

UK STATEMENT TO IOM COUNCIL

Thank you Chair,

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mme Chair, and the new members of the Bureau on their election. We wish you every success for the coming year, and I assure you that you can count on the continued support of the UK.

Thank you also to the Director General and Deputy Director General for their comprehensive statements this afternoon.

Mme Chair,

The UK places great value in its partnership with the IOM. Over the past year the organisation has proved to be an effective partner in activities ranging from migration management to post emergency humanitarian assistance. The UK firmly believes not only that this operational flexibility is IOM's strength, but also is the core value that enables the organisation to continually demonstrate its added value to member states. The UK particularly values the work the IOM has done on our returns and readmissions programmes, and the way in which the IOM has, in its humanitarian assistance activities, demonstrated its commitment as an active participant within the framework of the cluster system.

The phenomenon of Global Migration is an issue of huge importance for States represented here, and a challenge for the international community as a whole. The recent report of the Global Commission for International Migration, and the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development served to increase awareness and provide an international focus on this challenging set of issues. The Global Forum which the Belgian Government

will host next summer, following on from the UN High level Dialogue, is the next step in what the UK hopes will continue to be a constructive dialogue.

As follow up to the High level Dialogue progresses, we would urge the IOM to ensure that its own International Dialogue on Migration, and the proposal for an International Migration and Development Initiative, are complementary to, the UN High Level Dialogue. We should not attempt to duplicate it. The UK has listened carefully to presentations this week on the proposal for an International Migration and Development Initiative. We remain concerned that this initiative risks the very duplication we should all be striving to avoid. We should continue intensive consultations among member states on this initiative.

Mme Chair,

As the demands placed on IOM by its member states increase, so the need for a clear strategic vision for the organisation is vital. The UK remains committed to the objective of agreeing a new strategy for IOM. We support the concept of a 3 pillared strategic framework encompassing measurable objectives, governance structures, and the budget architecture. The UK believes all 3 aspects need re-examination, and acknowledge that this new strategy is the best vehicle through which to do this. The UK believes that through a strategy which it owns jointly with its member states, IOM can achieve a better level of common understanding on its strategic focus, its objectives, and on how performance against those objectives can be measured.

We are disappointed that despite three years of discussion the issue of the strategy remains unresolved. We strongly support the elaboration of a timeframe for further consultations that will lead to adoption of a five-year strategy for IOM at the 2007 Annual Council.

Mme Chair,

A key pillar of the strategy discussion will focus on IOM's budget architecture. As market demand has seen IOM's programmatic base expand, so the pressure on IOM's core structures and administrative budget have increased. This year, the UK has exceptionally agreed to an increase in IOM's administrative budget to cover statutory cost increases. However, in negotiation of the 2008 budget we expect to revert to our traditional position of seeking zero growth in the IOM administrative budget. I would add that this is not a position that is peculiar to IOM. It is a broad approach to the administrative and support activity costs of all international organisations - and indeed our own Government Ministries. We are very aware of the tension between an expanding programme base, and the legitimate demands of member states for a tightly managed and administrative core. This is an issue of growing concern and one that threatens the sustainability of the organisation. Together we must work to address these difficult issues and ensure that the future of IOM is based on a more sustainable business model.

The fact that non-payment by Member States of their annual contributions to the IOM administrative budget remains such a significant problem does not of course help. The UK joins others in expressing serious concern at this unsustainable situation. We urge those member states in arrears to work together with the IOM to find a way to resolve this serious issue.

Mme Chair,

The UK places great stock in its operational partnership with IOM. We recognise that there are inevitably tensions between the Member States' desire for a clear strategy, aligned with budgetary stringency, and the need to maintain the operational flexibility which is a core strength of the organisation. Much work needs to be done to prepare IOM for the challenges that lie ahead. The UK remains committed to working with the organisation to

ensure it can look to the immediate future as a strong, strategically focused, well managed and flexible organisation properly placed to deliver services that governments need to meet the needs of migrants and displaced people the world over.

We look forward to another year of constructive co-operation and dialogue.