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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA  
Conference on International Migration  
in the Arab World  
11-16 May 1981  
Nicosia, Cyprus

ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. PETROS STYLIANOU  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR

TO THE CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION  
IN THE ARAB WORLD



It is privilege and pleasure for me to be given this opportunity to address this important conference on International Migration on the Arab World, which the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia has decided to organise in Nicosia instead of Beirut, where it was originally scheduled to take place. Notwithstanding its readiness to act as host country to the conference, the Cyprus Government is sincerely sorry for the tragic circumstances in which Beirut had to be abandoned as the place of the conference

The subject to be debated by this impressive gathering is certainly one that has assumed singular significance and importance, especially under the world circumstances prevailing today and particularly those in the Arab World.

From the programme of the conference, it is obvious that the themes to be discussed cover a wide range of interesting aspects of the problem and I am sure that the conclusions to be reached will prove most rewarding and useful. Themes like "The Future of International Migration", "Major Issues in Receiving - and Sending - Countries", "Issues Relating to the welfare of Migrants", "Employment Market and the Migration of Manpower in the Gulf Countries", and "The Socio-Economic Characteristics of International Migrants in the Arab Countries", to mention but a few of the subjects to be discussed, are bound to arouse considerable interest and give much food for thought. And the conclusions to be reached may well provide answers to some of the problems raised by international migration in other areas of the world as well.

What is of particular interest to Cyprus is the theme on "Employment Market and the Migration Manpower in the Gulf Countries". As many of you may be aware, a few thousand Cypriot skilled artisans and qualified professionals have been rendering their services in the Gulf area since the invasion of our country in July, 1974, when, literally overnight, they lost everything they had - their homes, their properties and even their personal belongings - and became refugees in their own country. I avail myself of this opportunity to express the Cyprus Government's deep gratitude to these friendly countries for the confidence shown in our people. At the same time, we have every reason to feel proud of the creditable manner in which both the Cypriot construction companies operating

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in the Gulf countries and the staff employed by them have acquitted themselves as citizens of their host countries.

There is no doubt that, in a steadily shrinking and interdependent world, international migration is bound to take on a new dimension in the years to come, especially as national barriers are removed and travel formalities simplified or abandoned altogether. Naturally this new situation creates various problems both to the host countries and the migrant employees themselves-social, economic, welfare, cultural, etc. I am certain that your discussions and exchange of experiences will bear fruitful results, and that they will make a valuable contribution to the study of international migration in the world at large.

In wishing you every success in your deliberations, I should also like to extend to you a warm welcome to Cyprus and wish you a pleasant stay here.