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Statement by

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of the
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before the

**88th Council Meeting
of the
International Organization for Migration**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset let me congratulate you upon your election as the chair of the 88th meeting of the council. I would also like to extend my congratulations to other members of the Bureau and thank the previous Bureau members. My congratulations also go to Brazil, Turkey, Estonia and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on their membership of IOM as well as the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on its observer status. I would also like to express my country's deep appreciation of the great job carried out by IOM, its distinguished Director General, Mr. McKinley, his capable Deputy and staff in areas related to migration. In my brief statement, I will address how Iran looks at migration; how Iran relates to broad migration issues and how we see the significant role of IOM in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Migration has become one of the major issues facing the international community. Indeed it is regarded by the United Nations as one of its top five global priorities for further consideration and discussion. Migration management at the international level needs a comprehensive approach which should cover all aspects including regular and irregular migration, cost and benefits, challenge and opportunities, the causes of movements, migrant rights and conditions, the situation of hosting, sending and transit states and their capabilities and last but not least the responsibility of other members of the international community.

We believe that IOM should continue to carry out its role in the future discussion on migration. IOM's strategy for the next ten years provides a good framework by which the expectations of member states concerning future policy and migration dialogue can be defined. In previous years, IOM has carried out different seminars in cooperation with other partners on the relationship of migration with other issues such as trade and health. We are pleased that this process will continue early next year with a seminar concerning migration and development. Such activities are useful in order to elaborate the linkages of migration with other issues and in particular to define the positive aspects of migration.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of migration is of great importance to my country. Iran is simultaneously a sending, a receiving and a transit country for migrants. Iranian migrant communities are among the most successful ones in Europe, North America, Asia and in our surrounding regions. Iranian migrants all over the world, who are among the most talented, educated and well-qualified individuals have contributed much to the economic development of their host countries.

As a major regional power and an island of stability in an area replete with conflicts, Iran is an attractive destination for migrants in West Asia. Furthermore, Iran is a transit country for migrants from neighboring countries with its multiple consequences for destination countries in Europe.

Our experience as a receiving, sending and transit country at the national, regional and global levels can be shared with the international community and enrich the debate on migration. On the other hand, we welcome international technical assistance and cooperation for a better management of migration problems and challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to mention that as a joint project between the Islamic Republic of Iran and IOM, the Academy for Migration and Refugee Studies has been established in Tehran. The academy was inaugurated during the recent visit of Mr. McKinley on 22nd September 2004. In this regard, we very much appreciate the activities of IOM authorities, in particular IOM's office in Tehran. This Academy which is of a regional capacity will serve as a basis to respond to the migration problems and migration management in the region and will implement different projects at national and regional levels.

I would like to thank the related offices of the IOM for their notable cooperation, follow-up measures and the information provided to my delegation. Our thanks also go to those countries which have demonstrated their willingness and interest in promoting IOM related projects in Iran.

Mr. Chairman,

A particularly noteworthy IOM project has been the “Afghans-out of country voting project” which was also an example of our close cooperation with the IOM. In the recent Afghanistan presidential election, around 600000 Afghans in Iran who were eligible to vote participated. I should also mention the good partnership of IOM in assisting the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees in 2002. Since then, in a joint program with UNHCR, more than one million Afghans have returned to Afghanistan. IOM was responsible for transferring the returnees to their place of establishment in Afghanistan.

Following the request of the IOM, the “Iraqis-out of country voting project” for the election in January 2005 is also under consideration. Based on our positive previous experiences, we are hopeful that this process will be carried out successfully.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me assure you that Islamic Republic of Iran as a receiving, sending and transit country for migrants and also a member of the IOM, continues to utilize all its resources, capabilities and capacities for a more profound and solid governance of migration at national, regional and international levels. In this regard, we remain hopeful for more qualitative bilateral and multilateral cooperation especially with IOM. Hope for a better life is the essence of migration. Let us all be hopeful, proactive and cooperative.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.