



The Hague Process  
on Refugees and Migration

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**To: Mr. Peter SUTHERLAND KCMG**  
**Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on International Migration and Development;**  
**c/o UN General Assembly Office for the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development,**  
**UN Headquarters**  
**First Avenue at 46th Street**  
**New York, NY 10017**  
**USA**

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The Hague, Netherlands, 4 July 2013

Dear Peter Sutherland,

Together with the Roosevelt Study Center, 'The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration' (THP) Foundation has prepared this letter as an official submission for serious consideration by the forthcoming UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which will take place on 3 and 4 October 2013 in New York at the United Nations Headquarters. We refer to UN General Assembly resolution 63/225 of 19 December 2008, where the General Assembly decided to devote a high-level dialogue to international migration and development during its sixty-eighth session in 2013.

As point of departure we have chosen the universally applicable and widely respected 'Four Freedoms' of President Franklin D. Roosevelt; four fundamental freedoms that people "everywhere in the world" ought to enjoy:

1. Freedom of speech
2. Freedom of worship
3. Freedom from want
4. Freedom from fear

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### **Roosevelt's Four Freedoms in relation to Migration and Development**

During the Second World War, a positive vision for the future was being developed. President Franklin D. Roosevelt started this process with the declaration of the Four Freedoms in his State of the Union address of January 6, 1941. He did so as an urgent matter “for our own time and generation,” and the Four Freedoms, together with the Atlantic Charter from the same year, would thereafter provide the basis for the United Nations system. His spouse, Eleanor, made a crucial contribution by guiding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to fruition in 1948, setting a benchmark for future generations to come. Later, environmental concerns led to an increasing interest in sustainability (Stockholm 1972) and “our common future”, as expressed in the report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 (the Brundtland Report). Five years later, in 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) took place in Rio de Janeiro.

At the end of the last century, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, together with his assistant John Ruggie, gave shape and substance to the idea of a Global Compact in support of the Earth Charter. Both the Compact and the Charter acknowledge that effective change to achieve sustainability is only possible when governance involves the complementary input of politics, business and civil society. A civil society initiative, the Earth Charter of 2000 called for partnerships of government, civil society, and business to secure effective governance. The document concludes:

*“Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life”.*

This is also the basis for the 2000 Millennium Declaration and the associated Development Goals. In 2002 Rio +20 built further on “our common future” by introducing the Sustainable Development Goals. In that same year Corporate Social Responsibility became a focus for global business enterprises, a challenge to the unhindered practices of free market neo-liberalism. This whole process, which began with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech of 1941, has mainly been driven by the UN.

We believe that the moral drive and ethical imperative of the Four Freedoms and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be brought to the issue of Migration and Development. This can be done in the spirit of the Earth Charter's concluding remarks, that is: anew, within the context of our modern times, with their fast-pace challenges and opportunities, and with full respect for cultural diversity. With this proposal we align ourselves fully with your own recent statement:

*“The bottom line is that making migration part of the world's development strategy will have a meaningful impact on the lives of migrants, affording them greater access to rights and to the fruits of their labor. Perhaps even more important, it could change public perceptions of migrants, so that they are viewed as a blessing rather than a scourge”.*

### **The Need for a Compelling Vision for the Future**

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's State of the Union address to Congress on January 6, 1941 stated the following:

*“In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.  
The first is freedom of speech and expression -- everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way -- everywhere in the*

*world. The third is freedom from want -- which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants -- everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear -- ... -- anywhere in the world. That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. "*

As President Franklin D. Roosevelt taught us, visions and ideas matter. Powerful ideas about how government and economy work have helped to define the agenda of world politics for many decades. Yet we are still faced with major problems: a world out of balance, with radical inequality, deep insecurity, and threats to basic rights.

To win the world back, progressives need clear and convincing narratives and paradigms around which to organize. Bold ideas and a compelling vision for the future – grounded in evidence, articulated in policy, and moved up and out into the world – can create the kind of common knowledge that shapes the next political era.

