

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA

GENEVA

Statement by India under Item 6: General Debate

at the 98th session of the IOM Council

(25 November 2009)

Mr. Chairman,

The Indian delegation congratulates you on your appointment as Chairman as well as the newly elected bureau and welcomes on board the new Deputy Director-General Ambassador Laura Thompson. We thank the Director-General, Ambassador William Lacy Swing, for his comprehensive report on the activities, achievements, challenges and perspectives of IOM, and express our appreciation for his dynamic and inspiring leadership and the professionalism and dedication of the IOM family.

As pointed out by the Director-General, we stand at a watershed, witnessing an era of the greatest human mobility in recorded history. The phenomenon of migration is a geo-political subject of global significance, with its salience having increased greatly over recent years. Migration, both within and beyond borders, has become a prominent theme in domestic and international debates, and hence, was chosen deservedly as the theme of the 2009 Human Development Report titled "Overcoming barriers: human mobility and development".

IOM's role has grown in tandem with the increase in migrant population, both in geographical spread as well as its activities. The near-doubling of its membership in the last decade, the expansion of its projects and programmes, field offices and operating budget point to IOM's responsiveness to the onerous demands being placed upon it. My delegation, therefore, welcomes the timely emphasis placed by the Director-General on the need to reform the Organization's structures and processes, keeping in view future growth and expansion. While supporting the Director-General's initiatives, we believe it would be useful to hold a review in a few years' time,

so as to assess how far these reforms have been able to meet the desired objectives.

While my delegation appreciates the active contribution of IOM to the Global Migration Group, we would advocate a greater role for IOM in the Global Forum on Migration and Development. We believe that GFMD stands to gain significantly from enhanced contributions and engagement by IOM, quintessentially a field organisation with a vast network of offices across the world. The GFMD process would also benefit tremendously from IOM's outreach and research-based documentation as well as its accurate trends and surveys on migration.

Mr. Chairman,

India's association with the Organization goes back several decades. The Government of India and IOM have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which serves as a platform for the joint implementation of programmes and activities enhancing the management and facilitation of overseas employment of Indian workers worldwide. In addition, India has been actively engaged both in the Colombo process and the Abu Dhabi dialogue, both regional consultative processes in which the IOM has made significant contributions. India, along with the Philippines, has signed an agreement with the UAE, a host country, to guarantee enhanced implementation of contractual workers' rights.

Being at once a country of origin, transit and destination, India has a vital stake in the global management of migration. It is estimated that around 25 million people of Indian origin live in as many as 110 countries across the globe while another 20 million migrants, including a large number of irregular migrants, live in India. Inward remittances amount to USD 27 billion, making India one of the highest recipients. Since 2004, India has established a dedicated Ministry towards promoting the interests of its huge Diaspora. We believe that in order to make international migration a "win-win" process, migration must be managed by all relevant stakeholders in a humane, orderly, non-discriminatory and mutually beneficial manner. We

welcome in this context the idea often articulated by the Director-General, that of prioritizing the best interests of migrants themselves.

My delegation believes that IOM's relevance has become even more pronounced in the post global economic crisis scenario, which has brought new dimensions to the fore , such as an increasing trend of anti-migration sentiment and xenophobic attitudes, being witnessed even towards highly skilled and professional labour and legal migrants in the developed world. At a time when the world is witnessing a scaling back of regular migration options, India calls for greater emphasis on the linkages of migration with development and, in particular, the positive contribution made by migrants to the development processes of both, the countries of destination as well as of origin. Further, we must not shy away from addressing the most salient issues of concern for the developing countries, namely racial discrimination and xenophobia as well as non-fulfillment of contractual obligations with regard to payment of wages and provision of appropriate living conditions.

Mr. Chairman,

India has offered its candidature for appointment as External Auditor of IOM. My delegation believes that it is important to set this election apart from other elections. In our opinion, the objective of this exercise is to select a candidate that possesses the technical expertise and wherewithal to meet IOM's specific financial management requirements. We sincerely hope that due credence is given to the extent to which each candidate has been able to satisfactorily meet the selection criteria laid down by IOM itself. In this regard, allow me to highlight a few distinguishing aspects of India's candidature. Not only do we possess considerable knowledge and experience in the field of IPSAS & SAP, but we are currently in the process of aiding international organizations in their transition to IPSAS; the precise function that IOM shall require of its External Auditor. Further, we have audited several international organizations in the last two decades, three of these have been undertaken in the last five years.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, in line with the idea of "member states' ownership" of IOM, India would like to assure you of our continued engagement and support towards the strengthening of IOMs as an organization responding effectively to the various challenges posed by global migration today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
