

Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands –109th IOM Council Meeting – speaking time 5:00.

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Thank you Mister Chair. The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and adds the following in its national capacity.

First, I would like to thank Director-General Vitorino for guiding us through the first Council under his leadership. Let me also extend a warm welcome to our new member, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and those who have obtained observership.

Mister Chair, for the Netherlands, IOM remains a key partner in the field of migration. We value the concrete progress achieved in several of our priority areas, including data collection and analysis, counter-trafficking and assisted voluntary return. The DG's report to this Council is a testimony to the broad range of IOM's activities to assist people on the move and their countries of origin, transit and destination. The Netherlands wishes to express its sincere admiration and appreciation for these efforts.

Over the past year, we have been especially grateful for the action that IOM and its partners have taken to address the challenges posed by mixed migration flows. For example in Libya, where, despite the very challenging circumstances, IOM has been able to assist and evacuate 15.000 vulnerable migrants and to improve conditions in detention centres. We particularly

commend IOM's cooperation with UNHCR in this regard. The Netherlands calls for the continuation of these efforts and for further cooperation to ensure the closure of the detention centres.

We also sincerely appreciate IOM's work in response to the Venezuela situation, which worsened significantly in the past year, resulting in a humanitarian crisis that is unprecedented in the region. IOM's efforts to provide direct assistance to those in need and to support host countries are commendable, as are its key role and close collaboration with partners. The Netherlands has just made a contribution of 4 million euro to IOM to further support these efforts. This contribution reflects our belief that cooperation and coordination are essential if we are to comprehensively address the issue of mixed migration.

Mister Chair, IOM has played an important role in the development of the Global Compact on Migration. This agreement provides an opportunity to address the root causes of irregular migration, to manage migration in a sustainable way and to improve the position of migrants, in full cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination.

We look forward to more engagement with the UN Migration Network, of which the structure was presented yesterday, and we are fully confident that IOM, as the Network's coordinator, will ensure the efficiency and impact of its work.

We believe these developments demand a new, more strategic policy role from IOM to complement its operational efforts. I say ‘complement’ because it is our view that there is no contradiction between preserving IOM’s essential characteristics, such as its efficiency and flexibility, while also developing its policy capacity. Indeed, IOM’s vast field experience would make its strategic policy advice immensely useful.

In order to achieve such fundamental organisational changes, IOM requires the support of its member states. In this respect, we welcome IOM’s engagement in the framework of the MOPAN-assessment, for which the Netherlands, together with Sweden, is the institutional lead. We believe its outcomes will help strengthen IOM’s overall performance and we hope IOM will use them in the development of its new strategy.

The Netherlands values the continuation of IOM’s leading role on improving migration management worldwide, preventing human trafficking and smuggling and ensuring the protection of human rights of all people on the move. We are therefore pleased to announce a core contribution of 6.6 million euros for 2018 and 2019, on top of our ongoing support for specific programmes. This should enable IOM to strengthen its institutional capacity for a strategic and coordinating role in the field of migration. Our contribution acknowledges many years of highly-valued cooperation and will surely also reinforce our cooperation in the years to come.

Mister Chair, in closing I would like to thank DG Vitorino for his comprehensive report to this Council. The Netherlands encourages IOM to continue its good work. You may be assured of our full support.