We believe that now more than ever we need a compelling vision for the future of migration, refugees and development in the world of today. Hence it is of crucial importance that the UN High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development (HLD) considers the use-value and potential impact of President Roosevelt's Four Freedoms for migration and development issues in the face of the challenges and opportunities of our time.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms were aimed at overcoming totalitarian thinking. Today when refugee and migration issues are being depicted, we are aware that a principal reason for people to flee their homes and seek refuge is fear. But in reality it is not only fear (or the lack of freedom of religion or speech) that is experienced by those on the move. It is also about the fear in those societies at the receiving end of refugees and migration. A significant part of the challenge comes from those who fear refugees and migrants because they are different, because they possess their own culture, religion, history and background. In reality, therefore, all people have to overcome fear as a common objective. This requires recognizing common interests, providing common opportunities, and respecting the worth and dignity of all members of humankind. We need to be aware how refugees and migrants can contribute to our 'wants'; they are or can become a strong force in contributing to societies.

Although they may differ from local populations, refugees and migrants should not be regarded as objects of care but as human beings who give strength to our societies and contribute to fulfilling our wants. A positive depiction and perception of refugees and migrants is key for overcoming fear at the receiving end.

The Four Freedoms of President Franklin D. Roosevelt was a call for action that fed into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the end of colonialism, and the victory of democracy and democracies the world over. Now, seventy-two years after his speech, we know that democracy alone does not release us from fear. The vast global cities that now occupy such dominant positions on each continent are facing the challenges of practicing diversity. So too are stakeholders in the business world: Corporate Social Responsibility is the new way forward.

It is not only about democracy and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Crucially, it is about how the partnership for good governance, involving governments, civil society and businesses, is essential for effectively dealing with refugees and migration. This vital partnership can only be effective if we overcome fear.

## **The Challenge**

Migration is of all times, integral to human history, but it has gained more attention in recent years at the local, regional and international level. Migration and 'refugees' are slowly beginning to be seen as an important potential resource for national economies and individual companies in the competition for talent. As the 2002 *Declaration of The Hague on the Future of Refugees and Migration Policy* already stated:

*“Refugees and migrants have skills, knowledge, experience and strong aspirations for a better life. These must be harnessed to productive and enriching endeavours, not wasted by exclusion from the normal life of the community in which they live. Access to the labour market, education, health and other public resources are important incentives to develop their own capabilities. Such a policy, empowering refugees and migrants to lead fulfilling lives, also has positive effects on the receiving societies in terms of enhancing individual autonomy, reducing social costs and increasing public acceptance of the value of refugees and migration”.*

The discourse surrounding refugees and migration, however, remains sensitive. Policies often fail to reach the ground in practice, and the debate is often framed around the narrow notion of security.

The immediate impact of the global economic and financial crisis, evolving demographics, and the effects of environmental degradation are affecting peoples' lives around the world. These developments raise major new opportunities and challenges that are as yet not sufficiently understood, acknowledged, or even addressed. The stakeholder population is either too fragmented or compartmentalized, with many actors only able to operate in their own domains. Yet as the nature of refugee and migration flows changes rapidly, particularly as a result of new economic, technological and social realities, the urgency of cooperation is becoming clearer every day.

## **Overcoming Fear, Facing the Challenge, Setting the Priorities**

Following the 2012 Global Hearing on Refugees and Migration under the auspices of THP (see enclosure), we believe that President Franklin D. Roosevelt's words are still relevant today. They should be given new content according to the developments and demands of our time, particularly with regard to migration, refugees and development. When we want to overcome fear we together have to face up to these challenges and the impact they are having with regard to migration and refugees:

- **Demographic changes related to labour migration and refugees**
- **Political and social changes**
- **The impact of the global economy**
- **The urbanization of displaced people**
- **The impact of environmental degradation and climate change on human mobility**

## CONCLUSION

We invite the HLD to acknowledge the above trends and developments, and to set a new common working agenda which may – with the support of and in cooperation with THP – set out the following 5 areas as priorities for the future:

### **1. Evidence Based Approach**

We promote an evidence-based approach by collecting existing research in the field of refugee and migration policy and by identifying research gaps. Hereby, awareness and understanding is improved and duplication of efforts is prevented.

