**Speech for HS on ‘*The Moral and Economic Imperative for Fairer, Smarter and more Humane Migration’* at the 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva, Switzerland, 17-21 October 2015.**

***Hon’ble Chairperson and Distinguished Delegates,***

Migration is not a new phenomenon. It has been there since time immemorial and many countries have experienced it in some form or other; only the degree and intensity varies. What has added new angle to human migration in recent times is the process of globalization which has broken the barriers of the nation state facilitating seamless movement of people, goods, services and ideas. A new noticeable trend is increase in number of women migrants.

2. Nobody would like to leave his or her country of birth and his home and hearth without insurmountable circumstances. People migrate in search of better opportunities and at times under very compelling circumstances due to economic, political or social reasons. The difference between voluntary and involuntary migration, or between [refugees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refugee) fleeing political conflict versus economic or [labour migration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour_migration), is complex.

3. The exodus of hundreds of thousand people from Syria **and other countries as refugees** is a man-made human tragedy. This has raised a number of issues, which need to be addressed with great degree of sensitivity. **Far from being propelled by economic reasons, this crisis is mostly about refugees**.  We encourage the Governments concerned to work out comprehensive and mutually beneficial solutions derived from their international obligations and the best practices dealing with such large scale refugee movement in the post-World War-II period. They must also deeply reflect on the factors leading to this crisis.

4. I wish to keep our comments within the framework of the theme for the General Debate relating to fairer, smarter and more humane migration.

5. Migration poses challenges and moral dilemma for destination countries, as fear, anxiety and doubts arise about the interests of local population. However, it also presents an opportunity for economic growth, human development and cultural diversity. The host country benefits in terms of their labour, both skilled and unskilled, talent and expertise, energy and innovation brought in by younger migrants. The native country benefits in terms of remittances, savings, skills and international contacts provided by migrants. Migration also strengthens tourism and nostalgia for one's foods and products of the country of origin creates markets for those products in the immigration country fostering local production and international trade.

6. The top destination countries for immigration have generally witnessed social, cultural and political diversity and strengthening of liberty, freedom and democratic values. Migration also helps in bridging the socio-cultural divides and brings people together leading to better understanding, which is very essential for a peaceful world.

7. Now let me share India's experience with migration. Since time immemorial, India has witnessed migration as one of the important features of interaction with the outside world, and as means for exchange of ideas, trade and commerce among many other things. The central theme and understanding of migration for Indians is derived from the Indian philosophical concept of “**वसुधैव कुटुंबकम”** which means that the entire world is one family. Historically Indian traders, seafarers and monks have migrated and settled in foreign lands as goodwill ambassadors spreading the message of unity, peace and brotherhood and **never ever to conquer territories.** Integral Humanism is deep rooted in the Indian Psyche.

8. Over 28.5 million overseas Indians, including Non-Resident Indians and Persons-of-Indian Origin, are presently residing overseas. Almost similar number of migrants, including irregular migrants, have made India their home. This has made India an important country of origin and of destination for migrants.

9. One of the finest examples of fairer, smarter and more humane migration is proudly showcased in Indian history. The Parsis, (Zoroastrians) emigrated to India for reasons of religious freedom and they were allowed to settle in India thanks to the goodwill of a local ruler. So they were given a place to live and opportunity to develop. **Over the centuries the Parsis have integrated and assimilated themselves into Indian society like sugar in the milk. They have contributed immensely to the history and development of India. Their achievements are not only respected by the whole nation but every Indian also takes pride in their success as own success.**

10. Sustainable development can only be achieved with the inclusion of all groups. This finds reflection in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by including migration and human mobility in four of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals target. Our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Vision of **सबका साथ सबका विकास**, which means ‘together with all, development for all’, underscores the importance of inclusive growth.

11. The Non-resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin, by their creativity, entrepreneurship, diligence and law abiding nature have played an important role in global brand building and image of India as a ‘Knowledge Economy’. They have become the most effective brand ambassadors to showcase India’s proud heritage, culture and its progress and also have contributed immensely to their host countries.

12. As a responsible country, India constructively engages with the *International Organisation for Migration, Global Forum for Migration and Development, Colombo Process* and similar other regional and international platforms, which promote and protect the interests of migrants. India has been advocating the need to view migration from a developmental paradigm, from humane perspective, and as a win-win situation.

13. I believe that we, the Parliamentarians need to support for greater international efforts to supplement national efforts in addressing the challenges associated with migration. Climate change may add new dimensions to the issue of migration. We acknowledge the fact that the solutions and approaches for dealing with migration may differ from country to country, based on local and national circumstances, but at all times it should conform to the basic norms of human dignity and human rights of migrants.

14. India calls for concerted effort to promote teamwork amongst nations to maximize the benefits of migration while reducing its negative effects. I conclude:-

 **“ प्राणिनाम् उपकाराय यद् इव परार्थ च !**

 **कर्मणा मनसा वचा तदैव मतिमान भजेत ” !!**

Which means "by his work, thoughts and words, an intelligent man **(and this applies to nations also)** must perform actions which will be beneficial for all living entities in this life."

 **Thank you.**

**Uprooting people against their wishes or forced migration from one’s motherland to an unknown foreign land is traumatic for individuals and families. On the other hand fairer and smarter migration in search of better opportunities leads to growth , development and a win-win situation for the native and the host countries in particular and global society in general.**