COUNCIL

110th Session

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE

110TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

Mr António Vitorino

Geneva
26 to 29 November 2019

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE
110TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

Introduction

1. Good morning and welcome to the 110th Session of the IOM Council. I am proud to be here today as I begin my second year in office, reporting on our activities and progress as an organization. This year has passed quickly, but even for this relatively short period, we have much to report, both in terms of what we are doing on the ground, as well as how we are developing as an institution.

2. This year, IOM's budget is projected to exceed USD 2 billion for the first time, an increase of 13 per cent on the 2018 budget. Correlated to this, IOM's staff, as of June 2019, numbered 13,844, an increase of 21 per cent on a year earlier. This growth is, for any organization, extraordinary. For IOM, however, it represents a double-edged sword.

3. On the one hand, the need for our work in the field – whether responding to crisis situations or building capacity to respond to growing mobility – is expanding. On the other hand, this demand is placing further strain on the Organization's core functions. In 2018, I noted that IOM, as an institution, had outgrown its structures. We are clearly popular and essential, yet fragile. In the present scenario, the current proposal for the 2020 budget reflects that only 1.5 per cent of the staff posts of the Organization are funded from assessed contributions, increasing pressure on Operational Support Income to cover essential functions and services. This reinforces the need to address these limitations with the Member States, and I look forward to your active involvement in these discussions.

4. These challenges are at the heart of the Administration's work during 2019 to establish two parallel processes of reform. I have led a process to develop an overarching vision for the Organization, setting a course for IOM to meet the demands of the next decade of migration. At the same time, the Deputy Director General has been central to the development of the Internal Governance Framework, designed to strengthen our internal processes to meet the requirements of a modern, fit-for-purpose organization.

5. In both these endeavours, our orientation phase is complete. You have received the final version of our five-year Strategic Vision (C/110/INF/1), and our most recent update on the application of the Internal Governance Framework (S/25/INF/1). We are now working towards the complex, multilayered process of implementation, for which I hope we can count on your support. I will return to this later.

Key activities in 2019

Resilience

6. As much of our growth indicates, IOM has been active in responding to acute new – and long-standing – humanitarian situations, with over 30 million IOM beneficiaries in 2018, an upward trend that continued throughout 2019.

7. Across the world, crisis situations continue to emerge or remain unresolved, displacing millions from their homes, with few prospects for swift resolution. Displacement levels thus remain staggering across many parts of the world. Internal displacement situations have become protracted, with few exceptions, and continue to require large-scale responses. Migrants also continue to suffer from

tremendous abuse and hardship in some key contexts. The proliferation of these situations is challenging to organizations such as IOM in a number of ways.

8.   First, IOM, as is the case for the broader international humanitarian community, is seeking record levels of humanitarian financing in order to respond to multiple crises around the world. While the scale of IOM operations has grown tremendously in some key contexts in recent years, including in Bangladesh, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, a significant number of IOM relief and recovery operations also remain critically under-funded, year after year, despite the scale of the needs and severity of the situation of the displaced and their host communities. This includes situations across a large section of Central and West Africa. Such inequity in humanitarian financing poses significant challenges to organizations that seek to deploy their efforts on the basis of needs rather than the relative attention afforded to specific contexts.

9.   Second, in contexts where instability, violence and poverty are rife, more and more people resort to mobility as both a coping and protection mechanism. This has given rise to large movements of Venezuelans across South America and the Caribbean who now number close to 4 million across the subcontinent. In other settings, migrants continue to suffer overwhelmingly from broader instability. In Libya, the situation of migrants remains dire, particularly for those who are placed in detention. Similar situations have consistently arisen in Yemen, where migrants originating from the Horn of Africa often face the abuse of human traffickers.

Box 1. Situation in Libya

Since the beginning of April 2019, there have been airstrikes on military targets and in urban, civilian areas in and around Tripoli. For migrants in urban settings, the situation has become more precarious and dangerous, as the ability to access food, water and power are intermittent and, for those in detention centres, extremely limited. There are currently more than 1.5 million people in the country in need of protection and assistance, including at least 641,000 migrants. IOM estimates that around 5,000 to 6,000 migrants are being held in detention centres across the country. The airstrike on the Tajoura Detention Centre in June this year brought home to all of us the relative helplessness of those detained.

