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## **Migrants underwrite development through their remittances – Ban**



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses the General Assembly (file photo)

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[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today underlined the role of migrants in accelerating development through remitting funds regularly to their countries of origin, noting that their economic contributions to host societies are often overlooked.

“Let us not forget, entire communities subsist almost entirely on remittances,” Mr. Ban [told](#) the General Assembly’s thematic debate on Migration and Development.

“Across the developing world, remittances make it possible for families to get health care... send their children to school... and start up small businesses. Remittances underwrite development. They are a source for stability and social cohesion,” said the Secretary-General.

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He observed that without the support of relatives working abroad, many more people might seek to migrate.

Mr. Ban said that migrants do not always fit into the stereotype of an unskilled group of people with low levels of education doing the so-called “3D” jobs – tasks that are considered “dirty, dangerous and difficult.”

“To the contrary, in many countries they are the best and the brightest: doctors, nurses, engineers and other highly educated professionals. These are a welcome addition to any society,” said Mr. Ban. “It is easy to see the negatives but it is much more difficult to appreciate the positives. And yet those positives ultimately overshadow the negatives,” he added.

Nearly two thirds of the world’s 214 million migrants live in wealthy countries, sending homes more than \$300 billion in remittances every year, an amount that dwarfs international aid flows, the Secretary-General noted, reiterating his call to governments to keep their countries’ borders open and not to restrict migration unduly.

He condemned what he described as a growing business in human trafficking, especially the trade in women and children for sex.

“The global economic crisis has compounded all these problems. Increasingly, we see extremist politicians targeting migrants and migration to deflect attention from national problems. This creates more discrimination... more fear... and more problems,” said Mr. Ban. “We have to fight these trends with reason and common sense.”

He stressed the importance of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and called for better and more regular funding of the body, noting that a country was urgently required to volunteer to chair the Forum next year.

Looking ahead to the 2013 United Nations High-level Dialogue on Migration, Mr. Ban said the gathering will be an important opportunity to improve global cooperation.

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