### **2. The Business Sector**

Migration and human mobility touch on the core practices of business and on their responsibilities as corporate citizens. Only recently have business networks and large enterprises started to look at issues of migration and diversity management more directly. They are now increasingly engaged with investigations and debates on refugee and migration-related issues. They realize that with good international cooperation, organized migration offers great potential for the business sector.

### **3. Cities**

Local governments are key stakeholders and players in the field of migration. Cities are the places where most challenges generated by migration and refugees occur and need to be solved. Urbanization is one of the most important global trends affecting and affected by refugee and migration flows. Cities all over the world are nodes of both domestic and international migration. Initiatives to support the social inclusion of immigrants and the development of their potential are key to strengthening local society and improving economic growth.

### **4. Partnerships between Business and Cities in the Presence of Governments**

We foresee economic factors and urbanisation to be the key drivers of migration in the decade to come. Therefore, we promote the development of ‘partnerships’ between businesses and urban authorities in the presence of national governmental representatives with a view to generate a positive approach to ongoing migration-related challenges and opportunities in participating cities – anywhere in the world. Such partnerships may include relevant partners from academia and institutions of learning, and from civil society more generally, particularly those who have a migrant/refugee background.

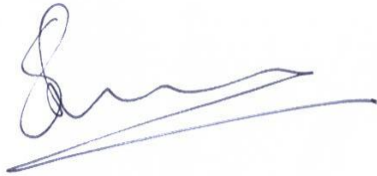
### **5. From HLD and GFMD to post MDGs: the ‘new’ in development**

The 2002 *Declaration of The Hague on the Future of Refugees and Migration Policy*, principle 10 ‘Migration and Development’ stated:

*“Economic disparities between and within countries are one of the major causes of migration. Migration policy therefore must go hand in hand with development policies, the combating of disease and the eradication of poverty and illiteracy. A greater commitment is required to comprehensive development strategies which are sustainable, people centred and include an emphasis on education, health and political participation. A workable international and regional framework on aid, trade, development and investment must prioritise a better allocation of resources to create opportunities for all and mitigate the negative effects of brain drain”.*

On the basis of the above statement, we call on the HLD to consider and define what at present is 'the new' in 'development' with regard to migration as a human rights issue. We believe a new consensus on development is needed worldwide which will be of added value to the advancement of the 'migration and development nexus'. This consensus must be built by the international community, and it deserves to be considered as part of the ongoing process of the GFMD and in the agenda of the post MDGs.

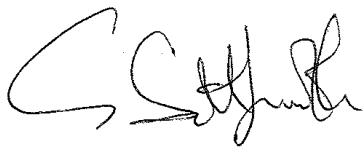
**On behalf of 'The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration (THP)' Foundation together with the Roosevelt Study Center,**



**Frans Bouwen, Director of External Relations THP**



**Nava Hinrichs, Managing Director THP**



**Giles Scott-Smith, Roosevelt Study Center**

**Cc :**

- **President of the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly**
- **UN DESA Migration Section, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), c/o Mr. Bela HOVY**
- **HRH Prince CONSTANTIJN of the Netherlands (chairman THP Board)**
- **THP/Roosevelt Study Center preparatory team:**
  - **Theo VAN BOVEN (member of THP's network)**
  - **Rein Jan HOEKSTRA (former member of the Roosevelt Study Center Board of Trustees and former Steering Group member THP/SID Netherlands)**
  - **Ruud LUBBERS (member of THP's Advisory Council ' Club of The Hague')**

enclosure