ITALY

Statement by H.E. Laura Mirachian,

Ambassador and Permanent Representative,

at the 101ᵗʰ Session of IOM Council

(Geneva, 27-30 November 2012)

Mr. Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished Delegates,

Italy aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Let me confirm to Ambassador Strohal our appreciation for his exemplary chairmanship. We also welcome Ambassador Hannan as incoming Council Chair.

Migration is definitely one of the great challenges of our time. It has to do with the issue of Development and political crisis but also with the Climate Change, with general mobility brought about by globalization and technological means of communication, with international economic crisis. Today, migration is becoming massive and involves all Continents and all Countries.

While Italy has historically been a Country of emigration, today immigrants currently present in our territory are estimated between 5 and 7 millions. Since 2001, the number of foreigners legally residing in Italy has more than tripled. Children of foreign origin make up nearly 8,4% of the enrolled students and 44,2% of them were born in Italy.

While ambivalent perceptions persist, the general attitude towards migration is changing. A very important development has been the adoption of a "code of conduct" for journalists, which intends to promote a dignified and non-discriminatory representation of migrants in the mass media. The creation of a Ministry for Integration, for the first time, last year is the best evidence that the political discourse towards migration is changing and that active inclusion is the way forward.

A plurality of measures recently adopted call for a more systematic culture of integration. On the one hand, efforts have been made to boost regular immigration: an amnesty for irregular immigrants; a legislation to deter exploitative forms of work, rewarding those who denounce their exploiters with a residence permit in the Country. On the other hand, steps have been taken to promote flexibility, such as the extension from 6 to 12 months of legal residence in Italy in case of job loss following the recent reform of the labour market.

Special attention is also devoted to the potential positive impact of migration on Development. As publicly recognized by Italian Prime Minister Monti, migrants' remittances play a major role in this respect. Therefore, Italy abolished the existing tax on the remittances of irregular migrants and strongly supports the reduction of the global cost of remittances from 10% to 5% by 2014, as agreed at the G8 meeting in 2009.

Mr. Chairman,

Italy commends IOM for the high quality of the projects implemented in partnerships with our national structures in 2012. I wish to highlight activities concerning family reunifications, or management of mixed migration flows and of assisted voluntary returns.

We deeply appreciate IOM's operational expertise, efficiency, effectiveness. IOM has proven with concrete facts to be a very relevant actor in the field of migration management. We commend the presentation of a Zero Nominal Growth budget for 2013, while maintaining the elevated quality of the activities.

Italy welcomes IOM's efforts to learn from experiences and channel them into opportunities for discussion and enhanced operational strategies. We support the Operational Framework as a tool to improve policy coherence and formulate the best responses to stand on the side of those in vulnerable conditions. We welcome such efforts and read them as a sign of understanding of the challenges of our time.

We also believe that IOM has a unique expertise in the field of migration. We strongly support its proactive role in the major platforms of discussion and its effective participation in 2013 New York-based discussions on the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

We encourage IOM to continue its efforts to achieve improved migration management and to include international migrations in the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Thank you.