

**COUNCIL**

**109th Session**

**DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE**

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**Mr António Vitorino**

Geneva  
27 to 30 November 2018



## **DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE 109TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL**

### **Introduction**

1. Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to welcome you to the 109th Session of the Council. I welcome you on behalf of all our colleagues around the world and thank you for taking the time from your busy schedules to join us here in Geneva.

2. Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Juan Eduardo Eguiguren of Chile, for all his hard work and commitment. I also wish to welcome the newly elected members of the IOM Council Bureau:

- Chairperson, Ambassador Negash Kebret Batora (Ethiopia)
- First Vice-Chairperson, Ambassador Morten Jespersen (Denmark)
- Second Vice-Chairperson, Ambassador Evan Garcia (Philippines)
- Rapporteur, Ambassador Socorro Flores Liera (Mexico)

3. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our new Member, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and our two new observers, the International Monetary Fund and International Emergency and Development Aid.

4. This Council meeting occurs at a time of great change within the United Nations system, and for IOM itself. The Organization is giving meaning to its new, closer relationship with the United Nations, in line with Council Resolution No. 1309 of 24 November 2015, just as landmark reform of the overall system brings stronger country-level coordination to development support from all agencies. When I assumed the leadership of the Organization, I was cognizant of the various responsibilities that have been placed on its shoulders and the need for IOM to rise to meet these new challenges.

5. In just a couple of weeks, many of us will find ourselves together once more in Marrakesh for the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The process of negotiating the Global Compact has been a milestone for States, coming together to find compromise on an issue that divides more frequently than it unites. The Global Compact finds its roots in the Sustainable Development Goals agreed by all Member States in 2015 and will be a guiding influence on those States that have chosen to endorse it as a voluntary, non-legally binding platform for cooperation.

6. Under the leadership of Ambassador Swing, IOM has grown substantially and matured into a global leader. But size alone does not determine the strength of an organization. It is the commitment and skills of its staff that has enabled IOM to respond to complex emergencies, to provide advice to governments on diverse issues, including labour migration, integrated border management and diaspora engagement, and to underpin inter-State dialogue, thereby helping to foster greater space for common ground.

7. As this is my first IOM Council, I will not attempt to undertake an extensive report of the Organization's activities for which I cannot yet claim credit. Instead, I would like to use this time to reflect on the breadth and scope of IOM's work, highlighting some critical areas of action. I would also like to offer some thoughts on the landscape in which IOM will find itself in the coming years, how best to consolidate and reinforce IOM's strengths, and set out some broad strategic directions.

## **IOM'S work in 2018**

### ***Support for migrants***

8. Migrants are at the heart of IOM's work, particularly those who find themselves vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. IOM has offered support to migrants in numerous tangible ways. For example, the Organization has undertaken health assessments for refugees awaiting resettlement, migrants applying for various types of visas, and returnees under assisted voluntary return programmes. IOM has placed increasing focus on the sustainability of the reintegration process, with the aim of reducing the vulnerability of those who return. To bring these services together in a more coherent manner, IOM is developing a range of migrant support mechanisms, focused on offering a range of integrated, tailored services, from visa application support to training assistance.

9. IOM has worked with dozens of governments throughout 2018 to review and support the integration of international standards into national policy frameworks, as well as their implementation. This includes training for officers, round-table discussions and one-on-one discussion. For example, IOM invests in a range of counter-trafficking initiatives, from prevention programming to direct assistance, training people from all sectors. Indeed, IOM has specifically developed guidelines on how businesses can protect and assist victims of exploitation. The Organization also works individually with governments to improve the situation of those in detention and to ensure critical access to health care.

10. As it grows, the Organization is taking steps to systematize this type of support. This year, IOM produced a handbook and toolkit on unaccompanied and separated children and launched an institutional framework for addressing gender-based violence in crises. Gender mainstreaming remains a priority for the Organization, with a significant increase in the number of IOM offices introducing a gender perspective into their projects, ensuring that women's voices and needs are incorporated into all phases of a project.

