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**STATEMENT
BY**

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AT

**THE HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION
AND DEVELOPMENT**

at the

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Madam President,

International Migration is a subject of much global interest at present. It involves people and has differing impact on sending, receiving and transit countries, including on their economies and societies. I am therefore glad that international migration is being discussed at the United Nations. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the detailed report as well as the events organized as part of the preparatory process for this High Level Dialogue.

Madam President,

India is a major country of origin, destination and transit of migrants, with a long history of attracting and sending people to other lands. It is estimated that around 20 million people of Indian origin live in other countries while another 20 million migrants, including a large number of irregular migrants are in India today. Overseas Indians, through sheer dint of effort, very often in trying circumstances, have significantly contributed to the countries of their destination while, at the same time, playing a positive role in building a bridge with India. Recognizing this, every year we celebrate their achievement with a "Proviso Bharatiya Divas" or "Day of the Indian Migrant" and have taken several innovative investment and policy initiatives including the "Overseas Citizenship of India".

Madam President,

In the context of globalization there is need to recognize the inevitability of international migration. This presents challenges and opportunities, including the increased demand for specialists in developed countries to strengthen their international competitiveness. In fact, the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects 2006 notes that a rise in migration from developing countries raises incomes of natives in high-income countries. The developed countries would therefore benefit by a greater openness than hitherto in allowing movement of natural persons across national frontiers and through greater political will and determination for a successful conclusion of the GATS MODE 4 negotiations.

High income countries must address the legitimate neomeogogra-5472.isomedur

Madam President,

Coming from Kerala, which is one of the largest places of origin of many of our workers overseas, I can personally testify to the importance of remittances, which are often the most important source of livelihood for the families of the migrant workers, and support not just one but many persons.

Madam President,

There is no restriction in India on migrating overseas. We favour a regular, non-discriminatory and orderly process, whether for permanent or shorter-term migration. In this context, artificial barriers to migration by high-income countries should not be created and that receiving as well as sending countries act to reinforce the positives from migration and work together in a cooperative atmosphere while being sensitive to each other's concerns.

We also believe that countries of origin benefit from the return of migrants with skills or capital that they would not have acquired at home. The existence of reliable domestic institutions encourages the involvement by migrants in the development of their countries of origin. 'drain drain' as a result of migration of skilled and highly trained people can also be translated into an overall gain.

Madam President,

As we speak about international migration today, we also need to note the problematic facet of irregular migration, which is a cause of concern for our collective well-being. Moreov