

**Statement by H.E. Ms. Vesna Batistić Kos
Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia to the UN
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Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, allow me to join the others in congratulating you for the election. We would like to express sincere appreciation for the outstanding leadership of the IOM by the Director General Ambassador William Swing and for his yearly report. It has provided a vivid outline for discussion on more resolute international action in the field of migration, building on the proactive approach that was finally globally embraced and that should take this longstanding, but very topical, phenomenon from the fears and obstacles to safe and orderly movements.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU.

The development of the Global compact is a historic project, and our common goal. The DG Report once again confirmed the outstanding role that the IOM plays in the field of migration and the centrality of its contribution to the process underway.

We congratulate IOM its 65th anniversary as well as joining the UN family.

Mr. Chairperson,

Migrations are a multi-layered phenomenon. First and foremost, we should at all times bear in mind the complicity of consequences and root causes. Conflict is at heart of any of these causes; poverty, lack of opportunities, climate change, failing states and societies are all avalanches waiting to happen. We should contemplate the solutions in a comprehensive way in order to enable decent livelihoods of all those effected along this process.

This requires a synergy of internal and external action. Internally, social and institutional resilience should be built in communities - be it a country of origin, transit or destination - making them better prepared, including through promoting tolerance, understanding, inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue. Externally, the complexity of the issue can only be addressed by a comprehensive and coherent approach tackling all of the elements of the migration flow. The response has to be in line with our international obligations and responsibilities, including the respect of human rights. As DG underlined, human rights are portable.

But, we also need to take into account that safe and orderly migration is only possible when both the concepts of state security and human rights protection are respected. We need to focus on consistent implementation of legal admission and return policy as well as preventing loss of life due to dangerous journeys. We must increase global efforts in countering organized crime networks in human trafficking.

Migration crises are happening all over the world and have been for a long time. So far, no one has found a perfect solution. From the overwhelming situation we experienced last year we have learned the hard way that migration challenges are too big for individual states and even regions to address alone. Croatia alone spent around 20 million euros for assistance to migrants and refugees. It is the experience of conflict and of a traditionally country of emigration but also empathy and solidarity of our citizens that carried much weight in dealing with the last migration influx. We must also acknowledge and thank the IOM for the valuable role it played in respect of this crisis. The emergency response project launched by IOM in September 2015 was of tremendous help to Croatia in coping with the influx.

Characterizing this migration flow was also a big number of unaccompanied children. These children deserve our special attention and care. In order to prepare ourselves better for dealing with such a challenge in the future, Croatian authorities and UNICEF organized a regional conference “*How to respond effectively to the needs of unaccompanied children in Southeast Europe*” in Zagreb, in October this year.

The European Union provides us with a crucial frame of cooperation regarding migration issues based on solidarity. Croatia also takes part and supports the European relocation and resettlement scheme. Admittedly, progress has been somewhat slow but visible nonetheless and we are certain that the challenges in this regard will soon be overcome.

The same principles apply at the global level. Unity, concerted efforts and solidarity are very well recognized as central by the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, the first comprehensive international document which provides a set of commitments and concrete plans for how to build on these commitments in the process of finding long-term resolution to problems related to migration.

Mr. Chairperson,

Managing migration is our common responsibility. Croatia is committed to contribute with all global partners to developing the future Global Compact on Migration.

Thank you for your attention.