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Statement by H.E. Amb. Maurizio Enrico SERRA,

Permanent Representative,

at the 108th Session of IOM Council

(Geneva, 28 November-1st December 2017)

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Chair, Director-General, Deputy Director-General, distinguished Delegates, Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the EU Delegation on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

At the outset, allow me to express our sincerest appreciation to Ambassador Quinn of Australia for guiding our work within the framework of the Working Groups on IOM Budget Reform and on IOM-UN Relations and Related Issues. A warm welcome goes to Cuba and the Cook Islands as new Member States as well as to the eight new observers that have joined the IOM family.

2017 has been no doubt another year of migration. With over one billion people on the move in today's world, migration management has moved to the forefront of many States' agendas. Facilitating more dignified, orderly and safe migration remains a key challenge we are striving to collectively address. Historic levels of displacement, thousands of deaths in transit and a huge asylum crisis have combined with rising xenophobia, growing concerns about migration and security, trafficking of human beings and inadequate policy-making. Conflicts, persecutions and human rights violations have driven people from their homes in search of safety but also poverty, climate change and lack of opportunities are prompting many

to leave their countries and to embark for dangerous journeys, looking for new lives elsewhere.

According to IOM, between January and October 2017, more than 170.000 migrants and asylum-seekers entered Europe through land and sea routes. More than 116.000 of them have registered in Italy. Although flows have slightly decreased compared to last year, they remain intense, since their root causes and drivers have not been properly addressed so far: conditions in countries of origin have not improved, there are progresses in some transit countries like Niger but the situation in Libya remains difficult. We commend the huge efforts put in place by IOM in order to scale-up its presence in Libya, assisting vulnerable migrants and improving conditions in detention centres. We also praise IOM for its work in supporting states to manage the migration situation along the central Mediterranean route and in implementing specific programmes such as assisted voluntary return, reintegration and counter-trafficking. Further, our cooperation with IOM remains crucial in reception centres in Italy, since it allows our authorities to better cope with reception of and assistance to migrants.

At the same time, despite over 7.000 migrants rescued in the central Mediterranean route in 2017, more than 3.000 migrants have already lost their life this year. In this regard, the efforts put in place by EUNAVFOR are crucial to reduce the death toll caused by irregular migration and to tackle human trafficking and smuggling. Many suspected smugglers have been apprehended and many lives saved in the Mediterranean Sea since the Operation has started and Italy will continue to contribute to tackle these despicable crimes.

While rescue at sea and border control is a key part of our response to the challenges of migration, a strong and comprehensive response is urgently needed in order to get us of this crisis. We need to address the political and economic root causes of migration, to

strengthen partnerships among countries of origin, transit and destination and to find collective, sustainable solutions based on the principle of respect of human dignity and safety.

Chair,

over one year ago IOM became a UN related Agency, a historic turn after relentless efforts in international cooperation on migration issues in the interest of migrants and Member States. Recognising the Organization as the global lead agency on migration, Italy has supported the process all along and has since been eager to contribute to the preparatory process of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to improve migration governance and promote advocacy for migrants and their rights worldwide.

We welcome the outcomes of the five thematic consultations leading to the adoption of the Global Compact and praise the inclusiveness that has characterized them. The factual involvement of all the stakeholders in our global response to migratory flows is essential to build an effective ‘whole-of-society’ approach. We are confident that the incoming stocktaking Conference in Puerto Vallarta will succeed in gathering all the contributions and good practices that we have discussed during the thematic sessions in Geneva, New York and Vienna.

In line with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Italy will continue advocating for a shared responsibility to manage large movements of refugees and migrants.

In our perspective, the Global Compact on Migration should focus on these objectives: 1) enhancing the protection of vulnerable migrants, especially non accompanied minors and women victims of trafficking; 2) investing in partnerships with countries of origin and transit, through the promotion of investments, to address the root causes of migration; 3) establishing an alternative and balanced

narrative on migration to combat the xenophobic rhetoric and to highlight its positive aspects of human mobility.