

107th IOM Council Session: General Debate - GER Statement

Mr. Chairman, Director General, distinguished members and observers of the Council,

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the EU and would like to welcome Ambassador Quinn as our new Chair.

Let me also thank the DG for presenting an excellent report yesterday, highlighting the need for a different, positive narrative on migration as well as some of the organization's accomplishments over the past year, which has certainly been a remarkable one in the 65 years of IOM: four new Member States have joined the organization – China, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and, just yesterday, the Kingdom of Tonga - while IOM itself became a member of the UN family as a related organization on 19 September this year.

Furthermore, IOM has experienced exponential growth, with the expenditures estimated to reach over USD 2 billion in 2017- unfortunately also a sign of proliferating crises, for which IOM assistance is essential. In this regard, we would like to commend IOM for retaining its operational capacity and flexibility.

GER appreciates the well-established cooperation with IOM in many areas such as Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR). We also welcome the assistance rendered by IOM in providing facilities for visa application in family reunification for Syrian refugees.

Concerning the Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration - as already expressed during last week's consultations with the co-facilitators - we would like to reiterate our support for a leading role of IOM in the process up to the intergovernmental conference in 2018 to be accurately accentuated in the modalities. While being well aware that the final decision is at the discretion of the UNSG, such leading role in our view includes the appointment of DG Swing as Secretary-General. To further accommodate the profound migration expertise based here in Geneva, we believe that this is precisely where the focus of the thematic consultations on core themes should be placed.

Similarly, as stipulated by the DG's "non-paper", regional consultations should include a broad range of participants, including civil society and the private sector.

Following the rich consultations that took place last week here in Geneva, we hope that the co-facilitators have taken these elements back to New York in order to be reflected in the “zero draft” of the modalities resolution expected for the end of this week.

It is clear that, as the future co-chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, GER envisages the Global Compact to constitute a strong signal of the international community for an improved governance of international migration. More specifically, it should aim at reconciling the interest of migrants, countries of origin and countries of destination to their mutual benefit. For instance, many industrialized countries, including GER, face severe shortages of skilled workers in a multitude of professions. Opening up certain skilled labour markets, under full observation of international labour rights and national labour standards, could provide a prospect of self-reliance to those who meet the professional requirements, including sufficient language skills. Countries of origin should not only benefit from their citizens’ remittances, but from their broadened professional qualification, which is why we approve circular migration. The Global Forum on Migration and Development will generate input for the Compact negotiations by providing an informal platform to exchange good practices, and to explore innovative ways to deepen cooperation. Finally, we would like to welcome the SWE-initiative to second with Ambassador Akerman-Börje highly experienced personnel to the IOM office in NY, thereby setting a good example in enabling IOM to play its rightful role in the process ahead.