

New revised version
3/12/04



Meeting 461
Date 2.12.04
Time _____
Tape No. _____

**Statement by
H.E. Dr. Toufiq Ali
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh
at the 88th Session of the IOM Council
Geneva, 2nd December 2004**

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Mr. Chairman,

We warmly congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election. We welcome the new members, the Bahamas, Estonia, Brazil and Turkey and the observer organization, ISESCO. They bring with them invaluable experience that will enrich the Organization.

I thank Mr. Brunson McKinley for his statement which, briefly, has covered many facets of the issue we are currently engaged with. He, and his administration, deserve our special thanks.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the last two days, we have heard from the GCIM, the high-level panelists and on the regional and global initiatives on migration. They have provided us with insight and perspectives that are extraordinarily rich and thought-provoking. We are told that migration is an important constituent to a better globalized world, a ladder to deliverance from poverty for some and increased prosperity for others. Sadly, the reality of the international regimes today does not match the rhetoric. The issues are sensitive, often technical, and do not lend themselves easily to dramatic television coverage, like war or extreme weather. But, let us not forget the enormous opportunity cost: millions of jobs, hundreds of millions of dollars of income, could be created with just a few reasonable steps from governments.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to highlight some perspectives from the discussions over the last two days. We have heard repeatedly that the term "migration" evokes strong sentiments in all quarters. There are some perceptions, some misperceptions, and some realities. The reality is that migration and economic growth are closely interlinked. I use economic growth in the broadest possible terms, applying not only to the developing countries that are trying to grow, but also to the industrialized countries. What we have heard is that migration has the potential to benefit all countries.

Migration covers a wide range of activities. "Traditional" migration has been current for ages, well before the concept of globalization gained currency, covering

long- and medium-term movements. The statements we have heard, from both the Secretariat as well as from the GCIM members, have made it clear that the temporary movement of workers has much greater potential to benefit both the receiving and sending states as well as the migrants.

Are countries poised to benefit from the potential? We have heard that market forces will dominate, and that the Governments have little freedom. My view is that, in the presence of asymmetry of information and other market imperfections, the outcome of the marketplace may not be the most efficient or desirable. We need to create a structure whereby the forces of demand and supply can work, given the market imperfections. Only then can we confront issues such as trafficking and smuggling of human beings. But, we will be ineffective unless we recognize the realities, and act together to bring about orderly movement. We have shown, in other areas, that such cooperation may indeed lead to fruitful results.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to commend all the initiatives for managing migration, be it at the regional or global levels. Workshops, both at Geneva and in capitals elsewhere, have improved our understanding of this subject. At the global level, the Berne Initiative process is a significant step forward. The expected outcome, the International Agenda for Migration Management, seeks to establish a framework leading to the progressive development of more orderly and humane management of migration. We look forward to this Agenda being developed and fine-tuned with the passage of time. I have no doubt that some years hence we will look back at this Initiative and regard it as the first step in the development of an international legal framework for the better management of migration.

In Bangladesh, we give a great deal of attention to migration matters. To establish a managed and orderly migration regime, we have taken some important steps in recent years, including through the creation of a separate Ministry for overseas employment and expatriates' welfare, specialized training and orientation programmes for potential migrants, including women migrant workers, and bilateral agreements with major destination countries. Migration is a development opportunity and tool for poverty reduction. IOM should enhance its programmes in Bangladesh accordingly.

Mr. Chairman,

The IOM is the only organization devoted exclusively to the issue of migration. And, from its infancy, it has had the responsibility of contributing to the close relationship between economic development and migration. We welcome improvements in the financial situation of the Organization, in particular the progress made on outstanding contributions. Bangladesh's contribution to the budget for 2004 has been fully paid. The budget for next year should enable the IOM to better fulfill its assigned role. At this stage, I would like to reiterate the critical need for greater engagement of the IOM with the Asian countries, who account for the bulk of migrant workers globally.

I would like to assure the IOM of our continuing support.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.