

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

106th Council

Joint Statement – Brazil on behalf of GRULAC

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Sammie Eddico for his tenure as Chairperson of the Council Bureau and congratulate Ambassador Bertrand De Crombrugghe for his election.

Mr. Chairman,

Migrants represent a population of more than 250 million people. Approximately 3% of the world's population, mainly workers with their families, live far from their countries of origin, in search of better living conditions. Nearly half of international migrants are women and more than 10% are young persons or adolescents aged between 15 and 24 years. Migratory flows are not only from developing to developed countries, but also among developing countries. Hence, there is not a more global issue than migration.

Men, women and children have been leaving their home countries due to a multiplicity of factors: civil wars, political instability, natural disasters, poverty and persecution of many different sorts.

In spite of the economic and cultural benefits of migration to hosting societies, migrants, particularly undocumented migrants, suffer the daily consequences of restrictive migratory policies. Furthermore, these policies deny the positive economic impact of migration on host countries' economies. According to the OECD survey "Is migration good for the economy?", published in the "Migration Policy Debates" journal, migrants fill in important niches, both in fast-growing and declining sectors of the economy, not to mention that they contribute more in taxes and other tributes than they actually receive in benefits.

International experience demonstrates that security-based policies are ineffective and counterproductive, besides having the effect of worsening the undocumented migrant's vulnerability and encouraging human trafficking and smuggling. According to the IOM Research Division, since the beginning of the year until November 5th, more than 770,000 migrants crossed the Mediterranean; almost 3,500 perished, many of whom were children.

As noted by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, these deaths "are the result of a continuing failure of governance accompanied by a monumental failure of compassion".

No country can disregard the fact that the old dichotomy between countries of origin and those of destination has given way to a much more complex scenario where countries face simultaneous waves of emigration and immigration in an ever more mobile society. The diversity of flows, whose directions are increasingly evolving, creates the situation in which countries can be points of origin, transit and destination.

In this context, we would like to commend the work undertaken by IOM, within its mandate, in response to those who are exposed and vulnerable to the impact of crises. While we take note with appreciation of the document “IOM Humanitarian Policy – Principles for Humanitarian Action”, we deem it crucial to reiterate that Member-States bear the primary responsibility to protect and assist migrants and their rights, in line with the “IOM Policy on Protection”.

We further appreciate the work undertaken in 2015 by the Chairperson of the Working Group on IOM-UN Relations and the IOM Strategy, and we encourage IOM to seek ways to improve legal arrangements with the United Nations, with the aim at bringing the IOM into relationship with the United Nations. We hope that IOM will not continue to remain outside the UN family.

Mr. Chairman,

As part of our regional contribution to better understand migration flows, and within our efforts to uphold the highest international protection standards, I recall the convening of the 15th South American Conference on Migration, held in Santiago de Chile, last September, attended by the DG, Ambassador William Swing. The meeting was focused on highlighting and addressing the values of justice and equality in the development and implementation of international migration in South America, based on a comprehensive view of migration, which includes both the vision of migrants as right-holders, and that of the responsibility of governments for the respect of Human Rights.

Likewise, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the “Declaration of Cartagena”, last December, our region adopted the “Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action – A Framework for Cooperation and Regional Solidarity to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees, Displaced and Stateless Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean”. A very important step forward is the agreement reached by Latin American and Caribbean States on the eradication of statelessness until 2024 in the same meeting.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, our region remains committed to working closely with IOM and to engage in initiatives with a view to defending the fundamental rights of migrants.

Thank you.