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UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANIZATIONS  
103<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER, 2013**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this 103rd Session of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Council and to applaud you for the excellent manner in which you are conducting these proceedings. I also extend congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

I wish to first associate myself with the statement made by the distinguished delegate of Argentina on behalf of CELAC.

I take this opportunity to welcome the new member states of the International Organization for Migration, namely Turkmenistan, the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Iceland and the Republic of the Marshall's Islands. We also welcome those international organizations which have been granted observer status.

Mr. Chairman,

The Director General in his report to the Council, cited the United Nations High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development as a "high" during the year. For The Bahamas, the High-level Dialogue provided an important stage upon which the issue of Migration was spotlighted.

Mr. Chairman,

The Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, in his address to the 68th Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, noted that as an archipelagic country with a relatively small population that covers a vast area with porous borders, opportunities for illegal migration are multiplied. The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs in his remarks during the High-level Dialogue too, described The Bahamas' geographical location between the source countries of illegal migration in the south and the destination country in the north as a "vortex which is not of its own making, but the consequences of which, we have had to live with and to withstand."

Only this week we witnessed, once again, the tragic end of those economic migrants who left their country in search of a better way of life and new opportunities but whose lives were sadly lost while undertaking the treacherous voyage from their homeland on unseaworthy vessels. Our heartfelt sympathies are extended to the families of these victims.

Mr. Chairman,

Earlier in the week, during the Panel discussion on Migrant Voices, the Council received the testimonies of those who had left their country of birth, voluntarily or by force, but have found new homes in other countries. We were reminded by one of the panelists that people migrate for various reasons, one being livelihood or improved lifestyle. Many of the migrants who risk their lives to reach our shores are victims of undue economic hardship in their own country. The Government of The Bahamas, like other countries around the world, recognizes the need to promote the human rights of migrant workers but with a sense of urgency, we call for renewed attention to the ill-effects on migrant-receiving states such as The Bahamas. The Bahamas continues to echo the call for intensified efforts by the international community to address the root cause of migration that of poverty. There is a great need to ensure

that the structural imbalances which hamper economic growth are removed. The Bahamas maintains that illegal migration will continue as long as economic disparities persist.

Mr. Chairman,

The Bahamas is of the view that countries of origin, transit and destination should in an effort to strengthen dialogue and cooperation, map a way forward on this critical issue which affects all of us. The Bahamas considers that the IOM, together with other international organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees can play a vital role in charting the course ahead to resolve migration issues.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to place on record, The Bahamas' appreciation to the IOM for its continued technical support to The Bahamas in the area of training programmes and seminars focused on migration matters. We look forward to the upcoming IOM Workshop on Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Programme which is to take place in The Bahamas in early next week.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of The Bahamas will continue to partner with IOM in its global work to assist those who for whatever reasons, have been displaced.

***Bahamas Permanent Mission to  
United Nations Office in Geneva  
27 November, 2013  
Geneva***