

Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands –107th IOM Council Meeting – speaking time  
5:00.

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Thank you Mr. Chair. The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and adds the following in its national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

Let me first congratulate you, [Ambassador Quinn], as well as the other bureau members, with yesterday's election. We look forward to working with you. Let me also add my voice to those delegations who have welcomed the Kingdom of Tonga as IOM's 166<sup>th</sup> member.

Mr. Chair, 2016 has indeed been a landmark year for migration. The 19 September New York Summit underscored that migration is by now firmly embedded in the international political agenda. But the year 2016 also proved to be a landmark year for IOM, our organization. IOM may be 65 years old today but – like its Director General – has never been more dynamic.

IOM has over these 65 years consistently showed that the organization is able to adapt itself to respond to the ever-growing needs and wishes of its members and the migrants it aims to assist, often in extremely complex situations. And while IOM has by now firmly established itself as the global lead agency on migration, and while it has successfully managed to embed migration into the UN family this year, IOM has always carried out its mandate with respect for a number of core characteristics, which we are greatly attached to.

The Netherlands has repeatedly acknowledged and highly appreciates the efficiency, flexibility, and operational character of IOM. The Netherlands

stresses the need for IOM to fully uphold these 'essential elements', also as a UN related organization, in line with Council Resolution 1309. In this respect we very much appreciate the DGs reassuring words to this Council yesterday.

Mr Chair, the DG also stated yesterday that the role of IOM is perhaps more critical now than it ever has been since its founding in 1951, and the Netherlands would agree with that. The challenges are indeed immense.

More than 65 mln. people around the globe have been forcibly displaced, due to factors of different nature. Migratory flows are often mixed in nature and may 'contain' migrant workers, refugees, unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking. In addition to its 'regular' migration governance work, IOM works to address the impacts of lengthy, protracted situations, but is at the same time confronted with new emergencies which require immediate attention. The current situation around Mosul is but one example of a situation in which IOM's speed, flexibility, and can-do mentality is put to the test. And there are many more situations like that. IOM staff, for the vast majority locally employed men and women, work under often very challenging circumstances to get the job done. For this dedicated work, we would like to express our very sincere gratitude.

Mr Chair, we all share a common goal, which includes the prevention of irregular migration, while respecting the human rights of migrants and providing international protection to those most in need. We should step up our common effort to fight the drawbacks of international migration, amongst other things human trafficking and smuggling. In light of this, countries should facilitate the legal and safe passage of migrants, where necessary and possible.

We also underline the collective responsibility to improve prospects for refugees and migrants in the region. In our programmes in specific regions,

the Netherlands focuses on offering perspectives by improving work and education opportunities in both host countries and – for the benefit of reintegration - countries of origin. By offering these opportunities the Netherlands aims to work towards long term solutions.

Mr Chair, the Netherlands would like to reiterate the recent statement by DG Swing: “We focus too much on problems, too little on solutions and we have become experts on addressing immediate needs.” Mr Chair, with the New York declaration, and the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration we have tasked ourselves to develop, we now have the chance to focus on solutions.

The Netherlands will work hard towards a solid Global Compact, designed to address migration on a global level. A Compact which is based on a comprehensive long term vision on mobility with full consideration for human rights.

Mr Chair, in order to achieve such a strong Global Compact, it is important we get the process right. Like other delegations have said, and like we have stressed in the consultations with the co-facilitators from New York last week, we underline the need for a genuine lead role of IOM in the process towards 2018. Such a role carries symbolic weight after IOM joined the UN family in September, but also, and this is much more important, logically stems from IOM’s mandate, expertise and experience, both in matters of policy and field operations all over the world. Mr Chair, for that same reason, the Netherlands joins other delegations who have spoken in favor of the DG taking up the role of Secretary-General at the international conference in 2018.

Mr Chair,

2016 was an important year from a multilateral perspective, but also from the point of view of our bilateral cooperation with IOM. Last year at this

Council, we expressed our wish to solidify our relationship with IOM. And we are pleased to have welcomed DG Swing and his staff to the Netherlands this year, just before the 19 September summit, for bilateral consultations. The Memorandum of Understanding signed at that occasion sealed years of fruitful cooperation through a wide variety of programs and will surely strengthen our relationship for the years to come.

IOM remains for the Netherlands a key partner in addressing migration-related challenges. We value this ongoing strong cooperation and concrete progress achieved in several priority areas. We continue to support assisted voluntary return and reintegration programs in various countries and, only very recently, we have committed to a new multiyear project aimed at strengthening regional convergence of data collection through the Displacement Tracking Matrix.

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Mr. Chair, in closing, I would like to express our appreciation to Director General Swing for his comprehensive report to this Council and more in general for his able leadership of the organization. Let me reiterate that the Netherlands remains committed to work constructively with IOM and all its members in the important years ahead.

Thank you.