

**EIGHTY-FIRST (SPECIAL) SESSION  
OF THE COUNCIL**

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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THIRD MEETING**

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva  
on Thursday, 7 June 2001, at 3.20 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. J. E. VEGA (Chile)

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Agenda item 1

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRMAN declared open the Eighty-first (Special) Session of the Council and welcomed participants. He reminded delegates that the Council was meeting in special session to admit seven new Members and two new observers.

Agenda item 2

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES AND OBSERVERS

2. The CHAIRMAN requested the Council to take note that the Director General had examined the credentials of representatives of all Member States and found them to be in order and that he had been advised of the names of the observers for non-member States and governmental and non-governmental organizations attending the session.

3. The Council took note.

Agenda item 3

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA  
(MC/2023/Rev.1)

4. The agenda was adopted.

Agenda item 4

MEMBERSHIP

(a) Application by the Republic of the Congo for membership in the Organization  
(MC/2024, MC/L/1002)

(b) Application by the Republic of Azerbaijan for membership in the Organization  
(MC/2025, MC/L/1003)

(c) Application by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for membership in the Organization  
(MC/2026, MC/L/1004)

(d) Application by the Democratic Republic of the Congo for membership in the Organization  
(MC/2027, MC/L/1005)

(e) Application by the Republic of Sierra Leone for membership in the Organization  
(MC/2030, MC/L/1006)

(f) Application by the Republic of the Gambia for membership in the Organization  
(MC/2031, MC/L/1007)

(g) Application by Georgia for membership in the Organization  
(MC/2032, MC/L/1008)

5. The CHAIRMAN said that after the Council had considered items 4 and 5 he would give the floor to the new Members and observers. He suggested that any delegates wishing to welcome them should do so at the end of the discussion on item 5.

6. He drew attention to the applications of the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Republic of the Gambia, and Georgia for membership and invited the Council to consider the draft resolutions in documents MC/L/1002, MC/L/1003, MC/L/1004, MC/L/1005, MC/L/1006, MC/L/1007 and MC/L/1008, respectively.

7. The draft resolutions on the admission of the Republic of the Congo (MC/L/1002), the Republic of Azerbaijan (MC/L/1003), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (MC/L/1004), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MC/L/1005), the Republic of Sierra Leone (MC/L/1006), the Republic of the Gambia (MC/L/1007) and Georgia (MC/L/1008) as Members of the Organization were adopted by acclamation.

8. The CHAIRMAN, noting that the Secretariat had informed him that the credentials for the representatives of the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Republic of the Gambia, and Georgia had been received and found to be in order, invited them to take their places among the Member States of the Organization.

#### Agenda item 5

#### OBSERVERSHIP

(a) Application by the People's Republic of China  
for representation by an observer  
(MC/2028, MC/L/1009)

(b) Application by Assistance pédagogique internationale (API)  
for representation by an observer  
(MC/2029, MC/L/1010)

9. The draft resolutions on granting the People's Republic of China (MC/L/1009) and Assistance pédagogique internationale (MC/L/1010) observer status at meetings of the Council were adopted by acclamation.

10. The CHAIRMAN, noting that the Secretariat had informed him that the credentials of the observers for the People's Republic of China and Assistance pédagogique internationale (API) had been received and found to be in order, invited them to take their places at the observers' table.

11. Mr. MENGA (Republic of the Congo) expressed his appreciation at the Republic of the Congo's admission to IOM. In recent years, a close and cordial cooperative relationship had been established between his country and IOM. His Government was grateful for the assistance it had received in the disarming of militia, the collection of weapons and the reintegration of former militia members into civil life, thereby contributing to the consolidation of the peace process and national reconciliation crucial to his country's development. That action had taken place within the context of the cease-fire and cessation of hostilities' agreements signed, respectively, at Pointe Noire and Brazzaville in November and December 1999, and recently confirmed by the Convention for Peace and Reconstruction of the Congo signed on 14 April 2001.

12. Such cooperation would need to be stepped up, in view of the Republic of the Congo's geographical position as a country of transit in the heart of Central Africa and consequently as a country of migration, predestined to migratory flows by its past history. That situation had been further aggravated by the precariousness of its economy, by political conflicts and crises and by natural catastrophes. The impact on his country of the crisis in the Great Lakes region was just one illustration of that phenomenon.

