



December 2, 2016

*Mr. Choi REASON,*

Director-General, your excellencies, dear colleagues and partners, we at Initiatives of Change would first of all like to applaud the important work being done here and would like to thank you for *accepting* considering our application. We are an international network of ~~NGOs~~ and individuals officially incorporated in 44 countries. We work to build trust across the world's divides by seeking to inspire, equip and connect individuals to make small concrete steps in their own lives, to engage in dialogue with others and then go on and improve the world around them. We are a neutral, non-political platform to people from all sides (even opposing ones).

With the current complex situation of migration in the world, and all other adjacent issues that it affects, the divides are extremely apparent. Through our work in creating spaces for dialogue with diaspora communities, trustbuilding workshops between migrants and local *citizens* communities, seminars to allow for healing the past in both conflict and non-conflict settings and much more, we are constantly working for and with migrants.

At our summer conferences in the iconic Caux Palace, just above Montreux, which became famous for its track 2 role in Franco-German reconciliation after World War II, we have welcomed IOM on various occasions. Just last summer, the Director-General gave an inspiring speech at our opening ceremony, and for the last three years IOM ~~has~~ collaborated on our conference dealing with land degradation, climate change and peacebuilding (where UNCCD was also a partner); *the issue of migration was a central focus.*

As an international network we are now turning our focus to addressing extremism of all kinds and here we wish to collaborate with others in creating an atmosphere of trust where prejudices and migration in general can be "de-mystified". We are sure that obtaining observer status will allow us to both gain from and contribute to the discussions and work being done by IOM and its members. To make any meaningful improvement to the challenges facing migration we can only do so together. Thank you.