
Madam Chair,

The movement of humans across our planet is one of the key distinctions of our species. Like our ability to speak, our ability to move from places of want to places of plenty; from abundance of youth to demographic scarcity; from need to possibility; from dreams to reality – in short, our drive to move constitutes the core of who we are. Human mobility is among the key aspects that define us as a species.

And the organization that has proved its worth over the most astonishing half-century of human manifestation – the period from the mid-twentieth century to the present – is the International Organization for Migration. The legacy of the leadership of Director-General Swing will surely be remembered as critical at such an important crossroads.

Madam Chair,

We celebrate the IOM's first birthday as a UN-related organization. But that would short-change its value. Certainly, last year's newly established relationship of the IOM with the UN family is a momentous occasion. But to think of it as a first anniversary is akin to buying a first toy train set for a prize-winning seasoned engineer.

Should we not, thus, celebrate its Sixty-Fifth birthday? Or, perhaps, its baptism to its current name in 1989?

If we are to celebrate the entrance to the UN system, it is possible to rethink where we appropriate value. Perhaps, it is not that the IOM received value by becoming a member of the UN family, but that the UN family received value by welcoming the IOM.

The IOM has not only played the logistical role for migration for decades, but the thinking role, such as through the International Dialogue on Migration, and as vividly evident yesterday, through the "World Migration Report." The IOM has quietly but efficiently – dare I say, humbly – highlighted migration issues ripe for policy for decades.

Macedonia commends the central role the IOM played during the consultation phase of the preparation of the GCM, successfully organizing the thematic consultations and bringing together many relevant stakeholders through the national and regional consultation processes. It also provided valuable support to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration.

These efforts allowed us to accumulate a solid base of knowledge and experience upon which the future Global Compact will be built.

The Republic of Macedonia stands committed to contribute to the negotiations on the Global Compact of Migration. IOM should have a central role to play in the road ahead, including, if not especially, after the adoption of the GCM next year. This will ensure coherence with the outstanding progress we have achieved so far.

With the understanding that we will create a global framework for migration governance through a non-binding document, we would however emphasize that our progress will only be complete, if we manage to ensure a robust follow-up of the Global Compact once it is adopted.

Macedonia, as a transit country that provided safe passage for over 1.1 million refugees and migrants transiting through the so called Eastern route, has a strong interest to support the development of a global framework for governance of migration that will contribute to meaningful improvements and will provide regular, safe, accessible and affordable mobility solutions to migrants.

If it is not evident to all, then let's work to make the following evident: Migration is a positive dynamic in human affairs. Contributing to making migration safe, orderly and regular is good for all: the migrants, as well as source, transit and destination countries. Orderly migration is in everyone's interest.

The challenge of the road ahead is not in the *what* or the *why*, but in the *how*. So let us use our creative powers to work *how* out.

And in doing that, let us not forget the power of narrative. Voyage is a quintessential human story. From Odysseus to Zheng He to Marco Polo, to our enchantment with statistics, of which the fact that almost a tenth of global economic productivity is the consequence of migration – the story of migration is an inspiring one.

The migrants of the future may set to voyage afoot, or take ships, or cars, or planes, or spacecraft. We must now set the stage for those voyages to be safe, orderly, and regular.

Gracias, Señora Presidenta.