

Irish National Statement-109th IOM Council

November 29th, 2018, Geneva

To be delivered by H.E. Ambassador Michael Gaffey

Chair,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and adds the following in its national capacity.

Ireland extends our warm congratulations to you on your election as Chair of the IOM Council and to all the members of the Bureau. We congratulate Director General Vitorino on his election this summer. It is clear that the future of IOM is in strong hands, in challenging times. We particularly appreciated the Director General's comprehensive overview of the breadth of IOM's work in his report, which reminds us that migration is a global phenomenon but that the Organisation is well placed to work with States and regions in specific contexts on tailored migration management.

Chair,

Every one of us in this Chamber represents or comes from nations which are the product of millennia of migration. Today, as always, migration is not something affecting one country and its neighbour. It is a global issue, to be addressed globally. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, though non-binding and respectful of national sovereignty, provides us with a strong framework for cooperation and support in addressing common challenges and working to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2016, Ireland was proud to co-facilitate, with Jordan, the New York Declaration which led to the two Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees. The momentum that brought us together then is as relevant today, and the role of

IOM is more important than ever. Ireland looks forward to participating in the UN Conference in Marrakesh next week and to the process of agreeing the Global Compact and considering how in practice we will collectively advance its objectives.

Chair,

As we survey trends in migration worldwide, there is an inevitable tendency to focus on our own regions and our own experiences. However, before doing so, it is worth reminding ourselves, as Europeans, that our neighbouring continent, Africa, has seen a higher increase in migration across borders than any other part of the world. We need to acknowledge the immense efforts by African countries to deal with migratory flows, and their generosity, along with countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Bangladesh in hosting very large populations of displaced people in very difficult circumstances. The Global Compact on Migration represents one step towards a solution, but the work really begins now. IOM will have a critical role to play in helping us take the principles enshrined in the Compact to action on a global level. This is how we can maximise the positive effects of well-managed migration, and meet the challenge of unmanaged migration.

Chair, Ireland is a country with a long history of migration. 17% of Irish citizens are living abroad today. For centuries, Irish people were forced to seek livelihoods elsewhere in times of political and economic uncertainty, and this has resulted in a diaspora of some 70 million people of Irish descent worldwide.

More recently, Ireland has experienced inward migration. Today, more than one in six residents were born outside Ireland. Our workforce is the third most international in Europe and we see this as a proud reflection of our global island.

Ireland is benefitting in many ways, economically, socially and culturally, from the contribution of the new Irish who have made our island their home, including those who have sought protection having been forced to leave their own homes.

This historical relationship with migration drives us to ensure that the vision set out in the Global Compact – of common understanding, shared responsibilities, and unity of purpose – is advanced. If we use this important framework we can increase the benefits of migration and better prevent irregular migration. This requires the strong cooperation of countries of origin, transit and destination, working together towards common and shared interests.

Chair,

Ireland also joins the calls we have heard for a gender-responsive implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. We need to focus on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all migrant women and girls, who face particular vulnerabilities in displacement. We welcome the work of the IOM to better respond to particular vulnerabilities of people on the move, including the new framework for addressing gender-based violence in crises and the work on unaccompanied minors.

Finally, Ireland welcomes the decision of the UN Secretary General to establish the UN Network on Migration, with IOM playing the central coordinating role. It is important to see the establishment of a forum which can leverage the added value of different UN agencies, in a highly coordinated manner that works towards a whole-of-system approach to an issue which inherently needs it.

I wish to reiterate Ireland's support to IOM in this role in the years to come and our commitment to standing as a strong advocate for your work on the global issue of migration.

Thank you chair.