

**STATEMENT  
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REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

**AT**

**THE 100-th SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

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Honorable Director General,  
Distinguished Chairperson,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset allow me to extend my congratulations to His Excellency Ambassador Christian Strohal upon his election as our new Chairperson. I would also like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Idriss Jazaïry for his dedicated Chairmanship during the past year. I would also like to use this opportunity to congratulate the 14 new Members to our Organization.

Not always one has this kind of happy celebration: the 100<sup>th</sup> IOM Council meeting coinciding with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Organization for Migration is yet one more milestone in the developing history of our Organization. Over the past sixty years the IOM has transformed and expanded, showing open-mindedness and flexibility towards the changing scope and nature of migration which not only hasn't faded away but has become a major global phenomenon of the modern world.

The Republic of Armenia joined IOM as a member in 1993, and the IOM office in Yerevan opened in the same year. The activities of the Organization in Armenia are based on a number of documents signed between the Government of Armenia and the IOM.

In order to have a clear idea of migration processes one should reveal objectively the dual nature of their impact both on the source and destination countries, and reflect on the correlation of the two. There are many examples when the countries with different political and economic systems cooperate because the presence of a large number of migrants influences the relations between these countries. Armenia is presently developing a sound policy that should address these issues, reduce the number of illegal migrants and

promote legal channels for migration. In order to achieve this goal we are ready and open for further cooperation.

Armenia's migration policy is based on a balanced and coordinated approach, aimed at establishing a unified migration strategy and strengthening the legislative basis for migration management in the country.

In 2004 the "Concept Paper on State Regulation of Population Migration" was adopted. Since 2004 the statistics on migration has shown a positive balance with the growing number of returnees who left Armenia in the beginning of the 1990s seeking jobs abroad due to enduring economic hardships.

Among the new waves of reforms in this field I would like to mention the upcoming introduction of the New Passports and Identification Cards with Biometric Parameters by mid-next year.

The Government proceeds with its border management reform through the establishment of a common Border Management System with the inclusion of all border crossing points. In this connection I would like to express our appreciation to the IOM and the US Government for the assistance in the implementation of the Border Management projects. The Training Centre of the Border Guards Troops was established and extensive training programs have been organized for border guards and police on legislation, human rights, examination of identity, travel documents and fraud detection, counter-smuggling and counter-trafficking. We have also made amendments and improvements in the procedures of granting entry visas, thus addressing concerns relating to the so-called "risk countries".

Mr. Chairperson,

Armenia prioritizes signing of bilateral readmission agreements with the destination countries, which are mostly the EU countries for Armenian migrants, and sees the link between readmission and visa facilitation as further perspective. In this context, I would like to underline that Armenia stresses the importance of providing support for the reintegration of persons being returned to the country of origin. If readmitted without any kind of support for reintegration in their home country, there is nothing that prevents migrants from trying to reenter an EU member state again. Creating opportunities and providing support to the returnees for the successful reintegration will not only contribute to combating illegal migration but also help in the reduction of poverty in the countries of origin that most often become driving force for illegal movements.

Since 2001 Armenia is involved in the inter-regional migration and asylum management dialogue between the sending and transit countries of the South Caucasus and the receiving EU Member States. The Cluster Process mechanisms and policies to reduce irregular migration are being promoted, while simultaneously strengthening the South Caucasus institutional capacity and the systems to promote legal migration and sustainable return and reintegration practices and policies. The other framework for cooperation is the European Neighborhood Policy which also reflects priorities in the field of migration: more specifically, it aims to reduce illegal immigration through the effective migration management. Within this framework as well as on the basis of the EU Global Approach to Migration, Armenia continues dialogue with the European Union.

Another very important aspect in the protection of the rights of migrants is the lack of information on their rights and duties both in sending and host country. With this in mind, “Migrants’ Support Unit” has been established at the Migration Agency of Armenia, which also operates online. Additionally, a “Migration Resource Centre” was established within the AENEAS Program, to raise the public awareness on threats of illegal migration and the benefits of legal labor migration. This Centre provides information about legal migration opportunities, laws and labor codes of different countries, warns about risks of illegal migration and trafficking as well as produces and disseminates various booklets.

Mr. Chairperson,

Addressing the root causes that force people to leave their home country should be viewed as one of the main tools for the significant improvement of the situation in the area of migration. And the application of restrictive measures only would definitely not be sufficient to tackle this issue. It should include measures to promote productive employment and decent work and, more generally, to improve the economic and social conditions as they definitely do contribute to the reduction of incentives for illegal migration. Using the potential of legal migration, in particular through the regulated/circular migration schemes, quota based projects, strengthening the cooperation at bilateral and regional levels and concluding labor agreements is among priorities of Armenia’s migration policy. We strongly believe that by fostering circular migration we could create temporary work opportunities helping to address labor needs not only in the countries of origin but also in the receiving countries.

I wasn’t quite sure whether to wish IOM another successful 100 sessions and at least another 60 years of existence, hoping that the causes of migration might cease to exist one fine day. But being realistic, I understand that migration has been one of the oldest phenomena and it will exist as long

as the humankind exists. Moreover, listening to the Migrant's Voices and knowing many more migrants' success stories, with happy ends, I can just once again commend the work carried out by the International Organization for Migration, the Director General William Lacy Swing and each and every staff-member of the IOM who have contributed to the happy end solutions to the real life stories of migrants.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson.