

## Bangladesh General Statement at the IOM Council

23-26 November 2009, Geneva

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Bangladesh congratulates the newly elected bureau under your leadership and assures you of our full support.

Mr. Chairman,

As we see the first welcome indications on the road to recovery from the global financial crisis, let me begin by focusing on the role migration can and should play in accelerating economic growth. Since the advent of the crisis, we have seen anti-migration sentiments grow and a tendency to raise the barriers to even orderly migration. We now have enough evidence to demonstrate that such policies are self defeating.

Migration remains the lifeblood for many economies. The jobs migrant workers perform and the services they provide would not be there in their absence. The dynamics of the labour market or the population trends in many countries are such that they will continue to require migrant workers, many in increasing numbers. In such a scenario, having an enabling legal and administrative framework for promoting orderly, ethical migration and protecting the human rights of migrants would actually help such economies prosper faster.

Mr. Chairman,

We need to realize that one of the three dominant trends of twenty first century migration would not concern acts of desperation. It would not be about people fleeing poverty or injustice. It would be temporary migration – legal and orderly temporary migration. These days, more and more people move because they can. They exercise a choice, and by doing so, improve their economic conditions and bring benefits to both the sending and the receiving countries.

The second dominant trend would be the shift from the north-south nature of migration. As developing countries experienced rapid growth and infrastructure boom over the last few decades, south-south migratory flows had become significant. Labour mobility may actually take a markedly south-south orientation as expanding and diversifying labour makers in developing countries generate the need for more foreign workers in various skills categories. One way to respond to this is through the welcome support provided by the IOM to the various regional processes, including the Colombo Process, of which Bangladesh is the next Chair.

The third dominant trend it yet to manifest fully. Mr. Chairman, the world economy may have cooled down a bit, but the world itself is heating up. Climate change threatens to displace millions, most of the mobility confined within respective borders. We have to

find ways to assist these 'unwilling migrants' to resettle and find livelihoods. For countries like Bangladesh who are at the frontline of the global climate hazard, the challenges would be enormous.

Mr. Chairman,

We have listened carefully to the candid and thought provoking statement of Director General William Swing this morning. He has outlined various aspects of contemporary human mobility and the necessary reform the Organization must go through in order to respond better to the needs of the migrants themselves and those of the member states.

In a world of shifting migratory trends and emerging challenges, the IOM Administration must chart a course based on the Strategy collectively prescribed by its membership. We are encouraged by the Director General's reiteration that the organization would prioritize issues like migration and development, labour mobility as well as migration and environment.

We believe that we have to discuss IOM's future evolution keeping in mind the need to respond better to the long term trends in human mobility. The structural reforms need to be accomplished in a way that would preserve, and indeed strengthen, the Organization's activities and field presence to relate better to these evolving and emerging trends. Regional and sub-regional specificities and migration trends need to be factored-in adequately in the proposed structural reforms.

It is therefore of paramount significance that the structural reforms be done right. It should not be done in haste. All members need to be fully on board. We note that the IOM Structural Reform Team concluded that the various IOM structures remain in serviceable condition. IOM's proposed budget for next year is based on the existing structure. We therefore believe that further consultations may indeed be useful in our collective efforts to pursue reforms that will make IOM a better and more efficient organization for the future.

We shall speak more on this aspect tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me reiterate the importance we attach to the IOM. Bangladesh remains a steadfast supporter of IOM and its Director General. We also remain committed to provide support to continued IOM presence in Dhaka.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.