13. He was convinced that the concept of globalization without a coherent migratory policy based on concerted action and collective responsibility would inevitably jeopardize long-term strategies and world development policies. By attempting to tackle migration problems at global level, IOM made a major contribution to development. His Government fully supported the Migration for Development in Africa programme and similar initiatives and had participated in the recent workshop held in Libreville. The people and Government of the Republic of the Congo undertook to contribute actively to IOM's work.

14. Mr. NAGIYEV (Republic of Azerbaijan) expressed his gratitude at the admission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to IOM. In view of the current social and economic situation, it was essential to find new methods of migration management based on international cooperation and mutual assistance. The action taken by his country in that connection had created the necessary conditions for its admission to the Council of Europe. Its Constitution, as well as laws and normative acts established in conformity with international standards, ensured the rights and freedom of its citizens.

15. However, despite its achievements, there were a number of major problems still to be solved in Azerbaijan, of which one of the most substantial was migration. The three main basic factors which seriously aggravated the current migration situation were, firstly, the social, economic and demographic policy of the former USSR which ignored the natural, historical and cultural specificities of Azerbaijan; secondly, the social and economic crisis caused by the collapse of the Soviet empire; and thirdly, the occupation of 20 per cent of the Azerbaijani territories which had resulted in a flow of over a million refugees and internally displaced persons. Furthermore, the transition to a market economy and Azerbaijan's integration into the world economy had also affected migratory processes. All those factors encouraged labour forces to move, both within Azerbaijan and around it. Its citizens had moved to Russia, Turkey, some European States and the United Arab Emirates.

16. A number of laws had been passed to create a legislative basis for migration management and bilateral agreements had been concluded in that connection with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Georgia. Similar agreements were being prepared with Germany, Belgium, Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Moldova. A special State programme on forced migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons had also been adopted.

17. Intensified cooperation between the Azerbaijani Government and IOM had focused in particular on capacity-building in migration management and, through the cluster approach, information campaigns for irregular migration prevention, assistance for migrants' voluntary return, programmes on micro-credits and employment and border control improvement. An agreement on cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and IOM, ratified by the Azerbaijani Parliament in 1999, and an official visit by the Director General had given a new impulse to bilateral relations. Meanwhile, the absence of migration management coordination had had a negative effect on labour migrants and their families' social protection – an area in which the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements might make a valuable contribution.

18. Mr. FULLER (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) expressed his gratitude that his country's application for membership in the Organization had been accepted. His country had been absent for 32 years and was delighted to be back. His national authorities looked forward to building on the solid links which had already been established through a close and long-standing relationship with the Organization. For example, in 2000 his country had provided financial support for IOM's work on counter-trafficking in the Balkans, capacity-building, the shelter programme for migrant workers in Gujarat (India), and emergency preparedness and response. Positive discussions had also been held on such important issues as irregular migration and cross-border movement of skilled labour. His delegation looked forward to working even more closely with the Organization in the years to come.

19. Mr. BOLAILOKO (Democratic Republic of the Congo) apologized for the fact that, for reasons of State, the Minister of Labour of his country had been unable to attend the Council session but would come to Geneva before the end of June. On her behalf, he thanked IOM and its Member States for their act of solidarity in admitting the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Organization. The presence of his country's delegation was clear proof of the interest his Government took in IOM. While the situation had already been disturbing during the 1970s and 1980s as a result of brain-drain, after which various programmes had been set up to counteract the crisis, the war affecting his country during the past three years had provoked massive displacement of its population, both within the country and beyond its frontiers. It had caused the closure of various production units, schools and medical training centres, through the absence or death of their staff. Now, thanks to the tireless activity of his Government, his compatriots were confident about the country's future, particularly with the support of bilateral and multilateral partners.

20. In that context, admission to IOM was of particular significance. Access to its facilities and programmes, such as the Migration for Development in Africa programme, offered possibilities for solving the problems of reinsertion and migration. He assured the Organization that his Government would take all the necessary steps to ensure implementation of specific projects to solve the crucial problems of his country. He appealed to the Member States of IOM to assist in solving the considerable migration-related problems facing his country.

