



**Permanent Mission of
the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

31-33, av. Giuseppe-Motta
1202 Genève

Tel. 022 748 18 00

Statement by

H.E. Ambassador Ian M. de Jong

Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of The Netherlands
to the UN Office and other
International Organizations at Geneva

Eighty-eight Session of the IOM-council

Geneva
2 December 2004

Check against delivery

88e IOM Council

General debate, 2 December 2004, The Netherlands.

Excellencies, ladies and gentleman,

This year's "International Dialogue on Migration" with its focus on Valuing Migration has been very informative. Migration as we've heard time and again, is part of human history. We therefore agree with IOM's approach to put the question on how to manage migration effectively at the forefront. Enhancing the positive side of the tally sheet and reducing the negative side calls for a distinction in migration management between human, economic, social and cultural dimensions and their interaction.

Managed migration implies controlling migration. Security, public order and public support for immigration policies in general are at stake. Irregular migration, or illegal residence, has major negative social consequences. Housing and economic opportunities of legal residents are hindered seriously. Various types of crime and nuisance accompany illegal residence. Because of their vulnerable position illegal residents are often taken advantage of by, for instance, rack renters and dishonest employers.

We can not afford not to take action to reduce the negative aspects. Simultaneously the Netherlands focuses on measures to enhance the positive side of migration. My government believes that the interface between migration and development provides the best entry point to advance migration for the benefit of all. As has been stressed in the IOM document "Year in Review", migration and development can no longer be dealt with as separate policy areas.

In July 2004 the Minister for Development Co-operation and the Minister for Immigration and Integration presented a key policy paper on 'Development and Migration' to parliament. Let me turn to the 5 key themes of this policy paper, being in order of priority:

1) coherence 2) capacity building 3) protection in the region 4) return and 5) remittances.

On coherence:

Coherence between the various policies impacting on migration issues needs to be pursued more vigorously in the interest of integrated migration management. The promotion of circular migration, for example, needs a clear and consistent labour immigration policy. Not

only the national labour market demands need to be taken into account, but also the interests of the countries of origin.

On capacity building:

Many developing countries lack the institutional capacity to tackle migration related problems. The Netherlands will therefore discuss with some of our partner countries whether capacity building or migration management can be incorporated within existing bilateral programmes and policies in support of good governance.

On protection in the region:

The Netherlands aims at strengthening protection of refugees in the region of origin. Refugees should have access to protection as early as possible. This protection should be monitored by UNHCR. For my government strengthening protection in the region implies a greater emphasis on the search for durable solutions and burden and responsibility sharing. Enhanced protection in the region can also help to prevent irregular secondary migration.

On return:

In our policy paper the benefits of circular migration are emphasised. This form of mobility includes capacity building in developing countries and discouraging brain drain. It also discusses the importance of voluntary return for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of countries that emerge from a conflict. The IOM programme Return of Qualified Afghans, which the Netherlands has financially supported, is a case in point.

The effective return of irregular migrants and safeguarding the integrity of our asylum system and overall migration policies is essential, if we wish to maintain public support for existing asylum policies. The Netherlands therefore underlines the importance of concluding readmission agreements with countries of origin or transit on a bilateral, Benelux or EU basis.

On remittances

On **remittances** the policy document concludes that the role of the government in general is limited. The Netherlands, however, follows with interest the various surveys on the possibilities for the use of remittances for sustainable development.

By highlighting the main elements of the policy paper 'Development and Migration' –which will be discussed in parliament next week-I hope our delegation has demonstrated our sincere intention to reduce the negative aspects and enhance the positive aspects of migration. We look forward to sharing with you in future sessions our experiences with this approach. Of course we also stand ready to learn from experiences elsewhere in the world to improve our migration management. We welcome the forum for policy dialogue that IOM's annual Council session provides in this regard.

Besides being a forum for policy dialogue on migration management, this Council also gives Member States the opportunity to provide guidance on the role and functioning of IOM in relation to managed migration.

In this respect, we welcome very much the discussion that we'll have on IOM's strategy paper and on the core purposes and functions for which this strategy will be applied.

Finally, two remarks on financial issues. Firstly, we are pleased that this year the issue of outstanding contributions is an agenda item in itself. Awareness of the negative impact of outstanding contributions has grown, but has not led to concrete steps by a sufficient number of member states causing the problem to reverse the current negative trend. Member states must meet the financial obligations they agreed upon when joining the organisation as a member.

Secondly, I would also like to express my concern about an increasing imbalance between the administrative and operational part of the budget. We invite the administration to engage member states more closely in setting clear priorities for the organisation's operations within the parameters that the memberships sets for the administrative part of the budget. Also in this respect, we look forward to a fruitful exchange of views during this Council.

I thank you for your attention,