

Statement by Mr. Zohrab Mnatsakanian, Permanent Representative of Armenia  
(Geneva, 2 December 2004)

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I join all previous speakers in congratulating you and your Bureau on your election.

These past two days have indeed been quite thought provoking, most informative and effective in terms of focusing our collective mind on the challenges and opportunities of migration. The presence of other global players in migration issues during our dialogue has among other things been an important manifestation of the multidimensional nature of the migration processes. The continued efforts of the Director General in promoting the international dialogue on migration are truly commendable. Mr. Director General, I thank you for having provided us with this opportunity and for your commitment to encouraging our engagements and proliferating this dialogue.

Having listened to the presentations of so many distinguished experts on migration issues, having observed their immensely comprehensive approach to this phenomenal capacity of the human being to move, I thought one would feel it rather daring to engage in the debate. However, I hope it would not be entirely incorrect to suggest that evolution of global thinking on this phenomenon is on the march, that we are rather more prepared to expand our horizons and evaluate the effects of migration in their entirety, that every negative aspect of migratory processes has a flip side to it, that benefits and opportunities of migration bear an impressive capacity to effectively navigate nations in our increasingly globalising world. Resilience in our collective thinking is I believe most welcome. But then, if I may borrow from Professor Singh of the Global Commission, we need to take courage to challenge the issue of “mindsets”, of perceptions, to promote the adaptability of our thinking to the positivism of migration.

Migration is certainly not something we have not known before. Moving places has always been an indispensable human capacity. As we learn from our history books, the wealth of the wealthiest nations has been generated not least because of the human ability to migrate. What probably makes our present realities different is that our collective evolution creates effective opportunities to move migration into the domain of global management in our increasingly interrelated, intertwined cobweb of mutual dependencies. Migration has never been and even more so today, is not an isolated issue in the global agenda. It is therefore impossible to confine this issue to only one venue or one debating hall. Anyway, this is not the case today. If so, than global management of migration requires effective mechanisms of coordinating our multiple efforts in multiple fora, at multiple levels, including the regional, bilateral and national ones. Therefore, we take note with great interest of the idea of a clearing house as voiced by our good friend, Ambassador Sergio Marchi, during our present discussions.

What probably makes us different from the past generations is that we have evolved to see the human being behind migration, to recognise his rights and to respect his dignity. At least this is what I take from our ongoing dialogue of the present times. That again brings forward the priority of setting minds, an objective of probably Darwinian proportions. Migration, as we can observe from following global or national headlines, probably as never before, is an increasingly political issue. It can generate votes or it can damage political careers. If so, than in the context of stressing human rights aspects of migration, there appears to be an increased need for responsibility to setting minds and proliferating migration dialogue beyond the narrow objectives

of populism. Mr. Director General, we recognise the impressive capacities of this Organisation to help extend such dialogue on migration to national levels, especially if we agree with the panellists on Tuesday morning, that the geography of migration is rather multivectoral and far beyond the simplistic distinction between sending and receiving states.

Mr. Chairman,

Regulating migration and protecting the migrant despite the circumstance of his motives to move has traditionally been the trademark of this Organisation. Several years ago my Government has been engaged through the IOM into the cluster process. This process has since evolved into a quite effective mechanism of co-operation with a number of countries in Western Europe. We have created legal and practical mechanisms for assisting the return of migrants. I believe in order for us and our partners to promote such model of co-operation we need at some point to evaluate our achievements and further assess the interrelationship between readmission and reintegration. I believe this is our common interest.

Given the time limits, I would refrain from providing itemised comments on every aspect of IOM administration, however, I would suggest there are visible results of the ongoing efforts of the Administration to streamline its resources and maintain efficiency. Equally, there are visible results from our collective efforts to encourage further decrease in outstanding contributions.

We welcome these positive developments, and my Government remains firmly engaged with own commitments. I would at the same time suggest that we also underline the need to further promoting the visibility of the benefits from the services we receive from the Organisation. We are therefore most committed to further enhancing Armenia's dialogue and co-operation with our partners in the IOM. Such dialogue is, among other things, particularly relevant in the context of Armenia's evolving national strategy on migration issues and the increased need to synchronise our domestic efforts and debate with global thinking and processes. We need an increased dialogue for effective evaluation of programmes and projects that we agree to implement in Armenia, as much as for promoting our common efforts in identifying priorities. Equally, given the multidimensional nature of migration, we need to further promote dialogue in the context of our various engagements with other international agencies directly or indirectly dealing with migration issues in Armenia. With all these in mind and while recognising the ongoing efforts of the Administration to sustain efficiency through structural adjustments, I believe there will however be a degree of sensitivity on our part with regard to the possible changes in the structure of the IOM Yerevan Office. My delegation remains firmly committed to such dialogue and greatly values the ongoing engagement of our good friends and partners in the Organisation.

Thank you