



**Permanent Mission of India
Geneva**

Statement by India at the 109th Annual Council Session of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) delivered by Mr. Rajiv K. Chander, Ambassador & Permanent Representative (29 November, 2018)

Item 12: General Debate

Excellencies and distinguished delegates, Good afternoon.

The delegation of India felicitates H.E. Mr. Negash Kebret Batora, the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, for his election as the Chairperson and other newly elected bureau members. We assure you of our fullest cooperation. We also express our gratitude to the outgoing Chair and other bureau members.

2. We welcome the Republic of Uzbekistan as the new member of IOM, the grant of observer status to two other organizations and, last but not the least, the new Director General (DG) Mr. Antonio Vittorino to his first Council session.

3. We encourage IOM to achieve universal membership and, in keeping with this spirit, for the office to have equitable geographical representation.

3. Today, IOM has both a new and expanding mandate. It is at a critical juncture. Our collective efforts to strengthen IOM and guide it in the formative years of its relationship with the UN and the initial implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) will be crucial.

4. Internally, IOM will need to manage knowledge, resources, including technology, and risks optimally to develop both programmatic and policy capacities needed to fully support its Member States and operations. For this, we look forward to the leadership and vision of the new DG.

5. We acknowledge the good work being carried out by IOM and its field offices in challenging environments.

Mr. Chairperson,

6. Migration is an inevitable and a predominantly positive phenomenon which powers the global economic engine, helps reduce inequities, connects

societies and bridges demographic and human resource gaps. It is also largely regular and orderly. The SDGs recognize it as a core enabler of inclusive and sustainable development. This developmental dimension of migration should not be lost sight of. There is a clear need to create greater awareness about its positive aspects. It is also important to ensure the safety, dignity and rights of the migrants throughout the migration cycle and make migration a choice.

7. Needless to state that the distinction between migrants and refugees should not be blurred, even in the case of mixed flows and that Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are neither migrants nor refugees. They are the primary concern of States and within the remit of their sovereign domestic jurisdiction. International organisations should optimally utilise their finite resources towards fulfilment of their core mandate.

8. IOM as the UN migration agency has an important role to play not only by managing migration but also facilitating it as part of migration governance.

9. We appreciate the invaluable and constructive role played by IOM in shaping the GCM. We welcome and support the role envisaged for IOM in its implementation and follow-up.

Mr. Chairperson,

10. The consensual inter-governmental adoption of the GCM as a legally non-binding framework for fostering genuine international cooperation, being fully mindful of the laws, policies and priorities of States and their international obligations, to govern migration and maximize its positive impacts will be a milestone achievement. Post adoption, IOM's lead coordinating and supporting role in the GCM implementation through the UN network on migration will be critical to turn commitments into action and this process should be fully guided by the Council, the supreme governing body of IOM.

11. We call on IOM to significantly expand its policy, programmatic and technical support to Member States to build national capacities to help them better manage migration and to meet their expectations. We underline the need to foster international cooperation amongst countries of origin, transit and destination.

12. The Program and Budget for the organisation should reflect its changing nature and be geared towards fulfilling the mandate provided by Member States. We request the DG to actively seek more un-earmarked funding and progressively increase its share in the operational budget.

Mr. Chairperson,

13. India is widely acknowledged as a major country of origin for migrants, globally. However, it is also being increasingly recognised that India is a major country of destination, as also a transit country.

14. Our Government accords top priority to ensuring a safe, orderly, legal and humane migration process. Our national institutional framework for migrants welfare and protection has undergone a transformational change during the last four years.

15. On the regulatory front, the e-Migrate system has ushered in greater accountability and transparency in the recruitment process. We are enhancing the skill-sets of our migrants through programmes like the Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and its standardized certification.

16. We have taken a number of other initiatives to promote migrant welfare such as the online grievance redressal portal (MADAD); the pre-departure orientation pilot program; the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) for emergencies; the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) for insurance cover and put in place 24X7 help lines.

17. We would greatly benefit by sharing our respective experiences in managing migration and mutually learning from each other's good practices.

18. Lastly, we take this opportunity to reaffirm India's commitment to a Member State led and driven IOM in its new, enhanced and lead coordinating role to 'make migration work for all' through a humane approach, keeping migrants at the centre of all our efforts. We look forward to a constructive engagement and fruitful outcomes in this council session.

Thank you.