11. In working so closely with migrants and civil society groups, IOM takes its own responsibilities seriously. It has committed to UN-wide policies on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by its staff, conducting in-house training, while hosting training for other actors in the field. It is also piloting a framework to improve its accountability to affected populations, involving stakeholders and beneficiaries in the decision-making process.

### ***Emergency response***

12. The migration landscape has been characterized by a series of crises in recent years. The large-scale movements of people, driven by diverse motivations, have posed a political and humanitarian challenge to States. In 2018, IOM has responded to a number of urgent, complex situations, working in cooperation with other actors to ensure basic immediate support for those affected, while working towards more durable outcomes.

13. Mounting numbers of Venezuelans have moved to neighbouring countries, a dynamic that has accelerated in recent months. The situation has highlighted the need for, and benefits of, close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Together, under the leadership of Mr Eduardo Stein, Joint Representative for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants, the two agencies are working with regional governments alongside a broader alliance of agencies and civil society and faith-based organizations to ensure a coordinated and effective response. The continued openness and commitment of countries in the South American region, and their willingness to offer various forms of status for new arrivals, should be commended and further strengthened by States beyond the region.

14. The situation in Libya remains a source of deep concern and distress, particularly regarding the significant number of migrants and refugees still held in detention. IOM has provided voluntary humanitarian return to nearly 15,000 migrants in Libya so far in 2018, including to Mali, Niger and Nigeria. However, the situation remains fiendishly complex. It is impossible to disaggregate instability in Libya from instability across West and Central Africa, the broader challenges of maritime migration across the Mediterranean, and the political and practical responses to mixed migration within the European Union. IOM must work with all States to reduce uncertainty and suffering among the migrant population, while recognizing that these are symptoms of a deeper vacuum of governance that urgently needs to be addressed.

15. Yemen has become one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the world, affecting all populations, including migrants. It is an example of the enduring challenges faced by the international community in delivering effective humanitarian action. IOM is an active partner, alongside other agencies, programmes and funds, and is offering direct assistance to those internally displaced by conflict, as well as support to the many migrants transiting Yemen. More than 7,000 migrants journey across the Red Sea each month to Yemen, many of whom are subjected to various forms of abuse and exploitation. Indeed, this week, IOM will evacuate several hundred Ethiopian nationals from Yemen and support their return and reintegration in their home country.

16. The plight of Rohingya refugees hosted by Bangladesh in Cox's Bazaar continues to be a priority for IOM, and the Organization has established a comprehensive response, offering support in a wide range of areas, from water, sanitation and hygiene to prevention of trafficking and exploitation of young girls at risk. This population is also particularly vulnerable to extreme weather, such as early rains, cyclones and monsoons. As a result, IOM has invested in upgrading shelters to reduce the impact of these events on populations in overcrowded conditions.

### ***Longer-term responses***

17. While IOM has the capacity to generate quick, life-saving responses to emergencies and disaster, it also recognizes the need to improve pre-emptive action. IOM contributes to reducing the risk of disaster, helping States implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, and investing in crisis preparedness, from camp management and camp coordination to improving on-the-ground, real-time information on displacement and population mobility through the Displacement Tracking Matrix.

18. IOM provides rapid relief to address the most acute humanitarian needs, while at the same time developing transition and recovery programmes to address the longer-term impacts and drivers of vulnerability. This generates trust, stability and legitimacy, not least by placing communities at the heart of programming. In Bangladesh, for example, IOM is already developing stabilization programming in the region alongside critical humanitarian support. This approach forms part of IOM's commitment to strengthen the humanitarian, development and peace nexus and places particular focus on marginalized populations such as ex-combatants, refugees and internally displaced persons.

19. The relationship between mobility and development outcomes is complex and deeply dependent on context. Economic growth may motivate individuals to move just as the absence of livelihood opportunities can push them to emigrate. Yet still more people lack the means to move, even when circumstances become dire. IOM is one of the agencies with the widest reach with respect to internally displaced populations, in terms of both operational scope and financial resources. People may be displaced for a broad range of reasons, notably conflict, but also environmental disasters such as floods and droughts. In addition to meeting humanitarian needs, helping internally displaced populations to access basic services, sustainable employment and livelihoods is a critical part of this work.

