

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR AHMET ÜZÜMCÜ
TURKISH PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
AT THE 96th IOM COUNCIL MEETING
(2 December 2008)**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the Council. I am confident that under your able guidance, substantive progress will be achieved during this session. I would also like to thank your predecessor, H.E. Javier Garrigues for the excellent job he did during his tenure. I want to welcome the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Qatar which joined the IOM as new observers as well as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and December 18.

Mr. Chairman,

The IOM Strategy Paper, adopted last year, set out the priorities of the Organization. It also provided a clear picture of the administrative structure as well as programmes and financing. With the establishment of the Standing Committee on Programme and Finance, we believe that the IOM has become more transparent and the members have been more actively involved in the budgetary matters. Hence, the sense of ownership among the IOM members has been increased. A regular flow of information about the activities of IOM to its membership will further contribute to this fruitful participatory working method.

Migration is a very complex social phenomenon. It must be addressed in a global manner, through a holistic approach. It has economic, social and cultural ramifications for both the countries of origin and those of destination. Of all the interactions between countries, it has indeed the potential to have the most significant and lasting impact.

In order to enhance its benefits and diminish its negative repercussions migration needs to be managed through bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms. We should not view this as an issue between the developed countries and the developing ones. We should bear in mind that common solutions which we will find together will serve the interests of everyone. In that respect, IOM and other international organizations have an important role to play. Close cooperation among them as well as between them and member nations is essential. The

interagency cooperation must be carried out in a complementary manner while each focusing on its own mandate and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

Having said that, I want to address one form of irregular migration, namely human trafficking, which constitutes one of the biggest challenges of today. This problem requires a multi-faceted approach. There is no simple solution and close international cooperation is indispensable.

As a transit as well as a destination country for irregular migrants, we have taken some measures. A national task force has been established, comprising representatives from all relevant agencies. A toll-free, nationwide and multi-lingual phone line has been allocated for the use of victims of human trafficking. In a project implemented with the contributions of IOM and aiming at assisting victims of human trafficking, informative leaflets have been prepared and distributed at our border gates. Police and gendarmarie forces are being trained on irregular migration and human trafficking. Shelters have been established in big cities for victims. A cabinet decision was put into force by the Ministry of Health, in order to extend free medical care to victims.

However, given the magnitude of the problem, solutions are beyond the means of any single country. International burden sharing is required. Turkey has been stating that focus should not only be on the origin or destination countries but also on transit ones.

While applying different measures to combat human trafficking, we share the view that the best way to fight irregular migration is to strengthen the channels of legal migration. We are pleased to see that an increasing number of countries support this approach. We encourage the national as well as international institutions to conduct further studies on this issue. A more in-depth discussion on this matter with a view to narrow down differences and try to determine a common approach would be extremely useful.

Mr. Chairman,

I want to thank the Director General for his comprehensive and very informative presentation. We support the three key priorities that he has mentioned, namely state ownership, partnership with all stakeholders and staff professionalism. Engaging in trade and environment as well as

enhancing policy capacities through dialogue will give further impetus to the work of the Organization.

We appreciate the 2008 World Migration Report. My authorities will closely analyze this study.

We are looking forward to the special panel on Global Migration Group to be held tomorrow. We believe that dedicating a portion of the Council meeting to the GMG is indeed very useful.

We are sure that the International Dialogue on Migration, particularly having the opportunity to share best practices among stakeholders, will be a valuable input to our proceedings.

Let me conclude by reiterating our commitment to cooperate closely with the IOM and other relevant international organizations on migration related issues.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.