

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION ON PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS: USG EXPLANATION OF POSITION

November 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins consensus on this resolution after substantial negotiations among many delegations. We are pleased that countries were able to work together to improve this text and that our discussions were constructive and progress was made. With this in mind, we would like to reiterate some of the points we raised during the consultations.

Implicit in this and any other discussion of international migration is the well-settled principle under international law that all states have the sovereign right to control admission to their territory and to regulate the admission and expulsion of foreign nationals. At the same time, we recognize that States must respect the human rights of migrants, consistent with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law. The United States fulfills these obligations by providing substantial protections under the U.S. Constitution and other domestic laws to aliens within the territory of the United States, regardless of their immigration status. The United States takes this responsibility very seriously and urges other States to do so as well.

This resolution addresses the topic of migration on a global scale and seeks to find common ground among members states with regard to the protection of human rights. This is a crucial concern that the international community has and will continue to address in coming years. The UN's approach to this global concern should not be sidetracked by undue focus on bilateral issues that are being addressed through respectful discussions and actions between the affected states. In this spirit, we believe it is inappropriate to make specific reference to a bilateral legal matter between two member states which has been previously addressed by this body. The case cited in PP9 is not the only one of this nature and referring to it alone diverts attention from the serious multilateral reflection and action required. Referencing this case does not promote constructive cooperation toward advancing the protection of human rights of migrants.

Mr. Chairman, the United States is a nation with a long history of welcoming immigrants and refugees, and we highly value legal, orderly and humane migration. Of the more than 190 million migrants in the world today, one out of five reside in the United States, and more than one million American citizens currently live outside our borders. The United States urges its own citizens to observe all national and local laws when moving to or working in another country. We welcome legal immigrants and properly-documented temporary visitors, including workers and students, and we are committed to protecting the human rights of migrants within our borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.