20. When faced with multiple complex crisis situations, it is sometimes hard to take the long view. IOM believes that, just as sustainable development policy can determine migration patterns, migration can also contribute to stronger development outcomes, whether through remittance contributions, skills transfers or return migration. Nonetheless, these benefits are not guaranteed and will be realized only with strong policies and institutional frameworks. This year IOM has been developing a strategy on migration and sustainable development, designed to hardwire migration into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensure that no one is left behind.

21. In addition, over the past five years, the need to bring environmental concerns into migration policy-making, and vice versa, has become a significant policy issue for IOM. Its Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division has become central to a number of inter-agency and multilateral partnerships focused on the impacts of climate change, building a robust evidence base and helping States build capacity to respond.

22. Although longer-term responses frequently focus on redressing negative impacts, migration has enormous potential to benefit individuals, communities and countries. Through the design of sustainable, effective legal channels for migration – whether for work, for study or for love – States can begin to proactively integrate migration into their economic planning and community-building. This is not a new idea; indeed, many States have designed strong programming to welcome migrants. But this can sometimes be lost among daily headlines centred on disaster and unanticipated change.

### ***Working with States***

23. IOM's work brings it into contact with a wide range of national government ministries – from home affairs to education – and local government actors. The Migration Governance Indicators have offered dozens of governments the opportunity to reflect on how they govern migration and the linkages between separate areas of work. In 2019, IOM will include local governments in the Indicators, for a first picture of how local government responds to migration.

24. IOM offers support to governments on a broad range of issues, from labour migration policy development to designing mechanisms for reaching out to diaspora communities. IOM has developed border management information systems and supported States in developing cross-border cooperation, data collection and risk analysis. The IOM Development Fund offers States the opportunity to build capacity in particular policy areas and offers IOM an opportunity to assess where demand for support exists; for example, in recent years, requests from across the globe for support to deal with the impacts of climate change have increased.

25. Partnership with States is nevertheless accompanied by partnership between States. IOM has participated in a large number of multilateral dialogues, from the negotiations for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration during the first half of this year, through to the Pan-African Forum on Migration, held in Djibouti just one week ago. IOM has been developing a productive and close working relationship with several regional organizations, such as the European Union and the African Union. Regional consultative processes operate around the world, from Khartoum to Colombo, and play a critical role in building trust between States. IOM offers support to these processes in a variety of ways, from serving as secretariat to providing technical expertise.

26. The IOM International Dialogue on Migration in 2018 set the stage for more open global exchanges on migration, incorporating a wide variety of actors. This year we have focused on developing successful partnerships – across governments, with cities and with migrants themselves – in anticipation of the adoption of the Global Compact. The endorsement of the Global Compact by the United Nations General Assembly will create a new test of partnerships across the United Nations system, both between States and between agencies, and with a broad set of stakeholders. Though

non-binding, the Global Compact offers clear terms of reference – and a common language – for governments seeking to establish common ground with each other and to deepen cooperation on specific aspects of migration management. In 2019, the International Dialogues on Migration will focus on youth, in acknowledgement of calls made at previous meetings to engage young people in global migration discussions and policymaking.

### ***Informing debate***

27. A critical part of IOM's work is to utilize the available evidence base to inform the public about the dynamics and impacts of migration, both good and bad. This includes data on stocks and flows of migrants and analytical assessments of emerging trends. The latest edition of IOM's flagship World Migration Report is a key example of this, covering a broad range of topics, from regional trends to violent extremism.

28. IOM's ability to collect and present data has become a central part of its work. This takes several forms. The Global Migration Data Analysis Centre in Berlin collates large data sets that offer an overview of mobility in the world, while exploring the challenging nature of collecting robust data on migration. The Displacement Tracking Matrix has become an invaluable tool for governments and agencies in offering a real-time view of movement in specific parts of the world – from Iraq to Ecuador – and helps those actors respond to the evolving needs of displaced populations.

