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**SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS:
MIGRANT WORKERS**

**Written statement* submitted by Migrants Rights International (MRI),
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[5 February 2004]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

1. Migrants Rights International, a global network of civil society organizations promoting the human rights of migrants, calls the attention of the 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights to the situation that millions of migrant workers and members of their families face today.
2. The United Nations estimates the number of international migrants at 175 million at the start of the 21st century. This means that one out of 35 persons is a migrant, including migrant workers and members of their families, refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons. This figure, however, does not include irregular or undocumented migrants – those who fall through the cracks of regulated channels – who are highly vulnerable, and in need of special attention and protection of their basic human rights.
3. This UN figure is expected to increase, as determined by various factors in migration today, including disparities in economic development, demand for both skilled and low skilled labour, particularly in the ageing populations of industrialized countries, environmental degradation, aggression and armed conflicts, human rights violations, access to information technology, and availability of different modes of travel. In other words, the intensity of globalization, i.e. the increased global interdependence and interconnection of financial, trade, commercial, and information flows, will also determine the rate of migratory flows.
4. The social, cultural, and economic contribution that migrants bring to their host countries and countries of origin is an important aspect of international migration, which is only beginning to be acknowledged recently. In 2002 alone, migrant workers sent home at least US\$88 billion through formal remittance channels, making remittances the second largest source of external finance for developing countries, next to foreign direct investment (FDI). A considerable volume of these remittances come from women migrant workers, who now comprise half of the migrants worldwide. In addition, migrants contribute positively to the development of the economy of their host countries. Migrant workers perform the jobs that the native population refuses to take, or is not able to provide, such as in agriculture, construction, care giving for children and the elderly, and household services. At the same time, migrants contribute to the enrichment of the culture and diversity of societies.
5. However, despite this recognized need for migrant workers and their tremendous positive contributions, many migrant-receiving countries continue to impose policies and measures that are threatening migrants' lives and safety. Highly-securitized border controls, detention, racial profiling, and massive deportations have endangered migrants' lives, contributed to increasing incidents of racism and racial discrimination, and violated migrants' human rights and dignity.
6. Enjoying the benefits of international labour migration, fighting terrorism, combating trafficking, and addressing the problems of irregular migration can be achieved in full respect of basic human rights norms and principles. While it is a valid and urgent concern for States to embark on policies and measures to address the challenges of international migration, it is also equally imperative that States implement their responsibility to ensure that these policies and measures have human rights as their core framework.
7. Thus, the entry into force on 1 July 2003 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is indeed a landmark

achievement in the promotion and protection of migrants' human rights. The Convention offers the most comprehensive body of human rights norms and standards that States can adopt in managing migration.

8. In view of this, Migrants Rights International invites States, particularly the industrialized migrant-receiving States, to ratify the Convention as their way of reaffirming human rights norms and principles that they are already committed to, including the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.

9. With the establishment of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, we urge States that are parties to the Convention, to abide by their human rights obligations by implementing the Convention fully and effectively. Furthermore, commitment to human rights by all States also means providing the Committee with the necessary resources and support so it can effectively carry out its task. On our part as migrant civil society organizations, we pledge our support to the work of the Committee and look forward to our role as active partners in monitoring migrants' human rights at the national level.

10. Likewise, at the Commission on Human Rights, we appeal for stronger cooperation in the enhancement of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants. We appeal for relevant States to extend her the invitation to visit their territories, and that all States implement her recommendations seriously, and respond to her urgent appeals.

11. At the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, we commend the work of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of non-citizens, Mr. David Weissbrodt. We note with full support the conclusions and recommendations he made in his final report that was submitted to the Fifty-fifth session, and urge States, international agencies, and other stakeholders to join in their implementation.

12. Furthermore, basic in the promotion and protection of migrants' human rights is the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and intolerance. These are societal ills that continue to victimize many migrants, subjecting them to inhuman conditions, and systematically violating their human rights and dignity. Thus, we remind States of their commitment to this global fight against racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia, by actively pursuing the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action. We urge States to implement their national action plans in line with the recommendations of Durban, to enjoin cooperation of civil society, international agencies, private sector, and other stakeholders, and to make these efforts as inclusive, participatory, and transparent as possible.

13. As a final note, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan leaves us an important reminder when he addressed the European Parliament in the beginning of this year. He said: "...the people who move across borders today, in search of a better life for themselves and their families are our brothers and sisters too. Let us treat them that way." (Press Release/SG/SM/9134, 29 January 2004).
