



**Statement by H.E. Dr. John Paul Grech,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to the United Nations and
Other International Organisations in Geneva
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It is a great pleasure to be here today and to be part of these important deliberations. As mentioned on previous occasions by both DG Swing as well as myself, Malta's case is unique deserving unique attention. Malta has consistently experienced heavy influxes of irregular immigration from North Africa since 2002. Irregular migration and asylum matters continue to be issues of great concern for my Government as they place disproportionate pressure on the national infrastructure.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is considered by my Government as a reliable partner for setting up migration strategies and activities in relation to migration flows from the various countries in our immediate region. The Maltese Government has had valuable collaboration with the IOM Mission in the Republic of Malta since the latter was established in 2007.

There has been close cooperation between IOM Office Malta and the Maltese Authorities in the implementation of the various projects namely the one dealing with 'Cooperation between Malta and African countries to enhance migration dialogue and development (COMAM)' in place since 2010 and more recently an IOM-UNHCR Joint Technical Mission to Malta in April 2014 where important issues such as unaccompanied and refugee minors were discussed at length.

Over the past two years, enhanced consultations and more effective collaboration between the authorities in Malta and IOM have led to the consolidation and development of a number of projects aimed at addressing the specific needs of Malta. Malta actively participates in the events organised by IOM and seeks to put forward its shared experiences and views especially when it comes to migration flows in the Mediterranean.

The valuable interaction between Malta and IOM is also clearly reflected in the high incidence of recent high level visits which took place. Ministers and dignitaries visited IOM in Geneva and the Director-General himself Mr William Lacy Swing visited Malta in November 2013 and October 2014. The main purpose of his last visit being to participate in the inauguration of the IOM-UNHCR Joint Report entitled 'Unaccompanied and Refugee Minors – Alternatives to Detention'.

Over the years Malta's relations with IOM have gone from strength to strength. We have built on mutual understanding and consideration and we intend to continue to build and to improve on this solid work.

I wish to thank the Director General for his extensive Report on the work of the Organization for the year 2013. The Gender coordination report covers very important issues. The Financial Report for the Year ended 31 December 2013 includes the funds earmarked for projects carried out for issues that directly concern Malta. IOM's Office in Malta has been of great assistance with these projects. The projects on intra-EU relocation of refugees from Malta (EUREMA) as well as the projects on voluntary return and reintegration of migrants help to ease Malta's burden.

On a personal note, I wish to congratulate the Director-General for doing such an excellent job at the helm of this important international organisation. His personal commitment and that of the organisation towards Malta's particular needs have not gone unnoticed. On numerous public occasions, he has referred to Malta's plight and his visits to Malta give visibility to Malta's situation. The Government of the Republic of Malta is appreciative of these gestures and the assistance afforded to Malta.

Malta acknowledges the valuable efforts by IOM. IOM holds a central role as the International lead Agency on Migration issues and any duplication of work with other initiatives should be avoided for the benefit of all.

Thank you.