29. Migration also comprises thousands of stories. Tomorrow evening, the IOM Global Migration Film Festival will be launched here in Geneva, and around 100 countries across the globe, showcasing dramas and documentaries that bring the migrant experience to life. IOM's feature stories highlight places that do not always make the headlines, offering a rich tapestry of action and aspiration, and revealing the real faces of migrants worldwide.

### **What we can expect from the next decade**

30. IOM's reach is extensive, and its impact deep. But the coming decade will bring new challenges for which the Organization will need to prepare itself. The drivers of mobility are constantly evolving.

31. The impact of climate change – combined with growing intercontinental demographic disparity, widening economic and social inequality, and unresolved instability – is likely to lead to increased internal, regional and international mobility as individuals seek to establish sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families. While some countries of the world experience demographic expansion, others face sharp decline. While it is easy to make sweeping generalizations, migration dynamics are an aggregation of thousands of individual, context-specific decisions that are often poorly understood. Unravelling how macro-developments affect micro-movements, and vice versa, will be key to ensuring that policies can remain effective, supportive and globally coherent.

32. The world in which people move is also rapidly changing. Technology has created new opportunities to connect populations, as well as identify them more efficiently. Widespread access to social media is accelerating migration trends and expanding the networks through which migrants can seek support. Advancements in artificial intelligence and big data collection may offer new insight into predicting new patterns and ensuring timely responses. Advances in digital identification may offer migrants and others new opportunities to access public services and manage their own mobility. However, to ensure continued trust between governments and migrants, the management of data security and privacy will need to be carefully overseen. The use of new technology should not be based solely on feasibility, but also on desirability. IOM will need to be a trusted partner and adviser as the world innovates.

33. Rapid urbanization continues to transform the demographic landscape of many countries around the world. Cities are already home to the majority of international migrants, driven by opportunity as well as necessity, and local authorities are becoming leaders in finding creative solutions for rapid social change, supporting communities through innovation. However, rapidly expanding cities are also fragile ecosystems. Governments and international agencies tasked with supporting large populations in small geographies must navigate access to resources, balance deep inequalities and rethink the delivery of public services. areas All of these challenges may be exacerbated when job growth does not keep pace with population growth, and environmental change threatens the liveability of urban centres located in coastal regions.

34. Labour markets, never static, will value a different set of skills in 2030 than they did in 2010. At the same time, the terms of employment are becoming ever more flexible, in some cases precariously so. To succeed, citizens across the world will have to become more adaptable, more resilient and ready to take on several careers. How to learn will become as important as what to learn, though some skills will remain in critically short supply. Migrants are often those most capable to take on these challenges. Yet they can also be excluded from the training and support that is essential to help realize career potential. The investments governments make today in their working-age populations, including migrant groups, will be determinative of their success in the future.

35. While it is essential that governments maintain sovereign control over migration, non-State actors will become more influential. Migrants do not simply choose a destination country. They often choose specific locations, drawn by the promise of growing industries and feedback from personal and social networks. The private sector has a major influence over who moves where, as an employer as well as service providers, and yet its participation in migration governance remains limited. Local governments address the real impacts of migration, street by street, and yet, too often, their collective experiences remain unexamined. Civil society actors and diaspora movements are increasingly filling gaps left by government services, yet their actions are overlooked. Smugglers and traffickers, if unchecked, will continue to cultivate new routes to desirable destinations. They may take account of public policies designed to reduce irregular movement yet remain undeterred by them.

36. As the influence of non-State actors increases, it will become even more important for governments to find common ground. This will be no easy task. Governments will have to give meaning to multilateral partnerships in an era of increased political scepticism towards, and public scrutiny of, migration dynamics. The erosion of public confidence in governments' ability to manage flows of people – not only here in Europe, but across the globe – has led many political leaders to question the desirability of migration in the twenty-first century and the validity of long-established international legal frameworks. As global challenges increase in scope, the political space to find solutions has narrowed. But it is only through cooperation that answers to the challenging questions of the future will be found.

