

UNCTAD 14

“Looking Beyond Emergencies: Creating Opportunities in Migrant Sourcing
and Transiting Countries”

Speech for the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Nairobi, Tsavo 2, 15:00

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Thank you Ambassador Bhattacharya

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon and thank you all for being here today.

This event is co-hosted by UNCTAD and the German Federal Government.

The world is experiencing the biggest refugee emergency since World War II. In 2015, 65.3 million people were forcibly displaced; among those, 21.3 million are refugees.

Moreover in 2015, 244 million people lived and worked outside their home country.

These numbers show the magnitude of the crisis and the need for a rapid coordinated response to address it. But we have to do more.

We have to go beyond the emergency response.

We have to address one of the key root causes of migration: chronic poverty and economic fragility.

We need to make sure that migration is one option, but NOT the only option to prosper.

To meet the aspirations of those yearning for a better life – and to avert the humanitarian catastrophes of future migration crises – we need to reboot the economic conditions for prosperity around the world.

Development is not just about economic growth. It is about transforming an economy: increasing productivity; creating more and better jobs, particularly for women and the youth; diversifying economic activities in rural areas; and shifting investment and employment to more dynamic areas such as manufacturing or high-value services.

What can UNCTAD offer to address the economic causes of migration?

UNCTAD has over half- century experience in development cooperation; it provides assistance to create a world economy that serves the interests of all. UNCTAD technical assistance can be instrumental in diversifying economic opportunities both in countries of origin and in transit countries, particularly in rural areas and in the Least Developed Countries.

One of our objectives today is to identify what kind of support could be effective to boost growth and employment in the countries of origin,

countries of transit and recipient developing countries. However, I would also like to point to the role that the diaspora plays in the development of the country of origin. UNCTAD also offers tools to harness the benefits of the diaspora for the country of origin.

In Lesotho, for example, where remittances accounted for \$203 per person in 2015 and for 17.4% of the GDP. Or in Liberia, where remittances accounted for \$158 per person and for 25% of its GDP.

Let me stop here and turn over the floor. I am confident that with your ideas, insights, and experiences, we can begin to make migration a personal choice rather than a last resort.

I wish you a very productive and engaging session.

Thank you for your attention.