



**STATEMENT BY THE ITALIAN DELEGATION  
TO THE 92<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF IOM  
(Geneva, 28 November – 1st December 2006)**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

First of all allow me to express my sincerest thanks to both the Director-General and the Deputy Director-General of IOM for their very enlightening statements and for the very interesting background documentation provided for the current session of the Council, whose agenda is, in our view, a very rich source of food for thought.

Mr. Chairman, as we fully associate ourselves with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union, witnessing, maybe for the first time, to a true common denominator within the EU, in terms of approach to major migration issues and policies deserving special consideration, we wish to lay stress on a few points of interest to this assembly.

2006 has been a turning point both in IOM's history and on the wider scene of international migration/development. Events such as the publication of the GCIM (Global Commission on International Migration) Report at the end of last year, not to mention last September's High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD), the Conferences of Rabat and Tripoli, as well as preparations for next year's Forum in Brussels, have highlighted the following substantial elements.

Firstly, despite often divergent positions, there is growing awareness amongst States of the issue of migration having crossed the boundary of national sovereignty and, as a result, of the need to address it within a more holistic and multilateral framework, both at the regional and global levels.

Secondly, there is a recognized gap in this context within the UN system, notwithstanding many agencies and entities being involved in various aspects of migration, according to their areas of expertise.

Mr. Chairman, in light of these considerations, any discussion within IOM and on IOM strategy cannot and should not, at this point in time, leave this important political premise aside and Member States should no longer delay the debate on the IOM-UN relationship. In fact, IOM, which is currently the sole Organization having a comprehensive migration mandate, has consolidated specific experience and extensive knowledge of all the components to migration and development. Besides IOM is already strongly “linked” to the UN (Observer Status by the General Assembly was granted in 1992) and has partnership agreements with virtually all the Agencies. Its harmonization with most of the UN administrative criteria and code of conduct is reflected also in its recent affiliation to the “UN Joint Staff Pension Fund”. It should not be forgotten that the IOM is also part of the UN Country Teams and that it works in close cooperation with the UN, both at HQ and field levels. IOM actively participates, inter alia, in the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and in the Consolidated Appeal Process and was one of the co-founders of the Geneva Migration Group in 2003, to be renamed Global Migration Group in recent past. On this score, we feel the need to draw the attention of the GMG Membership to the importance of promoting appropriate mechanisms to interact with States and improve the overall effectiveness of all the stakeholders faced with the challenges presented by international migration

Mr. Chairman, in view of all the considerations above, the Organization seems to be in the “ideal” position to envisage becoming part of the UN system, thus bridging the gap before us. We believe that times are ripe for this process to translate into practice, “to walk the extra mile”, bearing in mind the value added IOM can bring in meeting the challenges that human mobility may hold in the future and remembering that coordination, mutual complementarity and coherence of purpose should guide the Organization and its membership through such process, in order to increase effectiveness, exploit synergies and avoid useless overlap.

We are persuaded that the membership can steer the process in such a way as to safeguard the Organization’s traditional flexibility and administrative autonomy (a number of existing examples may help trace the path), hence we feel like encouraging the Council to formally engage in a thorough review of the IOM –UN relationship file.

Mr. Chairman,

the existing bond between Italy and IOM, owing, among others, to the presence of one of its regional offices on our territory, is something

we are particularly proud of. Number of bilateral projects, especially in the area of counter-trafficking and integration of migrants, but also of mixed migratory flows, along with successful examples of cooperation, such as the IOM-UNHCR-Italian Red Cross screening mechanism put in place on the Island of Lampedusa, not to mention initiatives co-funded by the Italian Government, like the MIDA and ARGO Programmes, should encourage us, the Member States, to further engage in effective joint approach mechanisms. Italy, for its part, is deeply committed to increasingly avail itself of IOM's expertise in cooperation initiatives with the countries of origin and of transit of migrants, especially those on the African continent.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, allow us to express our greatest appreciation for the positive outcome of the last session of the SCBF, having translated in support for the proposal to set IOM budget level for 2007 at "Zero Real Growth". We are convinced this represents an important step forward in terms of financial flexibility and trust it will allow the Organization to further enhance its operational efficiency.

Mr. Chairman, as the end of the year approaches, let us not lose track of our common goals and focus on the momentum gained during and after the UN High-Level Dialogue, by promoting capacity-building and sharing of best practices at all levels, for the benefit of migrants and countries alike. In particular, let us make sure that the dialogue that was successfully started in New York may continue to be nurtured, as it is the only effective means to advance understanding on migration issues worldwide.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.