### **What IOM will need to deliver**

37. IOM is globally present, responsive and flexible, capable of delivering a positive impact on the ground. It is recognized as an institution of extraordinary scope and delivery, characterized by the positive impact it has on everyday lives across the world.

38. Increasingly, the Organization will be called upon not just to support governments and migrants at different stages in the migration journey, but also to connect those stages in the journey. IOM is well positioned to understand the complete system of migration management, to ensure consistency of outcome from specific policy and operational approaches, regardless of where they are applied, and to address the interplay between different programmatic areas. For example, assisted



voluntary return is a key programmatic area for IOM, but the success of these programmes depends on understanding the specific humanitarian and development context in the country of return.

39. Migration has become a whole-of-government endeavour. It is no longer possible to separate migration issues from other key global objectives – whether improving development outcomes, supporting vulnerable populations, managing high-volume borders or combating organized crime – or to clearly identify the boundaries of migration policy. While IOM works across governments, engaging with multiple ministries in a single country, too often those ministries do not work with each other. There is an opportunity for IOM to help connect key policy domains more effectively and ensure that migration issues thread through the full range of policy interventions.

40. To fully capitalize on its potential, IOM will need to become a learning organization, capable of offering a consistent “state of the field” perspective on every aspect of migration management and migrant support. This is not simply a question of building policy capacity to support Member States, but one of developing a constant pool of knowledge and experience from which the Organization can share new ideas and identify new developments.

41. This requires no change in the body of IOM’s work, but presents an opportunity for the Organization to build additional muscles to strengthen that body. This includes:

- (a) Developing policy capacity, based on the vast compendium of knowledge and experience that exists within the Organization, building on the decentralized approach that characterizes IOM. Knowledge is not simply something to be held static in databases, but to be drawn from the constantly expanding expertise of its staff.
- (b) Strengthening foresight capacity to improve operational planning, and increase preparedness for, and resilience to, moments of crisis; and ensuring the needs of individual migrants are anticipated, and then met, at all points in the journey.
- (c) Pioneering new means of data collection and building capacity for research and data analysis that can enhance operational outcomes. This includes the use of new technologies and systems, hand in hand with the responsible management of data by all their users.
- (d) Ensuring policy is coherently applied across the Organization, taking into account the vast diversity of contexts in which IOM works. Principles of good governance are universal, but the means through which they can be effected are many and varied.
- (e) Incorporating innovative practice at every level of the Organization, from simple improvements to enhanced communication between distantly located staff through to ensuring that border management systems evolve alongside new developments in technology.

42. IOM will need to become a strategic partner as well as an implementer, helping governments adopt a long-term perspective as well as fulfil their short-term priorities. Also, in order to deliver stronger outcomes, IOM will need to prioritize, based on what it believes the future will bring. Where, and how deeply, IOM chooses to invest over the next five years will have an impact on how well its Member States, and the international community as a whole, will be prepared to respond to changing migration needs.

43. The Organization has evolved through the expansion of its membership and project base. It has demonstrated its ability as well as flexibility to adapt to the changing scope and complexity of migration at global, regional and national level. However, to be truly effective as a partner, IOM will also need to ensure its internal structures are fit for purpose. The expansion of activities within the Organization now needs to be matched, ensuring strong processes of accountability and review. Comments made by Member States during the recent session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance reinforced the need for stronger oversight within the Organization.

44. IOM is fully committed to continuing to enhance its management systems and controls, by deepening its internal capacity, with the aim of implementing measures to streamline and maximize the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of its resources. Thus, IOM will foster a risk-awareness culture which ensures that risk is embedded in the decision-making process and managed in full compliance with international standards. This will require additional resources and time.

45. A key challenge in the years to come will be the consolidation and effective management of IOM's growth, which is expected to continue. The Organization will need appropriate funds to match those growing and demanding roles. To keep pace with this growth, the core structure and budget must be strengthened as a sustained and continuing effort.

