

Statement by Tehmina Janjua, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan, General Debate, 94th Session of the IOM Council, 29 November 2007.

Mr. President,

I congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on election to the Council. The coming year will be an important-one for the IOM in which your steady hand and diplomatic skills will be most required. I assure you of our support in your endeavours to resolve all issues.

We would also like to thank Ambassador Najat Al-Hajjaji for her leadership especially in concluding the discussions on the IOM Strategy.

Our appreciation is also for the Director General, Mr. Bruson McKinely, the DDG Ms. Ndioro N'Diaye and their team for effectively steering the Organization and placing it at the centre-stage of migration policy and action.

We welcome the admission of the Republic of Burundi and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as new members of the Organization.

Mr. President,

The Council has examined, in depth, various aspects of migration, in the excellent panel discussions, over the past three days. These discussions have once again highlighted the significance of the age old phenomena of migration and the relationship and synergies between international migration and development. The important role of business and partnerships required in this human endeavour were also addressed by the panel conducted by Mr. Ikram Sehgal, who is a Member of the Director General's Business Advisory Group.

Migration is a growing global phenomenon with complex dimensions in today's interconnected world. In view of its humanitarian impact, migration was addressed by the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. We thank Mme N'Diaye for an excellent contribution to the panel discussion at the International Conference.

Migration is a factor of production and an agent for development for the global economy. For migration to contribute towards poverty eradication in developing countries, we need specific policy and operational interventions at the international and national levels. I will highlight only a few areas where intervention is required and where IOM can play a role.

Globalization of trade and capital cannot be separated from the movement of people across borders in search of livelihoods. International migration can become a positive force for development in both countries of origin and countries of destination if it is supported by appropriate policies. Greater partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination as well as the full integration of the migratory dimension in development policies and dialogue on all levels are crucial for enhancing the development potential of migration. This has been one of the recommendations of the Global Migration Forum held in Brussels in July this year. IOM can support developing country efforts in this regard.

Today the world is seeing an upsurge in racism, xenophobia and intolerance towards migrants. Unfortunately, Muslim migrants bear the brunt of these attitudes in what were earlier welcoming societies. Aggressive anti Muslim discourse in the media and discriminatory practices against Muslim communities aggravate the situation. These negative aspects of international migration deserve urgent attention. Integration of international migrant in receiving countries requires efforts by everyone. Receiving societies should launch information campaigns about the positive contribution of international migration to the entire societies. IOM can play an important advocacy role in this regard.

Remittances are the most tangible benefit of international migration for countries of origin. Pakistan has benefited from remittances flowing back into country from the Pakistani diasporas. The inflow of remittances has contributed to the steady growth in over economy over the past five years. Remittances are private flows and cannot be a substitute for ODA, FDI or debt relief.

Considering the relatively high participation of women in labour migration, the international community should focus on developing gender sensitive migration policies. Also, protection of unskilled workers needs to be strengthened.

Restrictive migration policies have contributed to an increase in irregular migration. Governments need to take a conscious decision to increase legal avenues of migration and for the regularization of migrant in irregular situations.

Mr. President,

We recognize the important role played by the IOM in the inter-Agency Standing Committee. We appreciate the important role played by the IOM teams in working in close partnership with UN agencies in providing humanitarian assistance during natural disasters. We have seen and appreciated this in action in Pakistan during the 2005 earthquake and the 2007 floods in Pakistan.

The Council should focus on resolving the relationship between the UN and the IOM. IOM is a valued partner of the United Nations system. The inter-agency Global Migration Group provides the platform to IOM for policy discussions with the UN.

With the membership of the IOM Council increasing, the staffing policies of the Organization should reflect its global membership. We support merit and geographical distribution to be the basis of recruitment. And, therefore, candidates from developing countries with good qualifications should no longer be ignored. They should be given greater opportunities for contributing at policy levels. We have read the report on gender. The gender perspective needs to be integrated fully into staffing policies, especially with regard to women from developing countries.

We have been informed by the Secretariat about its out-posting policy. We would like to know how such centers are identified. Pakistan, with excellent professionals and infrastructure to support these processes would be able to support IOM in carrying out its out-posting activities. I thank you Mr. President.