

Statement by Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal, H.E. Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, at the 101st Session of the IOM Council, November 28, 2012

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I wish to congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on your election to preside over this session and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in discharging your important responsibilities. I also congratulate the vice chairs and the rapporteur on their respective elections.

I wish to acknowledge the vision, commitment and dedication of the Director General Ambassador William Lacy Swing with which he has been serving the Organization. His stewardship of the organization has an important role in the smooth sailing of IOM activities even in the times when the trends of human mobility are dynamic and complex. I also express deep appreciation for courage and dedicated service of IOM field staff for standing strong even in the most testing circumstances.

My delegation warmly welcomes two new members and three observers to the Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

In his report, the Director General discusses metonymically the recent achievements, persisting challenges and future prospects of the Organization in the form of 'milestones, stumbling stones, and stepping stones'. This artistic parallel leads us into understanding how IOM has always acted towards formulating and materializing humane and equitable migration policies and practices.

Nepal views the three pillar priorities namely proprietorship, partnership and professionalism that have guided the operations of IOM as the principles of fostering the collective responsibility of member states and defining 'migration narrative' not as a burden but as an inherent concern of all member states. We call for further strengthening of IOM's institutional and structural capacities vis-à-vis these three pillars.

Along with the rise in number of migrants, unprecedented challenges have emerged in the management of migration. DG's report rightly highlights, among others, the challenges erupting out of 'anti-migrant sentiment' in some places. The only way to tackle such sentiment is through a stronger partnership among IOM, its member states, civil society and the international community.

We underscore the importance of ongoing reform measures in IOM with focuses on human resources, budget and structural domains. We agree that serving migrants becomes a far-fetched phenomenon without a stronger IOM and its leadership in global migration.

The report of the Director General also discusses how the complexities of migration can be managed by fashioning a ‘high road’ migration scenario. The cooperation of member states founded on strong political will is inevitable in using this ‘stepping stone’. Nepal has always facilitated migration and has worked together with IOM since it joined the Organization in 2006.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation highly values the constructive support received from IOM in managing and facilitating migration. We appreciate IOM for its technical cooperation that spans to the government agencies, services to labour migrants, initiatives in counter trafficking, assistance in border control and information management system and technical cooperation in disaster preparedness. We recall with pleasure the help and cooperation that the Government of Nepal has received from the Organization in the rescue of the Nepalese migrant workers in troubled situations and humanitarian emergencies.

My delegation would, while stressing the need for repatriation of the refugees to their homeland with dignity and honour as the only lasting solution, also like to thank IOM for facilitating the process of the third country resettlement of the Bhutanese refugees in different countries.

Mr. Chairman

Migration is likely to remain a key issue in our time for all member states. It becomes more important in the South- South context where an estimated 90% of human mobility is about labour and employment purposes. While employment can accelerate human development by providing migrants with an opportunity to use their productivity and gain new skills, their savings and investment can benefit their families and communities.

In this light, migration should not be understood as the movement of people alone. It entails the movement of technology, ideas, culture and money, if managed properly with migrants enjoying their rights and dignity irrespective of their locations.

At present the share of remittances as private financial resources for households in developing and least developed countries is on the rise. This, however, cannot be considered a substitute for FDI, ODA, debt relief or other public sources of finance for development. The LDCs, given the limited scope for the mobilization of domestic resources, require, as a compulsion but not a choice, an enhanced and scaled-up level of international support to address a multitude of development they confront.

Recognizing the vitality of remittance for LDCs economies, Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the LDCs underlines remittance as important private financial resources. The IPoA also calls for simplifying migration procedures, investing the savings of the migrant workers in development-oriented programmes and using knowledge and skills of the returning migrants in development related projects.

Nepal’s share of remittances has also been increasing over the years. It has contributed towards widening the opportunities for social development and poverty eradication in the country in general and of those households receiving remittances in particular. Proper channelling of remittances for productive investment would help accelerate economic growth

and sustainable development leading to full and productive employment and decent work for all.

It is in recognition of the fact that facilitating migration and protecting the rights of migrants is a collective responsibility, the Government of Nepal has introduced a novel provision under Foreign Employment Act with gender sensitive approach to promote and protect the rights of migrants in general and migrant domestic female workers in particular.

Mr Chairman,

Today, because of migration, our societies are multicultural and diverse. Respecting diversity and multiculturalism in a rapidly globalizing and interdependent world would be the first essential step towards promoting global understanding of the rights and dignity of all migrant workers.

Given the unprecedented nature of human mobility and the pivotal role that migrants can play for both the country of origin and that of destination, we believe that:

1. The trends of South- North and South-South labour migration for employment will continue. This will naturally invite greater attention towards protecting the rights of migrants. IOM will, thus, have to play increasingly a proactive and facilitative role in reducing the wage gaps and protecting the vulnerable and undocumented workers. The special focus has to be laid on the domestic female workers so that they are not exploited and misused.
2. IOM can help facilitate sharing of best practices to enable the countries in need to factor the 'fruits' of migration into development management.
3. IOM has already established itself as a leading migration agency. Broadening cooperation and strategic partnership with member states, civil society and international community within multi-stakeholders can be the new 'migration narrative' for the coming years.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Nepal reiterates its commitment to maintain and further consolidate the channels of close cooperation and constructive engagements with IOM.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.