21. Mr. WURIE (Republic of Sierra Leone) thanked all IOM Member States for admitting his country to the Organization. By its application for membership, his Government had shown the importance which it attached to organized migration. It had also acknowledged the services already rendered to his country by IOM, which normally limited its programmes and activities to its Members. He particularly commended IOM on the recent opening of an office in Freetown. Sierra Leone was just emerging from a ten-year war that had created a great deal of suffering, degradation, poverty and disease, and had produced large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. His Government hoped that Sierra Leone would benefit from return migration and refugee programmes, as well as from the transfer of qualified human resources. His country looked forward to a fruitful partnership with IOM and he asked Member States for their support and understanding for his country which was suffering the devastating effects of war. He thanked all those in IOM, particularly the Director General and the Deputy Director General, who had been in constant contact with his Government in order to facilitate its membership.

22. Mr. BADIWI (Republic of the Gambia) thanked delegates for accepting the Gambia as a Member of the Organization, thereby formalizing the already existing relationship with IOM. His Government looked forward to participating more fully in IOM's work. As a country of transit and migration, on account of its geographical location, the Gambia had great need of the Organization's services and he was convinced that membership would provide the basis for fruitful cooperation. Since the recent adoption of a plan of action, an institutional framework for migration management had been established in the Gambia. The country had subsequently enjoyed a new level of collaboration with IOM in developing national migration programmes, including a technical cooperation programme to establish a governmental commission for migration management and border control services. A national strategy on migration policy was to be considered for 2001 and special emphasis had been laid on the active involvement of relevant non-governmental organizations.

23. Because of the current situation in the southern part of Senegal, IOM's services were particularly needed. Continuing tensions in Casamance had driven over 2,500 refugees to villages along Gambia's southern border, since fighting had flared up in mid-May. Currently there were some 12,500 refugees in the Gambia and his country required IOM's help in assisting with their voluntary repatriation, or alternatively their settlement and integration in his country. His delegation looked forward to fruitful cooperation with IOM and felt it a privilege to belong to the Organization.

24. Mr. EDILASHVILI (Georgia) said that it was an honour for Georgia to accede to IOM and hoped that his country's participation in the Organization's work would be mutually productive and fruitful. His Government attached the greatest importance to migration issues since, after civil wars, ethno-political conflicts and natural disasters, Georgia had been severely affected by the movement of displaced persons within and across its borders. At present, there were nearly 300,000 internally displaced persons throughout Georgia giving rise to serious social and economic problems which were difficult to deal with. He hoped that IOM membership would help his country to find new approaches. His Government was also committed to resolving the issue of the Muslim population from the Meskethi region of Georgia, deported almost 50 years previously by the Stalin regime. A relevant and well-funded programme was required in order to find a realistic solution involving the active participation of the countries where those displaced persons had found shelter.

25. Due to its geopolitical situation, his country was also used as a transit area for illegal migration and human trafficking and therefore needed additional measures to protect its borders. Georgia would therefore welcome cooperation in the context of IOM's border management programme. His Government was particularly interested in the new IOM cluster proposal and was optimistic that it would help countries to achieve their multilateral and regional goals in migration management. He thanked IOM's Secretariat for its assistance and hoped that his country's cooperation with the Organization would be intensified in future.

26. Mr. QIAO (People's Republic of China) expressed gratitude on behalf of the Chinese Government to IOM for granting China observer status with IOM. He was convinced that that would be a new starting point for cooperation with IOM and its Members. The Chinese Government considered that regular movement of persons and migration would be beneficial to promoting mutual understanding and cooperation among States in the economic, social and cultural fields. At the same time, the Chinese Government was resolutely opposed to illegal migration, human smuggling and trafficking, against which a number of measures had been taken. States should strengthen cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect and make joint efforts to combat transnational criminal acts connected with migration. IOM, as an important international body, had made substantial efforts in promoting international cooperation on migration issues. The Chinese Government attached importance to the role played by IOM with which it had already enjoyed fruitful cooperation. He was confident that with China participating in IOM's activities as an observer, the existing friendly cooperative relationship would be further strengthened.

