

**COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

**101th Session**

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR RYTIS PAULAUSKAS,**

**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

Mr. Chairman, Director General, Excellences and delegates,

Let me start with my sincere congratulation to His Excellency Abdul Hannan, Ambassador of Bangladesh on his election as the Chairman of the Council.

Lithuania aligns itself with the EU statement and in particular welcomes the decision of the EU and IOM to work towards more strategic partnership, [after the exchange of letters of July 2012,] to the benefit of the activities of both organizations in the migration field.

Lithuania commends the work of the IOM under the able stewardship of the Director General William Swing and recognizes its role and unique experience in the field of migration. We thank its leadership for the untiring efforts in lobbying migrants and assisting the governments in building their knowledge and capabilities. We appreciate close collaboration with the IOM office in Vilnius and hope to further advance the Organization's agenda in the region.

Like most of the speakers I would also like to express Lithuanian support for the IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework which has been drawn up with the goal to better engage with the partners and to minimize gaps of the response in emergency situations. We believe that

the Framework could also serve as a guiding document for the member countries in strengthening their preparedness and national capacities.

Next year the second UNGA High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development will take place in New York. Lithuania aligns with those drawing strong link between migration and development and supports inclusion of migration issues into the post-2015 agenda. We support close involvement of the IOM into the preparation of the HLD 2013 as *the* migration agency and also because we share the opinion of the Ambassador Strohal that there should be more synergy between the competencies in migration and security, between Geneva and New York.

Another event of particular interest to Lithuania is an upcoming conference on Diasporas to be hosted by the IOM in early 2013. In times of migration and mobility, diasporas play an important role in absorbing new experience and knowledge, thus contributing to the economy and development of the home country and country of destination, keeping the contacts with compatriots and helping to preserve national identity and language. We welcome involvement of the IOM in facilitating engagement between diasporas and their country of origin and bringing this issue to the agenda of the international community. Lithuania stands ready to share its experience in building closer relations with its diaspora through networking and projects.

And finally, I would like to welcome new member states Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Republic of the Union of Myanmar and new observers to the International Organization of Migration.