---

10.   In trying to navigate a complex and volatile situation such as Libya, where solutions are scarce, IOM is now considering whether new approaches may be warranted. While the Organization will continue to offer life-saving and other forms of humanitarian assistance to migrants, irrespective of the context in which they find themselves, IOM's engagement should also be based on a more comprehensive approach to the issue of migration to and through Libya, in a manner that respects the prerogatives of the State, while being respectful of migrants' fundamental rights and protection needs.

11.   The deteriorating situation in the Sahel, and the combined adverse effects of poverty, population growth, scarce resources and environmental change and the ongoing threats posed by non-State armed groups, highlights that the volume of outward migration experienced by the subregion is unlikely to diminish in the short term as the impetus to move remains high and those who decide to travel are willing to take enormous risks.

12.   This is one of the reasons why IOM is investing strongly in the resilience of communities in West Africa, including migrants and the internally displaced. It is ever more important that we address situations before they become acute – through development programming and human capital investment – and offer means for individuals to reintegrate and prosper once they have made the difficult decision to return, whether from Libya or elsewhere.

13.   Resilience is also necessary in places where changing climate and extreme weather events are having a deep impact on both short-term displacement and humanitarian response. In Bangladesh, for example, around 1.7 million people were displaced in the first half of this year, the vast majority due to weather-related disasters, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. In addition to addressing this relentless community-level stress, IOM is working with other agencies to support Rohingya refugees living in camps while monsoons, cyclones and flooding events create deep upheaval for a population already at its most vulnerable. Earlier this year, two cyclones – Idai and Kenneth – affected millions of people in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. IOM was part of the front-line response, offering support with respect to shelter, non-food items and camp coordination and camp management. While six months later the number who remain displaced has fallen to a few thousand, crop damage caused by the cyclones has left up to 12 million across Southern Africa severely food insecure, particularly in Zimbabwe. There is a need for greater investment in building the disaster response capacities of national and local authorities to reduce long-term dependence on the international community and the longer-term impacts of sudden and extreme events.

14.   However, access can also be a challenge. The fragility in parts of the world inhibits IOM from providing full support to some populations. Multiple IOM offices face difficulties in accessing populations in need of assistance, largely as a result of challenges to the safety and security of IOM staff and operations. The tragic killing of IOM health workers in South Sudan last month was a stark reminder of the challenging circumstances faced by our IOM teams on the ground. Those adverse circumstances extend to such locations as Afghanistan, Somalia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Yemen. Throughout the world, working conditions for IOM staff continue to worsen, a particular challenge given IOM's deep field presence. Without respect for the fundamental principles that underpin our collective action, solutions cannot be achieved.

15.   In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the resumption of violence in the eastern part of the country earlier this year not only displaced thousands of people, but the lack of access for humanitarian workers also limited critical support, not least in Ebola-affected areas of the country.

Box 2. Ebola virus disease

As at 30 June 2019, 2,338 Ebola virus disease cases and 1,571 deaths had been reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. IOM works across borders to address health crises that do not respect the scope of State sovereignty. The Organization is a critical actor in monitoring and surveillance: between February and June this year over 33.2 million travellers were screened by IOM at points of entry and points of control. This work, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and health organizations, brings home the need for continued international solidarity, particularly when operating in a context of weak governance and instability.

---

16.   Responding concurrently to such a large number of situations, in often very difficult operating environments, with limited access and local capacities, has presented considerable challenges for IOM; it has also forced the Organization to invest in establishing more effective approaches – with greater resources allocated towards areas such as emergency preparedness, early warning mechanisms and capacity-building. These efforts go hand in hand with IOM's commitments to the Grand Bargain, which remain relevant, and organization-wide institutional efforts to build a more effective and efficient IOM.

17.   Nonetheless, while political solutions may be a distant reality, IOM has continued to assist displaced persons and affected communities in progress towards durable solutions.

