

**Remarks by DCM Sandra Clark  
on behalf of U.S. as Co-chair  
Migrant's in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative  
West and Central Africa Consultation, Dakar  
Tuesday, December 8, 2015**

*(As delivered)*

Minister of Interior and Public Security Abdoulaye Daouda Diallo,  
Ambassador Joaquín Gonzalez-Ducay,  
Distinguished guests,

On behalf of the United States Embassy in Dakar, I am delighted to welcome everyone to this regional consultation for the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative. Thank you to our host, the Gouvernement of Senegal. We are pleased to be working closely with our colleagues from the Philippines and other members of our Working Group. Thank you to the European Commission, which generously provided funding support for this event and to the International Centre for Migration Policy Development for organizing it. And thanks also to the International Organization for Migration, for its invaluable assistance in shaping these consultations. Each of you brings to this consultation a wealth of experience and innovation in helping your nationals overseas and in protecting migrants in your own countries in times of crisis.

This initiative is voluntary and government-led, and has one purpose: to generate global guidelines that we hope will help states and other important partners to assist migrants in crisis. We need your help over the next two days to identify ways to make these guidelines relevant and useful to addressing the challenges we face.

The world's attention is focused on the plight of migrants, with tragic images of families trying to cross the Mediterranean featured nearly every evening on the news. But we must also remember that migrants are valuable to our society, bringing many economic and cultural contributions.

But they are often disproportionately vulnerable in time of crisis. And we have a common responsibility to respond to crises impacting international migration—to focus first and foremost on saving lives and ensuring that the human rights of migrants are respected, regardless of their immigration status.

Virtually every conflict situation over the past five years has seen migrants either stranded in or seeking to flee from conflict zones. Approximately 1.8 million foreign workers of various nationalities were caught in the crisis in Libya in 2011. The aftermath saw a loss of foreign workers and challenged countries receiving their nationals who returned in large numbers. Many of you here today assisted your nationals during the Libya crisis, and elsewhere in the region.

Migrants can equally find themselves in vulnerable situations in natural disasters. Many of you were called upon to assist your citizens whose travel or livelihoods abroad were

impacted by the unprecedented Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa last year. The United States also has a large number of workers abroad, and hosts many migrant workers. We've seen that no country is immune to a crisis – take hurricanes Katrina and Sandy in my country as an example – and we need to engage and learn from partners on how to better serve populations who depend on us, whether as citizens abroad or those resident within our borders.

The challenge is obvious: We need to create a less ad-hoc response, with a clear articulation of the responsibilities we each have towards migrants caught in countries in crisis. This will save lives, protect the vulnerable, and help us improve how we respond.

The United States and our partners in this initiative are committed to promoting humane and effective international migration policies and encourage other states to cooperate towards that end. We can all do better. We can work to ensure thousands of migrants are effectively empowered and assisted in otherwise chaotic, dangerous situations.

The voluntary global guidelines that will be produced, in large part due to the input from you during this consultation, should help us to better protect migrants impacted by conflict or natural disaster. We hope this initiative will help governments and other stakeholders address migrants' needs in an even broader range of scenarios.

Thank you for your participation, and I very much look forward to hearing the outcomes of discussions over the next two days.

Thanks you very much.