Dear Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues, Friends,

My name is Peter Widermann, Director General at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), based in Vienna, Austria.

As we have gathered here for the 2nd HLD, let us have a look back at what happened in the past 7 years.

When we last met for the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, many of us were concerned with the state of the global framework for migration. Migration and development were still perceived as separate and only vaguely related components in the global arena. For some, the issue of migration was mainly connected to security considerations and left out of the development agenda. Our understanding of the nature of international migration and the reciprocal links between migration and development were limited and policy responses unfitting.

As a result of our deliberations, the continuity of discussions in the Global Forum on Migration and Development has helped us to bridge the divide between migration as a purely domestic concern and migration as an enabler of global development.

Now, we find ourselves at important crossroads: the post-2015 development agenda is being framed. And we should include migration in this framework in order to ensure that we seize the potential of migration to enable development. And this is contingent on migration being safe, humane and orderly managed.

In order to get there, we need to revisit some of the fundamentals of migration governance.
First and foremost, better migration entails facilitating mobility of people for the full potential of human and social development – with less red tape around immigration and with safeguards against abuse and exploitation. Mobility of people offers much more than fiscal and economic benefits. It is about skills transfer, it is about a global movement that brings social and cultural diversity to the places we live in.

Secondly, in a mobile world, our integration frameworks need to enable participation and inclusion. Those societies that enable migrants to thrive and excel will be the most successful.

Thirdly, borders will have to be managed so as to facilitate the movement of people and goods at the same time, as they are needed to help reduce the risks connected to increased mobility; and we need to prosecute those who exploit our endeavours of creating better migration.

With this in mind, we notice a growing conviction that we need dialogue that includes all stakeholders in order to have better migration: we have to include the diasporas, civil society organisations, trade unions, employer associations, businesses or recruitment agencies and universities, to name some of them.

We, as a migration organisation, will continue to give special attention to including development in our migration dialogues. We will continue to undertake sound research to guide these dialogues and evidence-based policymaking. As we know, better data and better analysis help to design better policies.

We at ICMPD will continue to put our expertise at the service of the global community, and to work in what we believe in: that migration is about people.

Excellencies,

ICMPD is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year! When my organisation was founded the migration world looked different. I hope that in 20 years from now we can look back and know that we used this momentum to move forward. I am sure the next time we meet we will have seen a fundamental shift in migration governance.

Let me conclude my speech by congratulating the UN General Assembly and the organisers of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, and to invite us all to keep
the momentum going – through our work and, most importantly, our concerted efforts to give migration a human face. We cannot miss this opportunity. Migration is development and it is too big to fail!