Box 3. IOM assistance for displaced persons

In 2019, IOM has assisted more than 98,000 displaced persons to reintegrate into their places of origin, 266,000 to locally integrate into the place of displacement and 29,000 to integrate elsewhere. Access to sustainable employment and livelihoods is often also a central component of IOM's transition and recovery work, which seeks to integrate individual support with community- and local-level initiatives to build capacity and address identified barriers. Active community engagement contributes to social cohesion and peacebuilding, laying the foundations for longer-term development and stability across diverse settings. This work forms part of IOM's overall approach to the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

---

18.   Many of the situations to which IOM has responded are emergency situations. While unpredictable, they are not however unforeseen. Our responses are increasingly informed by our previous experiences on the ground and the data we collect. The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) was deployed in 66 countries during the first half of 2019, tracking the movement of over 24 million internally displaced persons, and has become the standard for monitoring levels of internal displacement within the humanitarian sector. In addition, the DTM has begun to integrate protection and gender-based violence indicators into its operations, which allows for the identification of particularly vulnerable groups. This is critical in fast-paced situations, for fast response.

Mobility

19.   In the Southern American region, IOM is working closely with those governments hosting Venezuelan nationals to ensure the safety and protection of those on the move, while also responding to the needs of those governments to help them identify how many, and who, are in their countries. While this is a crisis situation of epic proportions for the region, evidenced at the International Solidarity Conference held last month in Brussels, we should also take note of some of the innovative policies and practices which have emerged as a result.

20.   For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, IOM has worked with the Government to register 29,000 Venezuelan nationals who have been residing irregularly within the country. Through this programme, these individuals gain legal status and access to the labour market and public services, while the Government gains a far better understanding of who is residing in the country. IOM is now running a similar programme in Ecuador, where nearly 180,000 individuals have been registered. In this regard, IOM has proposed a regional identification card, under the auspices of the Quito Process, which would also minimize risks to those on the move and particularly their vulnerability to smugglers and traffickers.

21.   IOM has also been working with governments and local authorities in the region – including in Argentina, Brazil and Peru – to facilitate access to social services and integration for migrants and refugees.

Box 4. Community and migrant engagement in Latin America

IOM offices in Latin America have developed integrated models to address integration barriers, through creating opportunities for communities and new arrivals to engage, building intercultural competences of communities and service providers and setting up one-stop service centres in arrival communities to facilitate access to mainstream services. For example, in Argentina, three migrant resource centres have been established to support arrivals at city level. In Brazil, a federal government plan to relocate individuals from the overstretched municipalities of Pacaraima and Boa Vista to other regions of the country is being accelerated. To date 14,643 Venezuelan nationals, mostly families, have been relocated across several cities in Brazil.

---

22.   This kind of capacity-building is core to IOM's work. For example, in June 2019 nearly half of IOM offices reported that they were supporting governments to develop and improve labour market frameworks and practices. In Zambia, IOM offered technical assistance for the institution of safeguards and bilateral labour agreements for the protection of Zambian nationals working abroad. In Fiji, IOM established a labour market information system for Kiribati and Tuvalu.

23.   During the first half of this year, IOM provided training and technical assistance to more than 45,000 government, civil society and private sector partners, as well as local community leaders, to strengthen the protection of migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse, such as victims of trafficking. This is vital. Too often we witness manageable situations descending into crisis owing to a lack of capacity. Even today, many countries lack the basic reception and support capabilities to manage new arrivals or cater for specific needs, particularly those of unaccompanied minors. IOM's work in this area is not always on the front line, but is framed as quiet diplomacy, offering advice to help governments develop more robust planning and programming.

24.   As the recent tragedy in the United Kingdom reminds us, we must remain vigilant to the dangers of smuggling and trafficking of people and the potentially horrendous outcomes. IOM has been working with authorities in both the United Kingdom and Viet Nam to counter trafficking, demonstrating the need to take a joined-up approach with authorities in origin, transit and destination countries; and not just governments. The IOM CREST initiative – Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking – demonstrates the power of private sector actors in promoting ethical recruitment and stronger standards in supply chain management across Asia.

Box 5. Partnerships to promote responsible recruitment

In the first half of 2019, the IOM CREST initiative implemented partnership projects with 14 international companies involving 22 countries. These partnerships included direct technical assistance provided to brands, employers and labour recruiters, engagement with migrant workers and multi-stakeholder dialogues with civil society and governments. An example of this collaboration is the partnership between IOM and Adidas, initiated in January 2019, to promote responsible recruitment and fair treatment of migrant workers.

