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STATEMENT BY THE ITALIAN DELEGATION
AT THE 88th Session of IOM's Council
(Geneva, 3rd December 2004)

Mr. Chairman,

as I am taking the floor for the first time in this forum, allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election, and join former speakers in welcoming our new member States and observer to the Council.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Director-General and Deputy Director-General for their comprehensive statements and the remarkable efforts they have invested in the Organization's management.

A special thank naturally goes also to the former chairman, Ambassador Karklins.

Mr. Chairman,

trying to be brief, I wish to concentrate my statement mainly on the challenges that lie ahead of us and formulate a few comments in relation to the document "*IOM Strategy: current and future migration realities and IOM's role*".

In consideration of the recent trends that have characterised migration-related phenomena, we much appreciate the update that has been provided on the 1995 Strategy Plan in the document and the objectives that the Organization sets as future priorities. We share, in

particular, IOM's aim to become a point of reference in the context of migration and to make expertise, policy advice and other support services available to the various international stakeholders and encourage the Organization to continue playing a leading role in international migration law and best practices. As a result, we see the merits in IOM being a growing promoter of common understanding on migration issues at national, regional and international levels, leading to enhanced cooperation and migration policy development.

On the same score, the Italian Government attaches the utmost importance to the promotion of the respect of the right to protection of migrants, with a view to facilitating the adoption of common standards by Member States. Nevertheless, such an objective – which must be pursued with full participation from and coordination with member States, and taking into account national points of view - needs further enlightenment. It is crucial to understand whether IOM intends to promote a collection and confrontation of international and domestic legislations on migration; if it will assume a more proactive role providing member States with recommendations; or if aims to go farther, promoting “ad hoc” projects on managing migration and protection of migrants. More information on this subject would not only provide a clearer view of the Organization's intentions, but also help to prevent possible and unwanted overlaps with the activity of the Global Commission on International Migration.

Mr. Chairman,

migration is of increasing interest to the U.N. system. There is a great need, in our view, to enhance all means of cooperation between IOM an U.N. agencies and provide clear definitions of respective mandates to avoid unwanted duplications and overlapping.

Allow me to draw your attention to a couple of relevant examples.

ILO also has an important stake in migration policies: the International Conference on Labour held in June was mainly focussed on the role of migrant workers; migration issues were on top of the list in the Report presented by the Organization's World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization; finally, ILO presented on the 29th of November an "*Action Plan on Labour Migration*" to the High-Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration of the Council of the European Union, that proposes a "non-binding multilateral framework for a rights-based approach to migration".

Furthermore, objectives 2 and 7 listed in the document "*IOM strategy*" risk to overlap with UNHCR's mandate, in terms of humanitarian help in emergency and post-conflict situations and in the search for durable solutions for IDPs and other migrants, respectively. At its 55th session, UNHCR's Executive Committee adopted a "*Conclusion on international cooperation and burden- and responsibility-sharing in mass influx situations*", promoting the intervention of the agency in such critical situations, by means and activities that are very similar to those proposed under "objective 2".

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude my intervention with one last suggestion. On our point of view, the paper does not specify to which extent the fulfilment of these objectives might affect the Organization's budget. The action plan should therefore include more detailed information over the budgetary implications of IOM's strategy and, as an additional objective, the engagement by IOM's member States to solving the issue of outstanding contributions.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.