

## New Zealand statement

# New Zealand Government



## Statement to the IOM Council

Geneva

[TBA] December 2011

*Tena koutou, Tena koutou katoa      Greetings to you, greetings to you all*

Director General, fellow delegates and colleagues, I speak on behalf of the New Zealand Government.

In celebrating the 60th anniversary of the IOM, we would like to sincerely congratulate the Director General on the leadership he is providing to the IOM. We had the honour to host Mr Swing in his visit to New Zealand in July this year, and remain impressed with his knowledge, and his commitment to the strategic direction and activities of the IOM, and his energy and zest for life and his work. New Zealand reiterates our ongoing support for the IOM and its core mandate.

We would also like to reflect on the positive and constructive progress the IOM has made as an organisation. We acknowledge the importance of the IOM implementing changes which will ensure that it continues to fulfil its mandate effectively and efficiently. In particular, we appreciate there are limits to the resources available and that, in acting in the best interests of Member States, the IOM must allocate resourcing where it is most effective.

We would like to congratulate the IOM on the launch of the World Migration Report 2011. Effective information and communication is vital in ensuring orderly migration, particularly in the current age of social media revolution.

New Zealand has a long tradition of welcoming and supporting migrants. We are a country whose history is built on migration. New Zealand is a trading nation with a small population base, located geographically distant from its offshore markets. This presents its own unique challenges, including the growing need for skilled workers.

The migration challenges over the past year continue to be influenced by the global economic crisis, which has played a significant role in shaping my government's policies towards migration. Migration goes hand in hand with economic development, and New Zealand, distanced from our major markets by the Pacific Ocean, has not been immune to the crisis. Overall the number of people approved for permanent residence to New Zealand is down over this last year by around 10%, and a challenge for us in the years ahead is to ensure skilled migration stays at the levels required to support our economic development.

New Zealand has reacted to this growing need by developing the Recognised Seasonal Employers programme. This circular migration scheme is focused on the horticulture and viticulture sectors, and encourages economic development, regional integration, and cooperation within the Pacific by allowing preferential access to workers who are citizens of eligible countries. The scheme ensures recruited workers are adequately paid and financially benefit from their time in New Zealand. This scheme benefits both citizens of the Pacific, and the employers, and the New Zealand labour market.

The Recognised Seasonal Employer programme generally supports economic growth and productivity for the whole industry by promoting best practice in the horticulture and viticulture industries, and ensuring that the employment conditions of both New Zealand and non-New Zealanders are protected and supported.

New Zealand's reliance on its offshore markets to drive a strong, internationally competitive domestic economy is critical to our ability to realise regional opportunities and deliver increased prosperity to New Zealanders. IOM Member States, including New Zealand, are continuing to think about the long-term consequences of the economic crisis on their immigration policies and preparing for future scenarios with regard to migration issues. It is important to remember that, for many, migration is linked to economic opportunity.

As you may know, New Zealand's second largest city, Christchurch, was struck by severe earthquakes in September 2010 and then again, far more severely in February this year. The second earthquake saw the single greatest loss of life and damage to property to New Zealand in decades.

The massive scale of the reconstruction and recovery efforts required means that immigration has a crucial role to play in ensuring a sufficient supply of the labour and skills needed to rebuild Christchurch. We are therefore working to identify roles and skills which will be in short supply and have developed a specific skills shortage list for the Canterbury region which will enable firms, many of whom are actively recruiting overseas, to bring workers onshore more quickly and easily.

With regard to irregular migration, New Zealand is also standing firm against people smuggling by participating in regional fora where these issues are discussed, including the Bali Process. New Zealand works closely with the IOM

and other Bali Process Steering Group members to operationalise the Regional Cooperation Framework. The Framework proposes effective ways for regional cooperation to reduce irregular movement through the region. New Zealand appreciates IOM's provision of administrative support to the Bali Process and active engagement in discussions.

Director General, I will conclude by reinforcing New Zealand's support for the IOM's work, and thank the IOM for its on going support. We look forward to celebrating similar IOM anniversaries for many years to come.

*Nga mihi rawa atu*

*Many thanks*