

(Translation)

**Statement of Ambassador Li Baodong,
Head of the Chinese Delegation,
At the 96th Council Session of
The International Organization for Migration**

3 December 2008

Mr. Chairperson,

Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing congratulations on behalf of the Chinese Mission to Mr. German Mundarain Hernandez on his election as Chairperson of the Council. I believe that under your leadership, this meeting will be a great success. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. William Lacy Swing on assuming the position as Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). I am convinced that his rich diplomatic skills and able leadership will guide this organization to new achievements in the field of international migration.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today there are 200 million international migrants worldwide, accounting for 3% of the total world population and the number of migrants is increasing at a pace of 2.9% each year. Migration, in particular labor migration, holds growing potential for global economic and social development. The IOM's report, *World Migration 2008: Managing Labour Mobility in the Evolving Global Economy*, provides a comprehensive update on the situation of global labor migration and analyzes the major challenges in this regard. The Chinese Delegation believes that labor migration deserves broad attention from the international community. I wish to share my observations as follows:

First, it is important to continue to value the significant contributions of labor migration to economic and social development. Labor migration contributes to the effective and reasonable allocation of labor resources globally, thereby good for global economic development as a whole. For the countries of destination, labor migration is complementary to the local labor market and provides important support for national economic development. For the countries of origin, overseas employment helps to increase national incomes, expand job opportunities and improve labor skills. Regular and orderly labor migration creates win-win results and promotes common development in both countries of origin and countries of destination. We should take an objective, friendly, open and inclusive approach to labor migration and promote regular and orderly flows of global migrants. Countries of origin and

countries of destination should increase dialogue, take positive and appropriate policies and measures and work to realize sustainable development of labor migration.

Second, legitimate rights and interests of migrant workers should be effectively protected. Today, migrant workers still face low incomes and difficulties in social integration and their rights and interests remain underprotected. The current financial crisis has seriously affected the real economy. As a result, in some countries with rising unemployment rates, migrant workers face more grave challenges in seeking employment, survival and development. Migrant workers, having made great contributions to global economic development, should not and cannot be victims of the financial crisis. All countries should take into full account the real difficulties of migrant workers and work to formulate and improve relevant policies and regulations in light of national conditions. All countries should respect the history and culture, religion and customs of migrant workers. On this precondition, countries should also provide necessary assistance for migrants in terms of employment conditions, family reunion, child education, healthcare and social security to protect them from the negative impacts of the financial crisis and enable them to continue to play their important part in economic recovery and development.

Third, all countries should increase research on migratory phenomena in the context of the current international situation and their national conditions and take effective measures to fully explore the role of migration in promoting development. The

international community should work together to maximize efforts to crack down on illegal migration and trafficking in persons and ensure regular migration at the same time by “digging open channels and removing clandestine ones”. Countries of destination and countries of origin should carry out cooperation under the principle of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit. In formulating policies to attract immigrants, especially policies on talents and professionals, host countries should fully address the legitimate concerns of countries of origin. Developed countries should provide more assistance to developing countries in finance, trade, technology and human resources to help them to enhance capacity to prevent and fight illegal migration. The IOM and other relevant international and regional organizations should play a greater role in this field.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the issue of migration. The first 10 months of this year saw 76 million inbound and outbound visitors for China’s mainland, up by 14% over 2007 year on year. Inbound visitors reached 20 million and foreign residents totalled 450,000. How to properly manage population flows is one of the big challenges we face now. In recent years, to meet the needs of new developments, we have adjusted management policies for border entry and exit, sped up clearance and provided facilitation for regular population flows. Meanwhile, we firmly oppose and strictly crack down on illegal border-crossing activities, especially transnational organized crimes, including smuggling and human trafficking, that pose threats to sovereignty and security of all nations. We have formulated and improved relevant laws and regulations,

strengthened law enforcement and increased public education.

China highly values international cooperation on migration. We have participated in the last two sessions of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. We support its proposals of enhancing coordination and cooperation in the regional negotiation process on migration, promoting sustainable migration policies and strengthening cooperation on migration data and information collection. China supports and has been actively involved in the preparatory work of its third session to be held in Greece in 2009. China has maintained close cooperation with the IOM. In 2006, the IOM established its liaison office in China. Last year, the two sides signed the memorandum of understanding for cooperation on the project of “Capacity Building for Migration Management in China”. Implementation of the project is progressing smoothly. China is ready to strengthen cooperation with the IOM and it is our firm belief that Mr. Swing, Director General of the IOM, will continue his focus on the migration and development issues, continuously deepen exchanges and cooperation with all governments, and guiding the IOM to play a greater role in helping developing countries in their capacity-building efforts. We are ready to work with the international community to meet new challenges in the field of migration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.