

IOM Council, 108th Session, 28 Nov – 1 Dec 2017.

Statement by Norway in the General debate

Delivered by Deputy Director Ms. Kaia Bilton, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Thank you Chair,

First, let me thank you, Director General Swing and your staff. We recognize and commend you on the important role that the IOM plays in the many crises around the world; in developing and refining the organization so it can meet the challenges ahead of us; and for your engagement and assistance with respect to the development of the Global Compact on Migration.

The last 12 months have indeed been demanding. We join many other delegations in congratulating you on the IOM's first year as a member of the UN family. The reports to this Council from the Standing Committee and the working groups bear witness to great activity and effort.

Norway supported the entry of IOM into the UN system. We would also like to see the organization well established as the global lead agency on migration, and as the international hub for the follow-up framework or mechanism that will be established for the global compact.

However, we would like to make a point we feel needs attention at this point in order for the IOM to successfully manage such a crucial mandate: It is important to ensure that all the agencies with a stake in migration issues are given the space and responsibility needed for them to follow up on their respective mandates. The only way to adequately respond to the complexity and magnitude of the

challenges ahead, is through a comprehensive approach and broad inter-agency alliances.

Chair,

A comment also on the Compact itself:

The GCM will be subject to intergovernmental negotiations. It therefore needs to take into account the fundamental and diverse national interests involved, without which the Compact will not gain sufficient support and legitimacy. For Norway, it is important that the Compact fully acknowledges the sovereign right of governments to decide, within existing international obligations, which foreign nationals may enter and reside on their territory.

Our common goal is safe, orderly and regular migration. In order to maintain efficient protection and asylum systems, there is a need also for well-functioning systems of return of those who do not meet criteria for legal stay. Norway believes that the Compact must reflect the obligation of states under international law to readmit their own nationals.

Chair,

To sum up, I would like to repeat that Norway is committed to the IOM, and we will elaborate and develop our partnership also in 2018. We are also committed to the process leading up to a Global Compact, which we hope will become our common toolbox to achieve global solutions to global challenges.

Thank you for your attention.