



**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Hungary to the United Nations Office  
and Other International Organisations in Geneva**

**Statement**

**of H.E. András Dékány, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the  
Republic of Hungary**

**at the 100th IOM Council meeting  
(7. December 2011)**

***Check against delivery***

Mr. Chairman,

Today, we commemorate a special milestone in the history of the International Organization for Migration: 60 years of assisting migrants worldwide in a constantly changing environment and political and social landscape. Since 1951, when IOM's predecessor ICEM was created, the world has undergone significant political, economic and social transformations. The huge number of 'people on the move' resulting from these changes has, however, remained a constant challenge. Since its establishment, the Organization has assisted about 15 million migrants, including refugees and IDPs worldwide, working closely with UNHCR in increasingly complex operations. The Organization has helped refugees to find new homes, internally displaced persons to go back to their earlier dwellings and also former combatants to return not only to their settlements of origin but also to civilian life. In the area of humanitarian assistance, many refugees owe a lot to IOM for what it does in the field of camp coordination and management. Also those, who have chosen voluntarily to become migrants, can count on the help of IOM to provide among others training, cultural orientation, consular services and to facilitate the transfer of remittances.

Besides its widely recognized field work, the Organization should also be commended for its less visible, but equally important contribution to shaping policy decisions, as well as for its role in the development of international migration and humanitarian law. Also IOM's involvement in training and capacity building of national migration authorities has been key to strengthening the capacity of governments to manage migration more effectively and in accordance with the rule of law.

Mr. Chairman,

It is widely said that a friend in need is a friend indeed. In an extraordinary situation of scarcity, natural disaster or human conflict, many individuals are forced to leave behind their earlier lives and seek shelter in a new place. Others, in hope of a better job, or a more prosperous and happier life, take themselves the initiative to move to a different, more desirable place to settle down there. These 'people on the move', in search for a better life, or fleeing from war or persecution, very often find themselves lacking the most basic means. Over the past 60 years, IOM has played a crucial role in providing comfort and assistance to such people.

Fifty-five years ago, many Hungarians also experienced this vulnerability – and relief. In 1956, after the nation's freedom fight was crushed, about 200 000 of my compatriots left Hungary from fear of repression and an uncertain future. The international community, at the height of the Cold War, did what it could, without challenging the strategic realities: it gave a helping hand to our refugees. Besides national governments, international organizations such as UNHCR and the Red Cross worked together in an exemplary exercise of international co-operation to provide care and support to the Hungarian refugees. Among these cooperating international organizations there was a relatively new one, founded just five years before: ICEM, the predecessor of IOM, which assisted 180 000 Hungarians who fled to Austria and to Yugoslavia to find a place to restart their lives. At this forum I wish to again express our thanks and gratefulness for everything the organization did for us in these

difficult times. You really were friends in need, which, I can assure you, Hungarians will never forget.

Compared to the 50s, when Hungary was merely a source of migrants, our country, together with others in Central Europe, is experiencing nowadays a different role: that of transit country, and increasingly also that of the destination of growing immigration. At the same time, irregular migration and trafficking continue to be major challenges, in particular since Hungary oversees an important part of the EU's external border. In addition to our historically positive sentiments towards the Organization, these factors encourage us to work in close collaboration with IOM. An excellent example of this has been our longstanding cooperation in the field of assisted voluntary return programs. Our country has equally supported IOM's operations pertaining to a number of complex humanitarian crises over the past few years. When in the beginning of this year IOM and UNHCR jointly conducted a major evacuation operation of third country nationals from Libya, Hungary, along with many other countries, willingly provided financial support to this remarkable effort. Beyond these contributions, we also hope that we will be able to further enhance our cooperation through the joint work carried out with the IOM representation in Budapest.

Hungary is committed to providing continued support to IOM in its efforts to address the needs of millions of migrants the world-over. The recent structural reform within the organization will hopefully allow for an even more targeted and successful response. In this regard, we applaud the growing membership of IOM, reflecting the strong interest of the international community in the plight of migrants, as it allows for an expansion of its programmes, staffing, offices and a stable and predictable budget. This broad support equally shows the confidence countries have in the organization's leadership and its willingness to take into account the views and perspectives of its Member States.

In conclusion, we would like to congratulate IOM on achieving this landmark and we wish it every success in strengthening its role as the leading agency on migration.