



**NORWAY**

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**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION  
88<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT BY**

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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF DENMARK, FINLAND, SWEDEN AND  
NORWAY**

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#### NORDIC STATEMENT

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor of speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Sweden and my own, Norway. We would like to congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on your election.

I shall start by expressing our gratitude for the very thorough and illuminating documentation provided for this Council session. We were impressed, but maybe also a little overwhelmed, by the quantity of background information that had to be absorbed. Some of it, such as *Year in Review*, is very succinct and informative, but we feel that more could perhaps be done to streamline some of the documentation. At present there is a certain amount of overlapping and repetition. The documentation would thus gain from being more concise and considerably less extensive.

Having said this, we would like to commend IOM on its efforts to provide solid documentation for a better-informed debate on migration, one of the most challenging issues of our time. The international response to the growing occurrence of migration has been slow in coming. The enormous potential of migration – both in its positive and negative aspects, calls for better management.

IOM continues to promote well-informed and constructive debates in its fora and among its constituents in Member States. We commend IOM for convening the annual International Dialogue. It provides a basis for reaching out to various stakeholders and giving migration issues their rightful place on the agendas of all relevant international organizations and in national governments. We value the new insight provided by this dialogue and the important educative function it serves. This year's dialogue was no exception.

The growing awareness of the need to manage migration issues more effectively and coherently and to put them on the global policy agenda led to the establishment last year of the Global Commission on International Migration. The Nordic countries are looking forward to the report of the Commission next summer. We hope that the Commission will succeed in realizing its objectives. Its report is likely to provide input to a necessary discussion on the United Nations' institutional involvement in migration issues, and what implications this will have for all international cooperation efforts in the migration area. IOM and its Member States must continue to take part in this discussion, which is not a new one; we are aware that the pros and cons of IOM becoming a specialized UN agency have been presented earlier. At this point we are not prepared to prescribe a solution, except that we presume that every effort will be made to avoid duplication and competing structures, taking due account of the cross-cutting nature of migration issues.

It may therefore be a little premature to draw firm conclusions about all aspects of the new document *IOM's strategy: current and future migration realities and IOM's role*. This is an important paper since it focuses on how IOM can serve governments and migrants. We agree that there is no need at present to make any substantial alterations to the strategy that has been in effect since 1995. Nevertheless, we can still ask ourselves whether, in the present situation, IOM is putting its various objectives in the right order of priority.

The Nordic countries have long held the view that IOM should concentrate its activities on its core mandate, instead of offering wide-ranging services in a number of areas somehow related to migration. We appreciate IOM's expertise in transportation-related activities and are pleased to take advantage of the services offered, in particular its Assisted Voluntary Returns program and the transportation of resettlement refugees to our countries. Moreover, we welcome and support IOM's pioneering role in the area of counter-trafficking. In some cases, we have also channeled humanitarian funds to IOM projects that have formed part of the Consolidated Appeals Process, in recognition of IOM's commitment to participating in this process and in the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. We would like to reiterate how important we consider it to be for IOM to coordinate its operations and programs with other relevant actors, especially the UN system. This is also valid for the issue of the security of IOM's staff, which is of deep concern to us, and we welcome IOM's cooperation with UNSECOORD.

The Nordic countries have always stressed the importance of gender issues. We appreciate IOM's efforts to mainstream a gender perspective throughout the organization and in all its programs. IOM should continue these efforts, along with still paying particular attention to the special needs of women and children who as victims of trafficking have had their human rights seriously violated.

While we are supportive of an active and innovative IOM within its mandate, we would like to caution against an apparent tendency to measure success in terms of growth, for example in the Director General's report on IOM's work in 2003. Growth is definitely not a sufficient condition for remaining "global, relevant and efficient", which is the goal set out in the strategy paper. This note of caution is particularly relevant when it comes to the increase in the number of Member States. It is more than regrettable that we have arrived at an apparent stalemate in which half of all IOM's Member States do not pay their assessed contributions.

We are concerned not only about the effects of the outstanding contributions on IOM's budget and its ability to operate, but also about the apparent lack of commitment to IOM as an organization by so many of its Member States. No amount of peer pressure seems to be enough to persuade a large number of States to live up to their voluntarily contracted obligations. We see few cases where payment of the relatively small amounts due to IOM would have a serious impact on national finances of the Member State concerned, all the more so in view of the possibility to negotiate a repayment plan. The Nordic countries are prepared to go along with the strategy paper's suggestion that Member States should "become more categorical in their censure of States with outstanding contributions", for the sake of saving IOM's operability and credibility. We are also taking into consideration the fact that IOM's External Auditors have recommended more vigorous action.

The budget shortfalls provoked by the outstanding contributions and the restrictive attitude of Member States to budget increases make it difficult for IOM to achieve its goals. IOM needs to have the financial means available to implement its annual program and to do so in a cost-effective manner. With this in mind, the Nordic countries were prepared to accept the marginal increases previously proposed for the administrative part of the budget.

We realize that there are limits to how far rationalization, decentralization and other measures can be taken before IOM fails to meet its responsibilities to its staff. The issues raised by IOM's personnel are cause for concern, in particular the statement by the Staff Association Committee to the 92<sup>nd</sup> session of the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance. We expect these matters to be dealt with and resolved in a transparent manner and with the full participation of the Staff Association Committee. Staff morale is a vital asset in any organization, one that no senior management or board can afford to undermine. No asset is more important to any organization than its staff, and that holds true for IOM as well.