

Norway's intervention at general debate during the 96. IOM Council Meeting, held in Geneva on December 2. – 5. 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We would like to congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on their election.

We would like to join other speakers in welcoming the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and December 18 as observers.

We thank the Director General and the Deputy Director General for sharing their visions for IOMs future work, and in particular the Director General's vision on a member driven organisation. Transparency and a close cooperation with members are important for a wellfunctioning organisation. Open-ended informal consultations are an excellent way to keep members informed and to have reactions from members to initiatives. We would also like to commend the IOM staff in Geneva and Oslo for their efforts to share information and to keep us informed on IOMs work.

We welcome the Director General's principle of a close cooperation with other organisations. As a UN member and a donor country Norway is strongly committed to the UN humanitarian reform, to improve financing, strengthen coordination and rationalize division of work.

We strongly support the Deputy Director General's view that gender mainstreaming is important both in projects and within the organisation itself. We look forward to more information on IOMs plans for gender mainstreaming. IOM is a major partner for Norway in the field of counter-trafficking. We are currently carrying out evaluations of our own work and IOM's counter-trafficking work, and we look forward to sharing with you the result of these evaluations.

Regarding victims of human trafficking, States should be encouraged to ratify and implement the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. We welcome the recent decision by the Conference of States Parties in Vienna in October this year to review the implementation of the Convention and its protocols.

The Norwegian Government supports the Global Forum both politically and financially. We consider the Forum's substantive work highly relevant and useful, and value the priority it gives to practical and action-oriented outcomes. Now that the Forum has entered its consolidation phase, we believe that the light support structure to be hosted by IOM will facilitate coordination and planning necessary for future work.

Mr Chairman,

This year's World Migration Report reflects the increasing migration across borders. The current financial crisis will have effects on the movement of people and how migration is received, as highlighted by the panel this morning.

Cooperation across borders becomes increasingly important.

Migrant workers and their families account for almost 90 per cent of the world's migrants. Policies and regulations ensuring decent work for all, also for migrant workers, are key elements in good migration policies. Implementing the eight fundamental ILO Conventions is essential in this regard, as they apply to migrants workers as well.

In addition, good governance, a general welfare policy and well distributed wealth in society are essential to protect migrants at home, while in transit and in countries of destination.

In a recent white paper presented to our national parliament, the needs for labour immigration and possible implications for national legislation have been analyzed. The white paper will serve as a basis for dialogue and decision making at national level. We appreciate the World Migration Report 2008 which gives us valuable background information.

Norway has increased its focus on the development dimensions of international migration. We have recently taken new initiatives to empowering migrants and diaspora to contribute to development and to reduce the costs of sending remittances to developing countries. We believe that strengthening the development impact of international migration can help giving us the “triple-win” situation: international migration that benefits countries of origin, countries of destination, as well as the migrants themselves and their families.

We look forward to a constructive cooperation with the IOM in the future, and would like to congratulate the Director General on his achievements on the organisation’s openness and interactive dialogue with members after his first 10 weeks of work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman