



Check against delivery

**Statement by the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
as delivered by Mr. Vusal Huseynov,
Chief of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**109th session of the IOM Council
Geneva, 28 November 2018**

**Dear Mr. Chairman,
Dear Director-General,
Excellencies,**

Let me start by congratulating you on your election as the chair of the IOM Council and other members of the Bureau for the forthcoming year.

We also extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. Antonio Vitorino for his election as new IOM Director-General. We are confident that under his stewardship IOM would be able to take further strides in its important activities in the years to come. My delegation also welcomes Uzbekistan and International Emergency Development Aid and International Monetary Fund as the newest member and observers of the Council respectively.

Azerbaijan notes with satisfaction that IOM is growing, not only in terms of expansion of its membership but also in its visibility and communication within the UN system and to the world at large. The decision made in 2016 to integrate IOM into the UN system was significant step forward which paved the way for IOM's experience and expertise to strengthen the UN's approach towards international migration.

As a truly global lead agency on migration, IOM is uniquely positioned to promote orderly migration globally not least by providing states with technical and policy support in migration management, including capacity building but also by facilitating dialogue on migration at the national, regional and global levels thus contributing to enhancing international cooperation in this field. In doing so, we see critical importance for IOM to preserve its essential characteristics being as a responsive, efficient, cost-effective and non-normative agency, which we put great value on.

Today globalization process occurring in the world has prioritized management of migration with flexible mechanisms. The number of migrants, as well as refugees and IDPs in the world has reached the record level. Guided with the "No one should be left behind" principle in the context of Sustainable Development Goals reflected in "the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" which was adopted in the UN summit held in September 2015, countries should eradicate all the forms of poverty, take measures against inequalities and spare no effort in this direction. As a cross-cutting issue migration is reflected in SDG's. 11 out of 17 goals contain targets and indicators that are relevant to migration or mobility. This in its turn once again manifests the important contribution of migration into global development.

For the successful implementation of Sustainable Development Goals strong partnership should be established among governments, private sector and civil society. This partnership should encompass everyone, should be at global, regional and national levels, based on principles and values that meet the interest of all the stakeholders, as well as shared view of the future and common goals. In this context we highly appreciate and rely on the support of IOM.

Good governance of migration processes, elaboration and implementation of comprehensive migration policy, as well as regulation of these processes in compliance with the national interests of the country is one of the priorities for the Republic of Azerbaijan. In the context of ongoing globalization our country pursues active migration policy in order to regulate the migration flows in and out of the country, to reduce the negative impact of migration processes occurring in the region and to manage the migration processes in accordance with the national legislation.

We fully acknowledge the added value of strong partnerships in terms of managing migration. Because a cross border phenomenon like migration can be only managed properly if there is a strong will and commitment towards collaboration among countries.

It is extremely important to increase efforts of the international community to study the role of the internal migration flows in its impact on international migratory movements. At the same time, there is a greater risk of cross-border migration and irregularity for internally displaced persons and vulnerable groups. Therefore, special attention and approach towards such persons should be considered as a preventive tool against illegal migration.

We strongly believe that solution of problems of migrants, especially problems of refugees and IDPs can be possible through solidarity, fight against xenophobia and committed joint efforts.

Azerbaijan as a country committed to promote and facilitate legal migration has taken sound steps in this regard. Electronic visa system which is called "ASAN visa" introduced in January of the last year enables nationals of approximately 100 countries to obtain electronic visa in 3 days and even in 3 hours in urgent cases. This also corresponds with SDG target 10.7 which envisages facilitation of safe, orderly and responsible migration and mobility.

We would like to highlight the importance of raising awareness among migrants about the migration procedures, their rights and responsibilities as well. Besides promoting legal migration, awareness-raising can be an effective tool to combat irregular migration. Because in most cases migrants end up in irregular situation because for simply not being aware of legal requirements and procedures in the country of destination. We strongly believe that informed migration can have a distinctive role in preventing irregular migration, which can be successful only through close and efficient partnerships among all the stakeholders of migration.

Azerbaijan enjoys excellent cooperation with IOM as a key partner of the Government of Azerbaijan in sphere of migration. IOM successfully contributes to improving capacities of government agencies responsible for migration management, including combating irregular migration and trafficking in human beings, reintegration of returned migrants, protection of the migrant rights. We have a number of joint projects, including the Pilot Project on Assisted Voluntary Return of Migrants from Azerbaijan implemented in partnership with IOM. We look forward to further developing this mutually beneficial cooperation, which should continue being practical and result-oriented.

In close collaboration with IOM, we are also promoting and developing the public-private partnership in Azerbaijan in the context of migration management. Public sector in Azerbaijan is engaged, for instance, in awareness-raising campaigns to prevent and combat trafficking or supports shelters assisting victims of trafficking, to name just few.

All of us are speedily approaching the historical momentum when the international community has to adopt the Global Compact on Migration next month in Marrakesh. While looking forward for its adoption, Azerbaijan reiterates that IOM's extensive experience and expertise in all aspects of migration is instrumental to ensure an operational compact. We would like to see a central, coordinating and catalytic role for IOM in the follow-up of to the compact and also salute that IOM has been entrusted with the task coordinating UN Network on Migration and serving as its secretariat. The Government of Azerbaijan organized 6 consultation sessions on the Global Compact on Migration in Azerbaijan with the participation of state agencies, academia, civil society and the mass media. The consultations covered areas such as protection of migrants, migration, environment and climate change, comprehensive and effective policy and practices in migration governance, protection of the migrant rights, as well as prevention of migrant smuggling and human trafficking. We are currently working on a new national migration strategy which would also include goals envisaged by the Global Compact on Migration. Yet once again I would like to re-emphasize the support and contribution of IOM which we enjoy in this regard.

Excellencies,

We must not forget that majority of the world's forcibly displaced population are internally displaced persons. My country of 10 million has gone through the expulsion of around 700 thousand IDPs after the occupation of our territories by Armenia, which made them one of the largest IDP population per capita in the world. The lack of legitimate control over these territories also increases the risks of migrant smuggling and human trafficking in our region, as well as poses a threat to global dimensions of migration.

Thus, we strongly support IOM's strong engagement with the internal displacement crisis the globe faces. It is our firm belief that while moving ahead with more comprehensive response in forced displacement situations, we must redouble our efforts to tackle its root causes. We welcome the panel discussion on IDPs that will be held within the current session tomorrow and stand ready to actively contribute to it.

Mr. Chairman,

This is my first address from such a high platform as the Chief of the State Migration Service of Azerbaijan. Therefore, availing myself of this opportunity I would like to underline that Azerbaijan is committed and open to cooperation with all the stakeholders involved in migration to maximize its positive impact.

Thank you for your attention.