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AND SOCIAL PROTECTION OF THE POPULATION OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN, AT SESSION II OF THE  
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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**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan, I welcome the participants in this forum and wish you fruitful work.

The problems being discussed at today's forum are very important for all parties because labour migration has a huge influence on the socio-economic situation of all the countries of the world, including Russia and Tajikistan, and will continue to do so.

In preparing my statement, I naturally made use of different materials, including surveys and publications by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and international experts on migration, and material published on the Internet.

Labour migration is a natural result of the process of tumultuous economic integration among countries.

Labour force migration from one country to another is a global phenomenon which increased throughout the world in the second half of the twentieth century. However, labour migration flows did not envelop Tajikistan and other former Soviet republics until after the collapse of the USSR.

During Soviet times, migration processes in Tajikistan were extremely passive for quite a number of reasons. Primarily, it was a combination of the population's increasing standard of living with its traditional way of life, especially with a patriarchal environment.

Family traditions in Tajikistan were more enduring compared to traditions in the overwhelming majority of republics of the former USSR. External migration did exist, but for educational purposes rather than for work.

However, extremely high birth rates combined with limited land resources (93 per cent of the territory of our republic consists of mountains) and the dramatic drop in industrial and agricultural production after the collapse of the USSR led to a reduction in living space, i.e., the conditions for sustaining normal life. Whereas in 1960 each inhabitant

of Tajikistan had 0.34 hectares of cultivated land, by 2004 this indicator had fallen to 0.13 hectares, in other words an almost three-fold reduction. This situation meant that people were forced to seek ways of supporting themselves outside the country.

In that connection, a proper regulatory and legal framework has now been organized in Tajikistan to regulate labour migration issues. In particular, two laws and any number of programmes, conceptual frameworks and regulations have been adopted to directly reflect the official State policy as regards labour migration processes. Fairly liberal laws are in force in Tajikistan with respect to the regulation of labour migration processes. The legislative framework for the creation of conditions for free labour migration is set out in Article 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, which states that citizens have the right to free movement and choice of place of residence and to leave the country and return to it.

It should be pointed out that the main labour migration flows from our country are for the most part directed towards Russia and also towards Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). The results of a survey of households conducted by government institutions in 2003 confirmed that most labour migrants from the Republic of Tajikistan are in Russia (336,700 persons or 96 per cent of the migrants), Kyrgyzstan (4,800 persons or 1.4 per cent of the migrants) and Kazakhstan (2,300 persons or 0.7 per cent of the migrants).

In citing these figures, I should like to mention that labour migration is not only of benefit to the donor countries. It should not be forgotten that labour migration comes about primarily as a result of a demand for labour force in the recipient countries (countries receiving the migrants).

In this situation one of the principal laws of the market economy comes into play — the law of supply and demand. In the case of labour migration, the demand for labour resources gives rise to a flow of these resources from neighbouring countries with a rapidly growing population and considerable labour resources.

For the donor countries the main positive aspect of migration is the transfer of funds.

In view of the absence of reliable information, the figure provided by various researchers for 2008 was a flow of funds in the region of 800 million United States dollars through labour migration channels. If we agree with these figures given above, and they are equivalent to roughly 20 to 25 per cent of the country's State budget revenue, this had a considerable influence on the limited markets and investment preferences, in view of the limited nature of the latter as such.

This being the case, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is taking measures to draw the capital of labour migrants into the country's economy.

This is confirmed by any number of meetings between the Head of State with labour migrants outside the republic in CIS countries and elsewhere abroad.

It must be noted in that connection that the Government provides guarantees of the free and equal involvement of the capital of labour migrants in such sectors as the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, industry, energy and the processing of agricultural produce.

At the same time, I should like to point out that there are a number of problems with regard to labour migration. First and foremost, these are:

- The predominance of unregulated, spontaneous external labour migration and the rise in the illegal employment of migrants. Because of the visa-free regime in operation with Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, migrants from Tajikistan enter the host country legally, but become illegal labour migrants because of violations of the residence regulations for working migrants;
- Poor bilateral co-operation in the field of labour migration with the countries receiving our working migrants;
- The absence of a developed infrastructure to deal with potential and working migrants in Tajikistan and in the host countries;
- The failure to provide social and legal protection for labour migrants, including the absence of social insurance (insurance policies), resulting in countless violations of their rights and freedoms;
- As a result of a reduction in the level of qualifications of the republic's labour resources, a low level of professional qualifications on the part of migrants, meaning that they do not meet the requirements of the host countries' labour markets;
- Low level of awareness and knowledge of the law and a lack of quite a number of the skills and knowledge needed by migrants to adapt to a new environment, including no knowledge or poor knowledge of the necessary languages.

On this basis, the labour migration market is currently regarded as part of the national labour market. Solving the problems of external labour migration involves two basic aspects:

- An active State policy to stimulate the development of the main works requiring labour, first and foremost small and medium-sized enterprises, and thus helping to create new jobs;
- Reform of the vocational education system in keeping with the requirements of today's labour market and organization of a system of pre-job training and pre-departure orientation for labour migrants;
- Liberalization of and reduction in the State's role in the organization of external labour migration through the creation of a package of incentives for activities by economic entities from business structures and non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Raising the level of competence and qualifications of public sector employees in the migration services;
- Development of a social partnership with NGOs and the media to increase potential labour migrants' awareness and knowledge of the law.

To that end, we have already done some work in this area. For example, at the start of last year a governmental decree saw the establishment of an adult training centre in Tajikistan to provide labour migrants with vocational training arranged according to modules.

The State Employment Assistance Programme for 2008 to 2009 was approved by a governmental decree. The Conceptual Framework for Employment Assistance until 2012 and the Conceptual Framework for the Creation and Preservation of Jobs in the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period from 2008 to 2015 have both been approved.

Work has begun on the development of a draft plan for the creation of jobs.

Furthermore, we have been holding weekly job fairs in Tajikistan since the start of the year.

Thus, more than 100 such fairs have already been held. These fairs were attended by around 30,000 citizens seeking employment and around 1,700 organizations and enterprises.

There is still much more to say about the problems of labour migration and about the measures being taken in Tajikistan to solve them, but the limited time available for my statement means that it is not possible to do so.

Allow me to wish everyone a successful forum.

Thank you for your attention.