STATEMENT OF BRAZIL – GENERAL DEBATE

Mister Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to express our appreciation for the work carried out last year by Ambassador Sammy Eddico as Chairperson of the IOM Council.

We would like to congratulate Ambassador Bertrand De Crombrugghe, for his election, and assure him he can count on our engagement and support for all his endeavors.

I also take this opportunity to welcome São Tome and Principe, another Portuguese speaking country, for the membership application to the IOM.

Since last decade, Brazil has adopted a migratory policy that has throughout these years allowed for more and more migrants to be received in our country with full respect for their human rights. To this end, my Government has facilitated the regularization of undocumented migrants through periodic amnesty programs.

Such course of action does not only derive from the positive perception of the Brazilian society in relation to migrants, but also from the acknowledgment of the valuable contribution of immigration to our society.

Moreover, no country can disregard the fact that the old dichotomy between countries of origin and those of destination has given way to much more complex situations. The diversity of flows, whose directions are evolving, creates the situation in which countries can be points of origin, transit and destination.

In an increasingly interconnected world, we believe that human mobility should be at the center of the international agenda. Migratory regulation should be one of the fundamental conditions to ensure that migrants are drivers of development. Xenophobia and intolerance should therefore be fought against by all necessary means.

Against this backdrop, Brazil has adopted a special migratory policy aimed at receiving Haitian nationals following the 2010 earthquake in Port-au-Prince.

In order to better address the Haitian migratory flow to Brazil, my Government and IOM established a partnership which led to the inauguration, last September, of the "Brazil Visa Application Center" in Port-au-Prince, where more efficient services can be rendered for visa applicants. As a result, the Brazilian consular authorities in that capital are now capable of issuing two thousand permanent visas per month.

Nowadays, more than sixty-five thousand Haitians live in Brazil regularly, enjoying full rights and the support from the Government and civil society.

In this regard, I am proud to inform that my Government granted, a few days ago, permanent residence permits for more than forty-three thousand Haitian nationals, who are already positioned in our labor market.

Similarly, Brazil has been working, within its possibilities, to receive people who have been displaced by war. In 2013, we established a system to expedite the issuance of visas on a humanitarian basis, for persons affected by the Syrian conflict who wish to seek shelter in Brazil. This "open-arms" policy, as recently stated by President Dilma Rousseff, was recently extended for two additional years. This decision motivated Brazil to sign with UNHCR, last September, an agreement to enhance and formalize cooperation on our visa program for people affected by the Syrian conflict.

On those grounds, and notwithstanding the geographical distance, more than two thousand and two hundred Syrians have already been recognized and now have the opportunity to rebuild their lives in our country. Syrians account for the largest contingent of refugees in Brazil today. It is little compared to the magnitude of the crisis, but it is a contribution we believe can help many people in need.

Such policies demonstrate our firm belief in the principle of shared responsibility by the international community in the face of the gravest migratory crisis of our generation.

Finally, I have the pleasure to recall the adoption of the "Agreement on Legal Position, Privileges and Immunities" between Brazil and IOM, which came into force last September. We are sure that this new step will enable a stronger and closer relationship.

Thank you.