



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)  
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

**C/105/CRP/48**

English only  
26 November 2014

---

**CONFERENCE ROOM PAPER**

**COUNCIL**

**105th Session**

**DIRECTOR GENERAL'S RESPONSE TO THE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

**ON THE WORKING GROUP ON**

**IOM-UN RELATIONS AND THE IOM STRATEGY**



**DIRECTOR GENERAL'S RESPONSE TO THE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT  
ON THE WORKING GROUP ON  
IOM-UN RELATIONS AND THE IOM STRATEGY**

1. I wish to thank the outgoing Chairperson for the Report on the Working Group on IOM-UN Relations and the IOM Strategy and for his leadership of the Working Group. It is important to underline that this Working Group – and the Working Group on Budget Reform – are Member State initiatives. These initiatives are the best examples of “Member State proprietorship” of the Organization – one of the three “Ps” (together with “partnerships” and “professionalism”). You will recall that this is one of the three priorities that I set for the Organization when I assumed office in October 2008.

2. Building on last year's UNGA Second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the UN General Assembly's Second Committee discussions have given substantial momentum to the idea that migration should be institutionalized in the UN system in one way or another. Over the past few weeks, as UN Member States have debated the issue of migration and development in the Second Committee, it has become abundantly clear that we may be reaching a significant juncture – one that could have far-reaching implications for IOM's future and for migration governance. In a very real sense, the report on the Working Group is proving to be very timely – in the light of the Second Committee's work in New York. Their deliberations have resulted in a draft resolution – still under consideration – which, if accepted in its present form, could result in the institutionalization of migration within the United Nations.

3. I would recall for you the four provisions of that draft resolution which are as follows: (a) the convening of a UNGA High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development every three years (the earlier interval was seven years); (b) an annual debate on migration and development in ECOSOC; (c) an annual UN DESA coordination meeting on migration to assess progress in implementing the Secretary-General's 8-point agenda from the 2013 High-level Dialogue; and (d) exploration of the possibility of a legally binding convention on migration and development.

4. Although IOM does not take a position on whether or not this institutionalization should take place, we have begun to reflect on what the implications of such a change might mean for the Organization.

5. The purpose of my bringing the Second Committee draft resolution to your attention at this Council is to share with you my initial thinking in respect of my responsibility on IOM-UN relations vis-à-vis you, the Member States – who elected me and to whom I am accountable. My position on the matter is well known to you and has remained consistent since I took office, and there is nothing in the draft resolution that has caused me to change or question my position. I have consistently made four points:

- (a) First, IOM-UN relations – within or outside the UN – is a matter for IOM Member States to decide; out of respect for you and your prerogative in the matter, my position, therefore, is one of strict neutrality.
- (b) Second, I have also said that one or the other of two developments might well, ultimately, require us, as a matter of self-defence, to consider the possibility of a more

formal association with the UN system: (i) should the UN form an entity within the Secretariat, however small, with a migration mandate; or (ii) UN and other agencies would duplicate aspects of our mandate to the point that we risked losing our global migration agency status. Here, as an illustration of the growing interest in migration, recall that the Global Migration Group, established in 2003 by IOM and UNHCR as the Geneva Migration Group, now has 18 members, with several additional UN agencies expected to seek membership.

- (c) Third, I have also consistently said that, should you, the Member States so wish, we could provide you with a list and analysis in regard to the various options that are possible for a more formal association with the UN system for an organization such as IOM, and our recommendations as to the best one for IOM.
- (d) Fourth, my drive to enlist ever more Member States has also to be seen, in large part, as an effort to put IOM in the strongest position possible should you, the Member States, decide that discussions should be opened with the UN regarding a more formal association with the UN system; in other words, we would wish to discuss from a position of strength, and, with 157 Member States and growing, IOM is approaching universal membership.

6. The Second Committee draft resolution should be of concern to you, as it is to us, for several reasons:

- (a) IOM is indisputably the leading organization on migration and the only one with a global footprint, near universal membership, and devoting 100 per cent of its resources to covering every aspect of migration. Although outside the UN, IOM serves States in the same way as UN agencies.
- (b) The resolution, as currently drafted, risks the marginalization of IOM and the creation of new, additional and duplicative arrangements within the UN.
- (c) Pressing so far and so fast in the current drive to pass this resolution also risks undoing the achievements and consensus of the High-level Dialogue.

7. Given the resolution now before the Second Committee, I believe that the time may have come for me – unless there are objections – as the most senior elected official of the Organization, to hold non-binding, strictly informal discussions with senior levels of the UN Secretariat in New York in order to understand more clearly the UN's intentions in regard to migration. In other words, how does the UN see the future of migration governance? Is the UN Secretariat satisfied with the current relationship, in which IOM participates in all UN bodies (e.g. UNCTs, IASC, UNDSS, UNJSPF, Multi-donor Trust Funds) – except the policy bodies. Are there longer-term plans to create a migration unit, however small, within the Secretariat (e.g. “UN Migration”), and what role, if any, does the Secretariat envisage for IOM in terms of implementing the current UNGA draft resolution should it be approved?

8. I would provide regular feedback to the Working Group and either the Working Group or I would keep the Member States informed, as appropriate and relevant.