

Thank you, Mrs Chairperson,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member states.

We warmly welcome the new IOM Members Cuba and Cook Islands as well as Kuwait as an observer country joining the International Organization for Migration.

At the beginning, let me express the gratitude of Slovakia and pay tribute to the IOM and its entire staff for an excellent work carried out during the last year in all parts of the world, often in particularly difficult and dangerous circumstances.

The 2017 has not only been another year of migration, it has been the first year in the preparation of the Global compact. So far the informal consultations have shown the common will to change migration policies and the support for enhanced cooperation in this regard. This gives us hope that we will succeed in having a tool helping managing migration in order to become safe, orderly and regular. Hopefully, this instrument will bring new approaches beneficial for all.

We welcome the important contributions IOM has already brought into the process of elaboration of the Global Compact presenting inputs to the Secretary General's report, preparing concept notes for thematic sessions, organizing inter regional consultative process, supporting national consultations with active participation of a number of various stakeholders.

I would also like to express our gratitude for the support provided to the President of the General Assembly, minister Lajčák during the consultation phase in preparation of the Global compact.

The valuable knowledge and expertise acquired during many years of experience predetermine the IOM's leading role in migration, which, after the adoption of the Global compact should become even stronger.

At the same time, it will be essential that IOM continues carrying out all its important functions in the relation to governments as well as to migrants.

Mr Chair, let me congratulate the IOM with the first anniversary of its UN membership which has created space for enhanced cooperation and cohesion with other UN organizations and bodies. We strongly support deepening synergy which is inevitable for tackling the migration issue in its complexity as an integral part of the Agenda 2030. The sustainable solution requires addressing the root causes of migration, including through development assistance, climate change resilience capacity building and enhanced disaster risk reduction. Creating favourable conditions in countries of origin will make migration a choice not a must.

For Slovakia the IOM remains the essential partner in addressing challenges of global displacement, but also in implementing our national migration policy in the country. We have been closely cooperating with IOM's office in Bratislava for over 20 years. From Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme, prevention of trafficking in human beings and assistance to victims, through Migrant Information Centre supporting migrants'

integration into the society, to the operation of the Emergency Transit Centre in Humenne (one of the only two in Europe), through which over 1 000 refugees were resettled to their new homes. We sincerely hope to be able to continue in operation of the Centre.

Migration governance based on updated and reliable data is crucial for us. It is again the IOM office that has been since 2009 entrusted to act as the Slovak National Contact Point in European Migration Network collecting and analysing reliable and up to date data on migration to support European Commission decision making.

As a part of cooperation it is also important to financially support IOM's programs not only nationally, but also globally. I am happy to announce the recent contribution of Slovakia to the IOM in the amount of 200 000 EUR.

Last week our government decided also to contribute 1 million EUR into the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which will surely support IOM's good efforts in African countries.

Let me conclude by reiterating Slovakia's appreciation and support for all the IOM's activities in international migration governance and assisting the most vulnerable.

Thank you for your attention