

**107th Session of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration
Geneva, 5 - 8 December 2016
STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF IRELAND
Ambassador Patricia O'Brien
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geneva**

Ireland associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. My delegation also congratulates the new chair of the Council, Ambassador Quinn, on his election and extends a warm welcome to the Kingdom of Tonga on their admission as a new member of the IOM.

Mr. Chairman,

I want to first thank the Director General for his leadership and congratulate him on a monumental year for the organisation, with IOM formally welcomed into the UN family earlier this year.

Furthermore, in celebrating the 65th anniversary of IOM this week, we commend the work the organization has undertaken since its establishment to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration; promote international cooperation on migration issues; and provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need.

We pay tribute to all the IOM field staff over this time who have worked to assist some of the world's most vulnerable, often in difficult or dangerous circumstances. We thank the Director General also for his thought provoking report which gave us an insight into how the organisation has evolved since its foundation in 1951 with the purpose of helping resettle those displaced by World War II. Much has changed in the world since then, but the core part of IOM's work- to find practical solutions to migration issues- remains constant.

Mr Chairman,

While 2016 marks a landmark year for IOM, it has also been a year marked by divisive dialogue on the topic of migration, and a troubling hardening in attitudes towards migrants. While it is important to address the concerns of those who feel marginalized within society, my government's view is that the solution to the sense of marginalization of some can never be to marginalize others. It is incumbent upon governments to promote acceptance over intolerance, and inclusion over exclusion. And this inclusion must not mean the exclusion of others- others who might not share our nationality, culture, identity or race.

In the coming weeks, Ireland will be publishing a new Migrant Integration Strategy –a framework for enabling migrants to participate fully in Irish life. This strategy will seek to promote inclusion, break down barriers to integration and help provide equality of opportunity to all, within a diverse and forward-looking Irish society.

Mr Chairman,

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants expressed our collective will to save lives, protect rights and share responsibility on a global scale. Ireland believes that the declaration sends a strong message of our political commitment to a wide range of actions which, taken together, will ensure a more humane and compassionate response to this issue in future. It is now up to member states to live up to this commitment and to work towards an effective and fit-for-purpose Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration. We support a strong role for IOM in this process, given the organisation's global remit and unparalleled operational and policy expertise in this area. We trust in the IOM to also ensure that our discussions are informed by solid data on migration trends.

We welcome the proposal, as set out in the elements paper on the modalities for the process, to hold broad, transparent and inclusive thematic consultations in phase one of the preparatory process. It is important that the decisions and negotiating positions we take are informed by sound evidence as well as by the voices of migrants themselves. These consultations will allow rich discussions between states, academia, civil society and other experts in their field.

Mr Chairman,

In working towards the Global Compact we must retain a people-centred approach which looks to guard the humanity and dignity of those on the move. This must be our ultimate aim. The Director-General often reminds us of this, speaking in a principled voice on behalf of migrants. We thank him for continuing to do so, and we reiterate Ireland's continued support to this end.

Thank you Mr Chairman

ENDS