27. Mr. JANNIN (*Assistance pédagogique internationale* (API)), speaking on behalf of the President of *Assistance pédagogique internationale* who had been unable to attend the meeting, said that API provided technical advice and consultancy services in civil protection, and training relating to first-aid, fire-protection and natural and industrial hazards. It also established prevention and early warning programmes for the protection of people, goods and the environment. His organization's activities contributed indirectly to assisting people to return to normal life and to developing civic awareness. It was therefore an honour to have been given observer status with IOM. API already had experience of cooperation with IOM, especially in Kosovo where it had been engaged in the restructuring of protection services and the setting-up of tactical strategies for first-aid and rescue operations, based on special training courses. He thanked all those who had contributed to developing the links between his organization and IOM.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that the free movement of people, with the concomitant implications for human rights and human dignity and the need for States to achieve effective migration control, was becoming one of the salient characteristics of the twenty-first century, and that IOM provided an important forum for exchange of views on such issues.

29. Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) said that the admission of seven new Member States and two observers enhanced IOM's status within the community of international organizations. That was certainly due in part to the tireless efforts of the Director General and of the Deputy Director General who had done such significant work for Africa. He also expressed appreciation of IOM's humanitarian mission, providing vital protection to migrant workers and contributing to counter-trafficking. It should be borne in mind that migrant workers constantly found themselves in situations of precariousness and that smuggling of human beings was the third largest area of trafficking in the world, after drugs and arms.



30. As an African country, Algeria welcomed the increasing number of African countries within IOM. Those countries were important centres of migrant populations and faced significant problems of displaced persons and precarious situations calling for international solidarity. They could benefit from exchanges with IOM through the various bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes. It would therefore be advisable to set up a system of cooperation in the field through the establishment of regional offices in Africa wherever their presence was required. As a country of destination and transit, Algeria had always considered that migration in its various aspects should be seen in relation to human rights, to the principle of the free flow of persons and to development. His country therefore supported IOM's policies.

31. Mr. THIOUNE (Senegal) commended the Director General and the Deputy Director General on their commitment, devotion and competence in enabling IOM to play an essential role in seeking solutions to world migration problems. His delegation welcomed the admission of the new Members and observers, in particular, the admission of Senegal's neighbouring country, the Gambia.

32. New migration challenges were emerging as economic globalization and the rapid progress of science and technology, especially the new information technologies, broke down the barriers of isolation and engendered a massive mix of peoples and cultures.

33. Regrettably, social, ecological and human disasters, conflicts and poverty in several regions of the world had had deep negative consequences which called for greater solidarity and humanism, if peace and human dignity were to be preserved. The links between migration and human rights had been emphasized in the resolutions adopted at the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and the third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries had highlighted the relationship between migration and development. His delegation expressed particular appreciation of IOM's programmes for migrants from the least developed countries, in particular programmes for migrant workers; programmes targeting diasporas and covering effective integration in countries of destination and participation in the development of countries of origin; counter-trafficking measures; medical programmes and public health for migrants; institutional capacity-building; and rapid humanitarian responses to situations of forced displacement and assistance in post-conflict situations. His delegation also supported IOM's return programmes, especially the Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN) programme, as well as the new programme for migration for development in less-developed countries. He welcomed the proposal to open a broad debate on the free flow of persons, goods and services, using the regional processes and partnerships with other relevant organizations. The interdependence of social, economic, political and even trade factors, which were one of the basic causes of migration, reflected the scope of the challenges facing Member States in that field.

34. He expressed appreciation of IOM's efforts to increase the Organization's flexibility and efficiency and the major sacrifices made by the Administration and the staff in terms of budgetary restriction. He reiterated his country's support for the Organization.

35. Mr. ALGIMANTAS RIMKUNAS (Lithuania) expressed a warm welcome to the new Members and observers. The number of Member countries of the Organization had increased dramatically, which was a clear sign of growing recognition of the importance of IOM's activities in recent years. As the Organization gradually achieved greater universality, it was important that the Director General and IOM's staff maintain and further develop the Organization's

functionality, flexibility and capability for rapid response to the migration problems arising in a changing world.

