



AUSTRALIA

**AUSTRALIAN STATEMENT TO
THE 92nd SESSION
OF THE IOM COUNCIL**

GENEVA

28 November to 1 December 2006

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr Chairman, Australia is pleased to have the opportunity through this forum to address our fellow Member States and observers. I have been struck by the debate of the past two days on the breadth of international discourse on migration which is mirrored in the Australian domestic discourse.

Partnerships with business and civil society

Mr Chairman, it is a truism to say that Australia was built on migration. We value highly the skills and expertise migrants contribute to Australia's economic and social development. We also prize our cultural diversity which has made our nation what it is today.

Australia welcomes 140,000 permanent skilled and family migrants each year. We welcome 13,000 humanitarian entrants – people most in need of protection and an opportunity to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. Each year several million temporary entrants also arrive in Australia. They come for work, business, tourism, and education.

The Australian experience has led us to believe that migration policies must be based on research, analysis, wide consultation with all stakeholders and follow up evaluation to ensure that migration is geared to the needs and capacity of States. This is constantly evolving and presents numerous challenges.

We believe that **dialogue** at all levels is crucial to meet these challenges and capitalise on the opportunities of migration.

Mr Chairman, we value the opportunities the IOM provides for debate and discussion on migration.

As part of IOM's international migration policy dialogue, we appreciated the opportunity to participate in the inter-sessional workshop on ***Migrants and the Host Society: Partnerships for Success***. This workshop underlined the need to involve civil society and the private sector at all stages of the integration process.

The stimulating panel discussion at this Council meeting on engaging business and civil society further highlighted the value of dialogue and participation as well as the important role business and civil society can play in working with governments to design programmes that meet a nation's economic, social and humanitarian priorities.

The Year in Review

Mr Chairman, Australia also welcomed the UN High Level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development, which provided States with an opportunity to take stock of better practices and to learn from each other's perspectives and experiences.

The Chair's summary of the HLD indicated that there was widespread support for further dialogue on migration and development. The **proposed Global Forum on International Migration and Development** provides another opportunity for that dialogue to take place. That opportunity carries with it a challenge to add value to the work of existing bodies and processes. We suggest the Forum should focus on substantive and practical areas for cooperation, such as capacity building in migration management - capacity being fundamental to the achievements of other benefits, including development.

Future directions for IOM

Mr Chairman, as we look to the future, it is important that we preserve, and wherever possible, enhance IOM's strengths.

As Member States continue to discuss what role IOM can play into the future, we should be mindful of its **broad mandate under the Constitution**, which has helped, and can continue to help States meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities of migration.

Any change to the IOM's role, including its relationship with the UN system, should be considered in the context of what it means for the IOM's strengths and the services it provides for its Member States.

States have varying capacities to respond to the challenges and opportunities of migration. While other international agencies have expertise in specific migration matters, only IOM is devoted exclusively to migration management. IOM's **ability to meet states' needs** – is based in its successful **fee-for-service** model, which allows it to be **flexible and responsive** to the changing needs of States. These attributes: flexibility, responsiveness and an operational budget that links directly to donor funded projects are key strengths of IOM.

Mr Chairman, in setting priorities for IOM over the next five years the IOM strategy document needs to effectively capture these strengths so that it remains a dynamic organisation highly valued by its members.

Thank you.