

General debate - 107th Council of the IOM

Thank you Mr. President.

Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU.

Let me begin by congratulating IOM and its Director-General, distinguished Mr. Swing, the 65th anniversary of the Organization. I would like to commend, on behalf of the Government of Montenegro, a responsible approach of IOM to providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced persons. A globally spread IOM's network has proven its important role in addressing challenges such as cross-border displacements due to disasters and climate change, as well as rapid and preventive response to growing migration flows. In addition, Montenegro appreciates an outstanding engagement of the IOM DG in negotiation process on the Agenda 2030, which has contributed to having migration challenges mainstreamed across numerous SDGs. It is a great recognition for an important role of migration in developing more peaceful and inclusive societies.

My delegation would like to thank Director-General for his comprehensive report on the current situation of the organization. It accurately depicts a magnitude and complexity of today's migration challenges. Thousands of men, women and children choosing a dangerous journey to escape from brutality of war and conflict, a high rate of death, smuggling and trafficking in human beings, impose an immediate call for comprehensive action. In this regard, Montenegro fully endorses the outcomes of the September Summit, in particular the New York Declaration on refugees and migrants. We are satisfied that the UN General Assembly has agreed by consensus to hold an intergovernmental Conference in 2018, the first of its kind, with an exclusive focus on adopting a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration by the Member States. Not only it represents a first global response to this paramount challenge, but is also a turning point in the history of international cooperation on migrations and global governance of migration.

My Government strives for a transparent, open and inclusive Global Compact preparatory process, which should be framed by the Agenda 2030. In our view, it needs to address international migrations holistically, taking into account development issues, human rights, humanitarian, climate change and security dimensions. The role of Geneva, a heart of multilateral humanitarian activities, along with our New York colleagues is indispensable. On this note, allow me to extend a support of Montenegro for the IOM DG's proposal to be appointed the president of the Conference dedicated to the adoption of the Global Compact in 2018. For us it is reasonable decision, as a paramount migration crisis has made an important role that IOM is playing even much more necessary.

We strongly believe that the recently signed agreement by which the IOM has become an UN-related organization is a great achievement for both organizations and their member states. We hope that a new IOM status will contribute to the further increase in membership. On this note, allow me to welcome this year's new members: China, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Tonga. My delegation looks favourably on shifting the focus of the Working Group from IOM-UN relation to IOM-UN cooperation, including to responding a demanding task of consultations on the Global Compact. As

we are fully aware that growing demands and challenges require a thorough financial adaptation, we support a renewal of the mandate of the Working Group on the Budget Reform.

Mr. President,

My Government supports endeavours of all international actors aiming to address both the consequences and the root causes of the migration crises. A responsible approach to this problem means that we must joint our activities to effectively address a very complex task of maintaining security on the borders while providing a better future for those who face unbearable bunch of suffering. We need to step up operational cooperation and work more closely in sharing information on irregular migrations, smuggling and trafficking in human beings. We also need a more sensitive approach when it comes to the issue of return, since returning asylum seekers who escaped the war and terror is never a legitimate option.

Montenegro is confident that a regional and cross-regional cooperation in this regard is of utmost importance. In this regard, let me inform you that last year a Montenegrin representative assumed duty of the director of MARRI RC with a clear aim to deal with problems of region in context of migration, as well as to strengthen a common strategy related to actual migration flows within the WB6. As a candidate for membership in the EU, we welcome the adoption of the new Migration Partnership Framework as well as "A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy". It proves a commitment to addressing the root causes of migration crisis, while ensuring full respect for human rights and international law. We expect that the Global Forum of Migrations and Development which is to be held next week in Bangladesh, will contribute to developing a transformative migrations agenda and come up with the ideas on how to successfully implement the migration related SDGs.

We believe that migration flows, mostly from Syria, but also from Eritrea, Somalia, Afghanistan, must not leave any state unprepared to provide asylum seekers with the life in dignity and basic needs. Allow me to remind you that in its contemporary history, Montenegro has proven that it cherishes the values of moral and political responsibility and solidarity when it comes to providing a refuge to those in need. During the turbulent 90s, Montenegro has wholeheartedly opened its door to all those who were escaping brutality of war in our region, thus accepting over 120.000 refugees or, for the sake of illustration, 1/5 of our entire population. Not only we provided a temporary shelter, but we have found a durable solution for integration of 15.000 of refugees and displaced persons. Through the participation in Regional Housing Program, Montenegro has provided a durable solution for housing of over 6.000 internally displaced persons, out of which many belonged to the most vulnerable social categories, including Roma population.

Although the main migration route nowadays is not passing through Montenegro, we are fully aware of our sensitive geopolitical position being a country on the external border of the EU. Montenegro is pleased that the close cooperation between the Regional Office of IOM and the Government has helped us create a solid legislative framework, in particular when it comes to border management, combating organized crime and corruption, illegal migrations, trafficking in human beings. In addition to the IOM project aiming to support Western Balkans Countries in efficiently responding to the challenges posed by migration, we are grateful for the IOM's and other

agencies' support in drafting our „Plan of action for measures in case of growth of the inflow of migrants“. We have also established an Operative team that coordinates the work of relevant national authorities for the asylum issues. Our normative framework has additionally been strengthened through passing a new Law on foreigners and through adoption of the Strategy for the Reintegration of Persons Returned under Readmission Agreements for the period 2016-2020. Finally, with a view to combat and prevent illegal migrations, the Government has drafted the Schengen Action Plan, which will tackle the issue of border security in accordance with Schengen standards.

Mr. President,

We stand ready to work together to promote the positive outcomes of migrations and ensure that migration-relevant SDGs are implemented effectively. Only by universal human urge to provide a safer, better life for those migrants and refugees who are in risk of being subject to smuggling and trafficking in human beings, will we be able to achieve orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, as a means of reducing inequalities within and among countries.

Let me assure you that my Government will continue to be a responsible partner to all international efforts aimed to expand safe and legal channels of migration in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law.