36. Mr. PETIT (France) welcomed the new Members and observers, noting with appreciation their intention to participate actively in the work of the Organization. With the entry of four African countries, two countries from Eastern Europe and one Member of the European Union making a long-awaited return to the Organization, and with the admission of China and an active non-governmental organization as observers, IOM's universality was strengthened and its geographical scope enhanced. The Director General, the Deputy Director General and their whole team were to be commended, as the universality and efficiency of IOM's international action for migration were essential in the present times of globalization and increasing population movements. It was important to humanize globalization, to eliminate as far as possible its concomitant risks and disadvantages and to maximize its advantages, especially the aspects of population displacement and migration which could increase the welfare of humanity.

37. Mr. GUILLERMET (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, welcomed the new Members and observers. He expressed satisfaction that IOM's membership had now increased to 86. He commended the Director General and the Deputy Director General on the excellent work they had done to enhance the universality of the Organization, which reflected the growing importance attached to migration in the twenty-first century. He expressed GRULAC's continuing support for the Organization.

38. Mr. ABBAS (Egypt) welcomed all new Members and observers on behalf of his delegation and expressed high appreciation of the increased international interest in migration issues reflected in IOM's growing membership. His delegation was sure that the new Members would enrich the work of IOM and the humanitarian cause that such an organization promoted. He congratulated the Director General and his associates for their excellent work in upgrading and strengthening IOM's activities and addressing all the humanitarian issues with which the Organization was involved.

39. The DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL welcomed the new Members and observers. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had always encouraged regular migration and was a country where human rights were respected. At the same time, it was currently experiencing increasing migration problems to which IOM was ready to help find solutions. Georgia and the Republic of Azerbaijan, newly independent countries, had a considerable need for training and technical cooperation in the field of management of population flows. The Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Sierra Leone were countries that had great need of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction and the return of qualified nationals to stimulate their national economies – an area in which IOM's Migration for Development in Africa programme could provide valuable assistance. IOM also stood ready to help the Republic of the Gambia which played a key role in West Africa, receiving migrants from Senegal, Mauritius and Guinea-Bissau. It was impossible to consider migration on the global scale without taking into account the participation of the People's Republic of China which she hoped would soon move to member status. Commending *Assistance pédagogique internationale* (API) for its valuable work in Kosovo, she expressed the hope that API would accompany IOM in its programmes in Timor, the Congo and the Great Lakes region in Africa.

40. As migration increased, the need for IOM's intervention and cooperation was also growing, in order to manage new migration flows and new development challenges. In that area, the Migration for Development Programme, upon which a comprehensive document was about to be published, could provide assistance by encouraging the return of qualified nationals whose skills could be instrumental in furthering the economic development of their countries.

41. The DIRECTOR GENERAL welcomed the new Members and observers to the Organization, highlighting a number of points raised in their statements to the Council. Regarding the Republic of the Congo, he noted the importance of the programme for reinsertion of ex-combatants. The delegate of the Republic of Azerbaijan had mentioned the cluster approach establishing dialogue between the three South Caucasus countries – a successful experiment which could well be applied in other regions in future. He also noted the mention of the Nagorno Karabakh problem to which IOM was ready to provide assistance. He expressed gratitude to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland which had been a generous and faithful supporter of IOM's activities over the years. The delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had underlined the importance of the return of qualified workers, for which the new Migration for Development in Africa programme could provide much needed assistance. In Sierra Leone and neighbouring Guinea, IOM was currently engaged in a major operation with UNHCR for the return of refugees and displaced persons. The delegate of the Gambia had drawn attention to the role which IOM could play in assisting countries to build their own capacity in migration management in preparation for the new challenges facing them. Regarding Georgia, he noted the reference to the problem in Meskethi region – an area in which IOM could assist in cooperation with the Russian Federation and other countries in which the deported Meskethi populations had settled. He welcomed the People's Republic of China as an observer. IOM's cooperation with China had already begun and included a jointly organized workshop to be held the following week in Beijing. He hoped that China would subsequently become a full member of IOM. He expressed thanks to *Assistance pédagogique internationale* (API), the other new observer, for its valuable assistance to IOM in carrying out one of the most difficult tasks in Kosovo.

#### Agenda item 6

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

42. None.

#### CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

43. The CHAIRMAN thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the Eighty-first (Special) Session of the Council.

The Eighty-first (Special) Session of the Council of the International Organization  
for Migration closed on Thursday, 7 June 2001, at 5 p.m.