 2009

Mr. Chairman,

1. I am very grateful for the positive references that have been made by the representatives of the European Commission and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to the good way in which Spain's agreements with various countries of the Latin American area have been working, and in particular for the extensive report on the agreement with Columbia, presented by Mr. Cordero, the representative of the IOM.
2. Spain is a country that has experienced, in an accelerated manner, an extraordinary migratory impact. In the space of some 12 or 13 years, between 1995 and 2008, the mass of migrant workers has increased by a factor of 8, rising from some 500,000 to more than 4 million persons. Today, like many other countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) affected by the present-day international financial and economic difficulties with which we are all familiar, Spain will also be forced to reorder its priorities in this area and to adapt certain elements of its migration policy.
3. I want to emphasize the efforts that the IOM, the OECD and the Brussels Commission have been making to gather data on the phenomenon of circular migration. The fact is that the information available on these mechanisms is scarce, as indeed is the experience that has been accumulated, no doubt for the reason that, in its present form, this is a relatively recent phenomenon. There are also not many cost-benefit analyses of this form of migration and of the arrangements that support it.
4. For all these reasons, Spain has recently been collaborating with other countries and with a number of international organizations to compile two specialized studies, which were presented last October at the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development in Manila. I am referring, in the first place, to the Guide on Best Practices in Temporary Migration Agreements, prepared jointly by Spain and Morocco and subsequently augmented at the Madrid Seminar, where there was very constructive co-operation with the OSCE, the IOM and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Secondly, I wish to mention our contributions to the Seminar on Circular Migration held on Mauritius, also in 2008.
5. Spain's experience with regard to circular migration is based primarily on the agreements reached with Morocco and with various countries of Latin America and of Sub-Saharan Africa. For the most part, the sector dealt with in these agreements is that of seasonal agricultural production. On this point, further to what has been said here by

Mr. El Jamri, I might add that as recently as last week a joint procedure was concluded in Morocco for the contracting of workers for the strawberry harvest in the South of Andalucía, thereby benefiting some 16,500 Moroccan women out of a total of 25,000 foreigners contracted.

6. Regarding the actual substance of these agreements, I should like to point out in particular the following. First, there is the double system of control, both a priori involving arrangements for providing information to persons who may be interested (regarding Spanish legislation, conditions of work and contracting, and also risks to be avoided), and at the end of the harvest, involving the appearance by the participants at the Embassy or Consular Office of Spain in their country so as to certify that they have in fact returned, which will permit them to take part in the next harvest, thereby closing the migratory circle.

7. Other elements to which I should like to draw attention are the following:

- The active participation of the employers in the process (in the concrete offer of employment, in the selection of the candidates, in the arrangements for housing and transport, etc.);
- An element of co-development as in the case of the agreement with Morocco, through the introduction of the possibility of participation in the establishment of small or medium-sized enterprises;
- The fact that what is involved is a kind of possible path leading, after a number of years, from temporary to permanent migration.

8. In conclusion, I must make special mention of the good results produced by these experiences, particularly with Morocco and Latin America. I must also add, however, that this is by no means a final solution and that the mechanisms involved have not yet been sufficiently tried or evaluated. For all of that, however, a contribution is being made to dealing with the specific and urgent needs both of the workers and of the employers, and both in the country of origin and in the country of destination.

9. Lastly, I believe that we need to keep very much in mind the current financial crisis or economic downturn that is affecting no small number of OECD countries and that, without doubt, is going to affect policies and practices in the area of migration. Obviously, we cannot abandon certain principles or leave unfulfilled certain commitments, but it will indeed be necessary to reorder priorities and seek flexible approaches. It will inevitably be necessary to reduce hiring at the point of origin and to introduce, as Spain is doing, plans for assisted return to countries of origin (together with the prospect of a possible re-entry into Spain following the elapse of a certain period).

10. It is altogether likely that this last prospect will result in a short-term reassessment of the usefulness of the temporary and circular migration arrangements that we are discussing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.