

Statement by

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Chairman, Director-General, Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we also warmly welcome the new member state Samoa and the new observers of IOM.

In the year 2014 the scope of humanitarian and migration crises has broken all records. The challenges were bigger than ever before. The complex crises in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Ebola affected states have forced more people to flee their homes. More migrants are left in need of assistance. Also, the tragedies around the Mediterranean have not stopped after the terrible incident near Lampedusa in 2013. More migrants have lost their lives.

The Netherlands wishes to compliment the International Organization for Migration for responding to these and other humanitarian emergencies in an adequate, hands-on and flexible manner. In specific we value the excellent work of IOM in protecting migrants' rights and preventing exploitation in crisis situations. In these challenging times, IOM has proven to be one of the most important organizations in addressing global migration issues. We would like to express our respect for all employees of IOM that have performed excellent work under these extreme circumstances.

As stated in the report of the Director General, the planned initiatives of IOM up until 2018 are ambitious. We support this ambitious approach, including the contribution to humanitarian and protection policy. At the same time we would like to urge IOM to remain realistic and not take up more than the organizational structure and its employees can manage.

Mr. Chairman,

The Netherlands aligns itself with the EU Statement and would like to add the following.

Over more than two decades, IOM and the Netherlands have collaborated closely and satisfactorily on a large number of projects. We attach great importance to the organization's professionalism and well-functioning and look forward to continuing this partnership. I would like to highlight four areas in which we are especially interested and would like to continue or deepen our cooperation.

First, IOM and the Netherlands have for more than two decades closely worked together on voluntary return and reintegration of migrants and their families. An effective program in this regard that we would like to highlight is the voluntary return of stranded migrants in North Africa. We wish to complement IOM with the successful implementation of these programs, wherein IOM has assisted a large number of stranded migrants with their return and reintegration. How will IOM continue these programs in the future?

Second, we value the positive contribution of migrants to the development of their home countries. Together we have successfully supported the temporary return of almost 900 qualified migrants to their home countries. In the continuation of this program, we would like to ask IOM to share some successes and lessons learned of similar programs in other countries.

Third, as mentioned in our statement last year, irregular migration demonstrates the necessity to inform migrants beforehand. A balanced narrative on their chances in countries of destination and the dangers they face in their attempt to reach Europe. Tackling irregular migration also demands to coherently address issues of human smuggling, human trafficking and the protection of victims. How can the Netherlands and IOM deepen cooperation on these activities as part of broader migration management in countries of origin and transit?

Lastly, complex humanitarian crises, such as in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and Central African Republic, demand sustainable solutions for refugees in the region. However, countries as Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen and recently Turkey, face increasing difficulties in accommodating the vast groups of refugees. It places serious constraints on the socio-economic situation of these host countries. What does IOM define as its key areas to continue, in close coordination with OCHA and

UNHCR, to assist host countries and work towards more durable solutions in the region?

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude by thanking you for your able handling of the proceedings this week.