46. The Programme and Budget for 2019 is a transitional budget. It has been prepared based on the confirmed funding for planned activities and taking into consideration current trends and crucial developments touching upon the migration phenomenon in the international arena.

47. The proposed Administrative Part of the Budget is CHF 52,229,662, which includes an increase of CHF 1,500,000 intended to cover the doubling of the Organization's contribution, as is the case for all agencies, to the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. This is in line with General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018. The Operational Part of the Budget is established at USD 1 billion, which is an increase of 5.8 per cent compared with the original budget for 2018 of USD 956 million. The projected level of Operation Support Income is established at USD 96 million.

48. Once again, I would like to thank those Member States that have honoured their obligations to the Organization and encourage others to do so. We will continue to make the case for the universal membership of IOM, and welcome again our newest Member, Uzbekistan. I trust that Member States will approve the revised Programme and Budget for 2019 as proposed so that IOM can continue its role as the leading international agency on migration and to support the effective and sustainable management of the Organization.

### **What 2019 will bring**

49. The year 2019 will bring great change for IOM. The implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will lead to significant additional responsibilities for the Organization, notably the coordination of the United Nations Network on Migration, which it is honoured to take on.

50. The implementation of the Global Compact is the responsibility of participating States, though IOM stands ready to support that implementation as needed. IOM's own work will continue to be framed by the Migration Governance Framework, agreed by its Member States. The Global Compact will sit alongside the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed texts in further framing the scope and objectives of IOM's work.

51. The United Nations Network on Migration, with IOM at its centre, is intended to enhance the ability of the United Nations system to deliver effective system-wide support to States and ensure greater coherence on migration. We will have the opportunity to discuss the Network structure and function in greater detail with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, Ms Louise Arbour, tomorrow morning. IOM is committed to executing successfully its role as coordinator and secretariat of the Network in a spirit of partnership and cooperation with its fellow United Nations agencies.

52. However, collaboration is not limited to the Network alone. IOM will place emphasis on international partnerships, particularly with UNHCR, building upon the effective cooperation that already exists around the world and is currently exemplified in the South American region. It will strengthen the productive and honest dialogue it has built with civil society organizations at all levels of the Organization and seek to ensure that the voices of migrants and other populations affected by IOM's work are heard.

53. Over the next several months, the Organization will set out a series of institutional, cross-cutting and thematic priorities for its work, through a series of consultations with IOM offices, Member States and other stakeholders. This process will identify areas of work where further investment may be needed to ensure that the Organization can meet all of your expectations. The strategy that emerges from this process will guide the next five years of my leadership and I look forward to your reflection on, and engagement with, the priorities that IOM will identify.

54. Those priorities will also inform a new "policy hub" within the Organization which will be developed in 2019. The hub will be the gateway to strategic policy development across IOM. It will draw knowledge from across the IOM offices and translate it into consistent and evidence-based policy guidance for the Organization. The policy hub will connect the parts of the Organization that are working on similar operational and policy areas to ensure there is mutual benefit and learning. To achieve this, IOM will review innovative practices utilized in other organizations and sectors, and pilot new approaches to knowledge management. We will set out a road map and design for the policy hub in the early part of next year.

55. Under the aegis of the Deputy Director General, IOM is reviewing its internal governance framework, identifying areas of work, including risk management, internal justice and procurement. These reform proposals will be submitted to you during the first quarter of 2019. This said, IOM has already allocated two new Professional staff positions to the Office of the Inspector General, following discussions at the recent session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance.

56. Across the world, governments are recognizing that migration is an essential, yet sensitive, topic for international cooperation. There is an opportunity for IOM to lead a global discussion that acknowledges, and builds upon, the complexity that characterizes modern migration management, but also ensures that migrants themselves remain at the heart of the conversation. Over the next four days we will have the opportunity to explore some of the issues I have highlighted in my report – including migration health, internally displaced persons and migrants' voices – and I also look forward to discussing the future of IOM with you during this week, and in the months to come.