

UNITED STATES DELEGATION STATEMENT

(for posting)

Mr. Chairman, Director General, Excellencies, and Distinguished Colleagues:

Let me begin by congratulating the Council Bureau on their election. I also offer a warm welcome to IOM's new Observer states, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Qatar, and its two new NGO Observers.

Thank you, Director General Swing and Deputy Director General Ndiaye, for your earlier remarks. They clearly highlight the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for IOM, particularly at a time when migration is increasingly complex and is receiving greater international attention.

Mr. Director General, I also wish to congratulate you on your new role at the helm of IOM. IOM continues to be a strategic partner in assisting my Government to advance our goal of promoting legal, orderly, and humane migration policies and practice and of protecting and assisting vulnerable populations. We applaud your efforts during the first two months of your tenure to engage immediately with IOM member states, staff and partners in constructive dialogue regarding the Organization's work and future.

We welcome your proactive consultations with IOM staff worldwide on issues of critical concern to them and to improved IOM operations – for example, re-emphasizing the importance of the staff rotation policy, launching a staff satisfaction survey, and implementing the revision of the Staff Regulations and Rules. We look to your leadership in making IOM a model of transparent and accountable personnel policies that ensure the best possible use of human resources and promote staff morale. We also strongly endorse the upcoming joint IOM-UNHCR senior staff retreat and hope that it will strengthen collaboration and yield new opportunities for fruitful partnerships in the field and at headquarters.

We are especially pleased to see that both IOM and UNHCR have sought in the past few months to collaborate closely on issues relating to the asylum-migration nexus. In particular, we congratulate IOM for its role in the regional conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration

in West Africa, which was co-organized by UNHCR, IOM, and ECOWAS. We hope that UNHCR and IOM, as well as concerned countries and other relevant organizations, will view favorably such a model for collaboration and will seize other opportunities for joint efforts on international migration in other regions of the world.

More specifically, we hope that IOM and UNHCR will again join forces to organize meetings on mixed flows and the 10-Point Plan, such as the ones planned for Southeast Asia and Central America. IOM is in a unique position to contribute its field expertise to these joint meetings, as it has been working for many years with member countries on the promotion of orderly and humane migration at a sub- and multi-regional level. IOM's strong region-specific expertise is invaluable, for example, when discussing relevant migration dialogues; on-going activities in the area of migration management and capacity-building; top priorities and challenges for member countries; identification of, and assistance to, victims of trafficking; and assisted voluntary return of stranded migrants. We encourage IOM to strengthen the Organization's partnerships and collaboration with other relevant actors and UN agencies, as it continues to enhance its premier migration role.

In this vein, we note the Special Session on the Future of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), where governments agreed to proceed with the implementation by early 2009 of the GFMD Support Unit with IOM as host entity. We compliment the government of the Philippines – in its capacity as Chair of the GFMD – and IOM, for the successful negotiation of the MOU pertaining to the Support Unit. We wish the GFMD Troika of Belgium, the Philippines, and Greece every success in the selection of a qualified Head of Unit, with extensive experience in the field of migration. The United States believes that this Unit, housed by IOM, will facilitate stronger collaboration which will ultimately benefit this state-run Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we are encouraged by the recent developments at IOM and with its partners, and look forward to Director General Swing's able leadership of the Organization in the years ahead. The United States believes that IOM is most strong and responsive when its practices are built upon transparency, integrity and accountability. We look forward to

working closely with our colleagues in this room to continue to support the Organization and strengthen its role as the preeminent global migration agency.

Thank you.