

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

107th Council, December 5 to 8, 2016

Statement on behalf of the Government of Canada

****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY****

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Government of Canada I would like to congratulate the International Organization for Migration on the occasion of its 65th Anniversary. Over the decades, IOM has evolved in very significant ways as the leading international organization on migration, working with governments and civil society to advance the understanding of migration issues, encouraging social and economic development through migration, and upholding the human dignity and well-being of migrants. It is a trusted partner for so many of us, perhaps now more than ever.

With more than 244 million people living outside their country of birth in 2015 we currently are living through one of the biggest and most significant movements of people in human history. For too long, we as an international community have been focussing on the immediate challenges posed by human mobility and employing knee-jerk reactions to crises. But migration is not a “crisis” or problem to be fixed, it is not something that should or even can be stopped. Rather, it is a complex reality with both opportunities that need to be embraced and challenges that need to be managed. Over all, it remains a force for positive change, fostering inclusion, diversity, innovation and growth. If we see diversity as a threat we, as communities and states, will miss out on the benefits of migration. And migration benefits sending countries as well. The World Bank estimates the total value of remittances back to countries of origin in 2016 will be over \$600 billion.

Globalization means migration and migration means globalization. We must not let this current trend toward isolationism and nationalism stand in the way of increased international

cooperation on migration. Immigrants make positive contributions to our society and economy. They boost innovation through new perspectives, entrepreneurship and diverse insights. They fill important skills gaps and labour market shortages, address the challenges of aging populations and improve their host communities' understanding of other cultures. Canada sees diversity, particularly through immigration, as critical to long-term economic growth and prosperity. As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said, "our country is strong not in spite of our differences, but because of them."

When a country manages migration well -- when states, citizens, migrants, international organizations, the private sector, unions, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, religious organizations and academia cooperate to govern migration well -- we can all benefit from the resulting diversity, inclusion and pluralism. Planned and orderly migration, including through effective integration programming, contributes to public safety, public health and public confidence in migration and supports a positive outlook toward diversity. And it is these types of strong migration systems, well-managed migration, that are needed if we are to meet the goal of facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration.

The recent OECD report "Challenges for Canada's Labour Migration System" comments on public acceptance for immigration in Canada being high. What we, in Canada, have learned over the years is that it is not sufficient for states to merely talk to each other about the benefits of migration. More importantly is the need to have that conversation with our citizens. Our citizens need to be engaged in the discussion on the benefits of migration and offered the opportunity to share their observations. If this does not happen we run the risk of acceptance of migration turning to fear of migration.

We have an opportunity with the Global Compact on Migration to highlight these benefits of migration and to change the narrative which, too often, reflects negative perspective. We also see this compact as a way to improve how the international community responds to new

challenges and opportunities within an increasingly connected and mobile world so that more migration – including responses to emergency situations - can be planned, orderly and regular.

We must be smart about how we approach the Global Compact. A Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration must be anchored in indivisible human rights that apply to all. It must be built on genuine and inclusive consultations as we work regionally as well as globally to determine together a way forward.

We know we all have different approaches and different views on how the compact should be developed and what it should include, but let's start with areas where we agree and where we can develop common understandings on approaches, and then move forward from there.

As the lead international organization for migration, the IOM can help us navigate the complex maze of issues, both through the consultations and – it is hoped - also as Secretary General of the 2018 conference – an appointment which Canada would support. IOM has produced or been intimately involved in the production of bodies of work that we should capitalize on. The Migration Governance Framework, Migrants in Countries in Crisis initiative, and Migration Crisis Operational Framework, not to mention the 12 year old - but still relevant - International Agenda for Migration Management, provide a solid starting point for defining migration governance, identifying the elements of a well-managed migration system and drafting guidelines for cooperative approaches to some of the gaps in the global governance of migration. And the existing International Dialogues on Migration and Regional Consultative Processes provide venues for regional and thematic consultations.

Speaking of RCPs, I was delighted to learn that Central and North American Vice-Ministers meeting in Honduras at the Regional Consultations on Migration two weeks ago endorsed IOM's DG Swing as Secretary General of the 2018 Conference.

Canada looks forward to working with Member States, UN entities, including the International Organization for Migration, civil society and other stakeholders to develop this Global Compact so as:

- To move the objectives outlined in the New York Declaration from abstract principles to implementable outcomes;
- To focus on people-centered approaches and practical and action oriented outcomes, and,
- To move multilateral collaboration to the next level, as we work together to allow states and migrants alike to reap the benefits of safer, more orderly and better managed migration.

Thank you.