



I T A L Y

Statement by H.E. Alberto Bertoni

Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN and other
International Organizations in Geneva
at the 106th Session of IOM Council
(Geneva, 24-27 November 2015)

Chair, Director-General, Deputy Director-General, distinguished
Delegates,

Italy aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the
European Union and its Member States.

At the outset, let me express to Ambassador Eddico of Ghana
our sincere appreciation for his chairmanship during the past year
and welcome Ambassador de Crombrugge of Belgium as the new
Council Chair. Rest assured that you can count on Italy's full
support.

A warm welcome goes to Eritrea, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Saint-
Kitts and Nevis, Sainte-Lucie and Kiribati as new Members States as
well as to the nine new observers that have joined the IOM family.

It is no secret that in recent times Europe has been facing an
escalating humanitarian crisis because of huge numbers of migrants
and refugees streaming into EU countries from Africa, the Middle

East and South Asia. Due to its southern exposure though, Italy has been on the front line for the past few years as a net receiver of immigrants. The Central Mediterranean passage connecting Libya to Italy was by far the most trafficked route for Europe-bound migrants in 2014 and this trend has continued also in the first half of 2015: according to IOM's estimates almost 3.000 people were reported dead/missing along this route since the beginning of the year and the number of illegal border crossings into Italy has remained high (over 90,000). Since 1998, Italy has been at the forefront of the fight against trafficking in human beings and the protection of victims, both children and adults. To that end, anti-trafficking teams have been established in Sicily and Apulia with the cooperation from IOM in an endeavour to avert further tragedies and even more victims.

It is not by chance that IOM has defined the Old Continent the most dangerous destination for irregular migration in the world and the Mediterranean the world's most dangerous border crossing. Nonetheless and despite unprecedented challenges, the recent Valletta Summit on Migration has demonstrated that there might be ways to address the new reality we are faced with. Managing migratory flows in the era of globalisation is - clearly and without a doubt - a shared responsibility.

Chair, there is growing and tangible awareness that nations need to act together in the face of an on-going human tragedy: hence, establishing a permanent dialogue with the countries of origin and transit must be part of our common effort. In this respect, it is worth reminding that the "Khartoum Process" was officially launched in Rome last year, during the semester of Italian Presidency of the European Union.

Handling a crisis of unprecedented dimensions implies devising unprecedented measures and creating positive synergies among all the different stakeholders. In this context allow me to highlight the importance Italy attaches to its long-standing co-operation with IOM, in its capacity both as a service provider and as a strategic partner, and I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Organization for the high quality of the projects and activities implemented with our Government. Besides, the presence of IOM in Lampedusa and at other reception centres in Southern Italy is for us a privilege as it allows our national authorities to better cope with the reception of and assistance to migrants, especially in the present circumstances.

Italy would also like to thank IOM for drafting and promoting the Gender Equality Policy 2015-2019: it will be an essential point of reference for future IOM's activities and programmes in order to recognize and address gender-related gaps in programming, ensure that all IOM beneficiaries have the same opportunities regardless of their sex and gender, mitigate vulnerabilities to and threats of gender-based violence and guarantee equal access and better outcomes for all IOM beneficiaries.

We would also like to commend IOM for the efforts made to mainstream the migrants' health issue, for the report titled, "Advancing the Unfinished Agenda of Migrant Health for the Benefit of All" (C/106/INF/15) and for the inclusion of the "Migration, human mobility and global health" item in the agenda of the IOM Council 106th session. We also truly appreciate the active role taken by IOM health programs in supporting Member States facing migration health related challenges. In this context I wish to recall the High-level

Meeting on Refugee and Migrant Health, “*Moving towards a common understanding of the public health aspects of large-scale migration*”, jointly promoted by the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization and the Italian Health Ministry, which took place this week in Rome.

Chair, Italy wishes to reiterate its commitment towards improving the assistance to and protection of migrants, bearing in mind the spirit of the post-2015 Development Agenda. For the first time since the adoption of the MDGs, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development mentions migration under Goal 10, target 10.7: “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. This target should, in our view, represent an ambition guiding policy-makers in our respective countries.

Thank you for your attention Chair.