

PHILIPPINES

IOM 105th COUNCIL SESSION
Salle 17, Palais des Nations
25-28 November 2014
Agenda Item No 10. General Debate

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

My delegation extends congratulations to you and to the members of your bureau, on your election, and thanks the Ambassador of Peru, for his work as chairman of the IOM Council over the course of last year.

My delegation also welcomes the Independent State of Samoa as the newest member of the IOM as well as the fourteen (14) new observer organizations to the IOM. Indeed, the continued growth IOM membership and the increasing number of organizations lining up to become observers are affirmations of IOM's stature as the leading inter-governmental organization on migration and a recognition of the relevance of work of IOM for a humane and orderly migration.

Mister Chairman,

On the matter of sustainable development goals, the Philippines supports the idea that there should be stronger coordination between Geneva and New York especially in the matter of migration. The most obvious reason for this is that while decisions on sustainable development goals will be made in New York, the expertise and much of the substantive discourse on migration are in Geneva.

My delegation wishes to echo the call of the Director General of IOM in his report to IOM Council that states should be actively engaged in the discussions leading to the formulation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda, particularly to ensure that Goal 8, that is, promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, remains as one of the development goals.

Like most states, the Philippines is also of the strong view that the 17 goals that has so far been formulated for the Post 2015 Development Agenda are all interrelated, especially on climate change. For us, if there is one overarching and running thread among these development goals, it will be the eradication of poverty.

Mister Chairman,

The Philippines supports the continuing emphasis of the IOM on the migrants' rights protection and promotion of their welfare. Perhaps more than ever, the emphasis of migrants rights and their welfare assume greater relevance and urgency in the face of the resurgence of xenophobic and anti-migrants sentiments and prejudiced stereotypes, the increasing number of migrants in crisis wanting protection in countries in crisis, and the continuing push towards outbound migration, with more and more migrants who are trekking even dangerous paths in land and seas.

We commend IOM in particular for its programs and initiatives aimed at lowering the cost of migration, both its social and financial cost. We are particularly pleased that the IOM is actively pursuing its joint initiative with the UPU for the lowering of remittance cost. We would be interested to know the lessons learned in implementing this initiative on country level.

My delegation is pleased to share with you that my country's own postal office is exploring bilaterally with its counterparts on the possibility of utilizing the postal system as avenues for inbound and outbound remittances of migrants and their families left behind and using as leverage the vast network of postal offices, at national and local levels, to provide easier access and lower remittance cost.

We are also looking forward in working with the ITU in exploring possibilities of maximizing the use of the mobile technology in lowering the cost of remittance. Currently, in the Philippines, major telecommunications companies partnered with banks, to deliver money remittance service locally using mobile phones. This add on service of mobile telephone companies does not only provide convenience to their customers but also lowered the cost of remittance.

In relation to ethical recruitment, my delegation is pleased share with you that my country's overseas employment regulatory agency has partnered with the IOM in pilot testing the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) in our overseas employment recruitment system. For us, partnering with the IOM on the IRIS initiative is a logical next step in pursuing our own ethical recruitment program which we have been implementing for several years now as part of our government's pre departure protective mantle for Filipinos who have decided to pursue working overseas, either as a land based or sea based overseas worker.

Mister Chairman,

On the matter of climate change and migration, the Philippines support the active engagement of IOM on the issue of climate change and disaster risk reduction as it relates to migration, as we ourselves is active in this concern.

My delegation is pleased to share with you two recent developments on multi states initiatives to which the Philippines is engaged with actively.

The first is 4th Nansen Initiative (NI) Regional Consultation that was convened last month in Manila under the theme “Human Mobility in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change in Southeast Asia.” More than 100 participants attended representing governments from at least nine Southeast Asia states, (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam), from Australia, Germany, Haiti, and Japan and from regional and international organizations, UN Agencies, civil society and research institutions.

The participants in that consultation identified 6 areas for intervention, two of which I will highlight here. These are:

- For states and other stakeholders to consider planned relocation only in cases where climate change adaptation measures prove insufficient to protect communities and ensuring that this move takes into account the people’s community ties and cultural values while providing adequate livelihood, housing and other basic social services that would sustain these communities; and
- Encourage the temporary admission of displaced persons abroad especially when their lives are at risk and to examine the possibility of developing temporary protection mechanisms at the bilateral, sub-regional and regional levels;

The other initiative the Philippines is actively engaged in is the Migrant in Crisis in Countries in Crisis, which it co-chairs with the US. This initiative is one of the concrete action plans emerging from the 2nd UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development held in New York in 2013.

This initiative aims to improve the ability of States and other relevant stakeholders to prepare for, respond to, and protect the dignity and rights of migrants caught in countries experiencing an acute crisis. To do so, the initiative will consider the full spectrum of measures and relevant stakeholders, encompassing elements of emergency preparedness, institutional capacities, humanitarian assistance and protection, and post crisis. Through a process of broad and inclusive consultations, the initiative aims to produce a set of voluntary guidelines and principles which define the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders vis-à-vis migrants in countries in crisis and compile good practices in preparing for, responding to, and addressing longer-term consequences of such situations.

The Philippines is pleased to be working with 5 other active IOM member states in a working group for the Migrants in Crisis in Countries in Crisis initiative, namely, Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, and the United States.

We are glad that IOM is also providing secretariat and technical support for this initiative, together with the European Commission, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Georgetown University Institute for the Study of International Migration and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development.

As regional consultations for this initiative will commence soon, my delegation hopes that states and other stakeholders will there to actively contribute to the development of this initiative.

Mister Chairman,

My delegation will continue to support IOMs 3 year budget strengthening plan that was approved by the 103rd IOM Council convened last year. We note know that after a year of implementation, it has already begun to provide substantial resources and address the chronic issue of overstretch budget.

We commend the IOM administration for its determined effort to negotiate and get more states to provide the privileges and immunities to the IOM. We are glad that, as reported by the Director General, 5 more states have granted privileges and immunities to the IOM, bringing to a total of 83 states out of 177 states where IOM operates that have granted immunities and privileges to the IOM. We call on those states that have yet to grant privileges and immunities to the IOM, to step up their efforts towards toward this end.

My delegation also commends the IOM administration for innovative payment plan to deal with the arrears incurred by member states for them not to lose their voting rights due to financial constraints. We are glad that as reported by the Director General, only 8 member states remain in danger of losing their voting rights.

Finally, Mister Chairman, my delegation wishes express if appreciation to all the IOM officers and staff, both at the headquarters and in the field, for their continued dedication and commitment, even on difficult and oftentimes dangerous situations, to pursue humane and orderly migration that benefits the migrants and their families, their countries of origin and adopted countries.

Thank you.

END