



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



Ban urges support for migrant families in message marking International Day



Migrant workers send home money to their families

15 May 2010 – Focusing on the social and cultural contributions of migrants, as well as on the challenges they face, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today urged governments to implement policies that help migrants adapt and prosper in their host countries.

In his message for the International Day of Families, observed annually on 15 May, the Secretary-General noted that, despite its many benefits, migration places heavy burdens on family members.

“Migrants can face harsh living conditions, discrimination and low wages. They often lack safety nets, and suffer disproportionately in times of economic hardship. Unemployment can push many to the bottom rung of societies,” he stated.

“Children of migrants can face a number of emotional and economic challenges unique to their circumstances, in particular a greater vulnerability to human trafficking, child labour and violence.”

Mr. Ban noted that the worsening economic crisis is partially to blame for the pressure on families to leave their homes. Many also migrate out of necessity due to poverty, unemployment, political or armed conflicts or violations of human rights.

At the same time, he also highlighted the positive impact of migration, including the opportunity for men and women to send income to family members back home, the valuable social and cultural contributions migrants make to their host countries, and

the chance for women migrants to gain independence and autonomy, becoming positive role models for others.

The Secretary-General called on those States that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

The Convention, which came into force in 2003, aims to protect migrant workers and their families from exploitation and the violation of their human rights. It is based on the idea that migrant workers have basic rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in international human rights treaties adopted by most countries.

The number of international migrants around the world has more than doubled since the 1960s to an estimated 214 million, according to the UN International Labour Organization (ILO).

To mark the day this year, the UN has a series of events organized in New York, including a briefing organized by the Department for Economic and Social Affairs ([DESA](#)).

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

Independent UN rights experts speak out against Arizona immigration law