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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, 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.

[22 May 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Revisiting Migrants' Contributions from a Human Rights-Based Approach

The increase in migration waves from countries of origin to countries of destination has led to reconsidering the contributions of migrants in the countries they go to. According to current estimates, there are 281 million migrants in the world. Migration may provide enormous opportunities and advantages for migrants, host communities, indigenous communities, and states, however, when it is unregulated it can create significant challenges. These challenges include massive social infrastructure with unexpected arrivals of large numbers of people and deaths of migrants making dangerous journeys. This highlights the pressing need for evidence-based, rational migration policies such as the Global Compact and increased international cooperation. Migrants participate in improving economies for both host and origin countries, as they contribute a good proportion to the gross domestic product of countries, and the remittances sent by overseas workers are a major source of external financing and foreign currency. In 57 countries, these remittances exceeded 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022, most of which went to low-income families. The more countries provide easy mechanisms to receive remittances from migrants abroad, the more these remittances will increase. Conversely, when restrictions are placed, these remittances will decrease. There are suggestions to reduce the fees imposed on remittances from migrants abroad to encourage migrants to make more remittances.

First: Positive Practices of Migrants' Contributions:

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association reviewed a set of positive measures and practices for migrants in countries of origin, destination and transit. In Egypt, the combined report of the second to fourth periodic reports submitted to the Committee on Migrant Workers recognized the positive contribution of Syrian migrants to the Egyptian economy. The government considered that Syrians, who constitute 17% of foreigners in Egypt are among the best nationalities positively contributing to the labor market and the Egyptian economy(1). In a related context, according to the International Organization for Migration estimates, more than a third of resident migrants in Egypt, representing 37%, work in stable jobs, indicating that a significant number of them positively participate in the labor market and the growth of the Egyptian economy. Cash transfers sent by migrants from Morocco to destination countries constitute a large percentage of the gross domestic product, significantly boosting the Moroccan economy. In 2020, remittances constituted 6.5% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP)(2). According to the World Bank Group's Migration and Development Brief, these rates are among the highest in Africa(3). In Italy, official research indicates that migrant workers contributed \$148 billion to the Italian economy, representing 9% of the GDP in 2021. Among the 5.2 million migrants residing in Italy in 2021, approximately 2,257,000 people were employed, making up 10% of the workforce, with the most substantial value contribution observed in agriculture, restaurants, and construction sectors(4). In a related context, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association noticed a set of other facilitating factors that help migrants make greater contributions, especially socially. For example, Portugal granted temporary citizenship rights to migrant, and Italy expressed its intention to grant temporary work permits to more than half a million undocumented migrants whose services are considered necessary in harvesting crops and in care and support work for the elderly. The collective efforts of member states resulted in the United Nations General Assembly's approval of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, a document outlining 23 objectives aimed at fostering multi-party cooperation in global migration management. The document includes policy recommendations that attempt to achieve a balance between human rights, the human dignity of migrants, state sovereignty, and the rule of law.

Second: Obstacles that Prevent the Recognition of Migrants' Contributions:

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association has observed a range of obstacles facing migrants in law and practice in destination countries or in host communities. These obstacles impede the recognition of migrants' contributions and limit their integration. For instance, in more than 100 member states, labor laws do not cover domestic workers. In practical terms, migrant often struggle to access essential services like healthcare and education on par with local citizens in their host countries. Additionally, migrant experience a loss of their cultural heritage and traditions. Specifically, migrant families abroad encounter various legal and logistical challenges when dealing with the transportation or burial of deceased family members in line with their customs(5). Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association also noted, through reviewing a number of researches concerned with migrant stories that some migrants in host countries may in practice face discrimination and exclusion, and these practices can lead to unlimited costs for migrants and receiving societies at the same time. According to a related study, exclusion has affected the well-being of Russian and Estonian migrants in Finland. According to the International Migration Report for the year 2020, exclusion and discrimination have had a negative impact on their contribution to trade, skills availability, labor force, and cultural exchange, all of which are key advantages for future societies(6).

Third: Recommendations:

- The Human Rights Council should urge UN member states to include domestic workers under the category of migrants in their national and local labor laws.
- Considering adopting measures, in law and practice, that respect and protect human rights, eliminate barriers and obstacles preventing migrants from enjoying these rights. These measures should be based on international human rights standards.
- The Council should encourage member states to accede to the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as increasing accession to this Convention would improve the contributions of migrants in receiving countries.
- Supporting initiatives to reduce the costs of fees imposed on remittances for migrants working in host countries, in line with Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The private sector should play a crucial role in improving the lives and integration of migrants in receiving countries, by providing legal services to local migrants to help enhance their integration efforts.
- Urging countries to expand the use of digital technology and payment systems using mobile devices to facilitate sending and receiving remittances and reduce their cost. Reducing this cost will free up a significant amount of money that can be directed to the most vulnerable and poor groups.

(1) Second to fourth periodic reports submitted by Egypt under article 73 of the Convention, due in 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/mskr9dep>

(2) Moroccan Migration Dynamics Prospects for the Future, https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs_10_2002.pdf

(3) Remittances from Moroccan Diaspora Hit \$5.6 Billion in June 2023, <https://tinyurl.com/2r2yv678>

(4) Remittances from Italy up by 12% in 2021,

<https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/40451/remittances-from-italy-up-by-12-in-2021>

(5) PROMISING PRACTICES in the PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO MIGRANTS, page 29,

https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1416/files/docs/provision_of_essential_services_-_good_practices.pdf

(6) The World Migration Report 2020, <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2020-interactive/>