---

25.   We cannot simply consider migrants as beneficiaries of our work; they should also be viewed as empowered partners in establishing new futures and contributing to sustainable development more broadly. The IOM Strategic Vision sets out the importance of human capital development and job creation. Supported by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, IOM is beginning to see the fruits of that investment with the creation of livelihood activities for some 30,000 West Africans, both returning migrants and others in the broader communities.

Box 6. Migrant protection and reintegration in Africa

Since the beginning of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in May 2017, IOM has assisted over 78,000 migrants with post-arrival reception and reintegration support across the three windows of North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel and Lake Chad regions. For example, in Daloa, Côte d'Ivoire, IOM has worked with the Government to assist 220 people in establishing a waste management cooperative. In Ethiopia, IOM and UNICEF are helping the Government respond to the immediate needs of returned unaccompanied children, such as shelter, psychosocial support, family tracing and reunification, and reintegration. However, IOM's work is not simply about return dynamics; it is also about supporting communities to adapt existing practices to changing realities, such as the movements of nomadic herders and others who frequently cross borders.

Governance

26.   It should come as no surprise that many of the issues that I have outlined so far are reflected in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This reinforces that, for us, the Global Compact is a very relevant guiding marker of progress that is already being undertaken by States and can be a key tool for governments to further focus their investments. In this regard, IOM has already been offering technical and policy support to governments – both national and local – as well as building cooperation with other United Nations agencies.

Box 7. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

In the first six months of 2019, IOM provided technical and policy support to 84 national governments and 13 local governments with respect to the operationalization of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. For example, following IOM assistance, Azerbaijan has conceptualized a new migration management strategy in line with the Global Compact, which will be used by the Government to implement its Global Compact commitments.

---

27.   Partnership with governments is not the only means of realizing stronger migration governance; indeed, IOM is witnessing, and supporting, greater collaboration between governments, whether through regional consultative processes or other regional governance structures. We are also increasing our engagement with civil society groups. In this context, I look forward to the next summit meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which will take place in Quito in January next year, hosted by the Government of Ecuador.

28.   With migration highlighted as a key megatrend by the United Nations, IOM has also been active in cross-cutting conversations. At the Climate Action Summit, held during the General Assembly week in New York, IOM, alongside the Governments of Portugal and Fiji, co-hosted a ministerial breakfast to discuss the situation of small island and developing States, outlining the critical need to respond to build resilience within the most affected populations.

29.   During the same week, IOM welcomed the landmark Political Declaration on universal health coverage with its explicit mention of the particular needs of migrants and recognition of critical migration-relevant issues such as complex emergencies, climate change and international migration of health workers.

30.   Next year, IOM will give active support, alongside the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement, which was launched by the United Nations Secretary-General last month. This is a unique opportunity to tackle the protracted nature of internal displacement, identify best practices and work towards durable solutions.

31.   At country level, IOM is actively engaging in United Nations reform, working with other agencies to ensure migration is fully integrated into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. In this regard, the establishment of the United Nations Network on Migration has been key to promoting coherence at all levels.

32.   We have made solid progress in setting up the Network during the course of 2019. A fuller briefing to Member States is scheduled for 12 December where we will have the opportunity to review our efforts this year while also looking ahead to next year. The process of establishing coordination structures at the country and regional levels is intensifying. I have always maintained that the key to our work will be the extent to which we can ensure the Network is viable where it matters most – on the ground, supported where appropriate by strong, responsive headquarters expertise. In 2020, I expect to see signs of this new way of working coming together for tangible results, which I will elaborate on later.

33.   And lastly, good governance of migration is more difficult without strong knowledge and evidence on the changing dynamics and drivers of migration. In this regard, IOM is consolidating its position to provide essential data. Tomorrow we will launch the 2020 edition of IOM's flagship publication, the World Migration Report. By their very nature, the complex dynamics of global migration can never be fully measured, understood and regulated. However, as the report shows, we do have a continually growing and improving body of data and information that can help us make better sense of the basic features of migration in increasingly uncertain times.

Building IOM for the future

34.   Looking forward, the two processes I have launched in 2019 – to strengthen internal governance and to set a strategic direction for the Organization – will now begin to bear fruit. As noted at the most recent meeting of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, we will build a stronger IOM through investments in internal justice – including tackling sexual exploitation and abuse – which will continue in 2020. We will build a more effective IOM by embarking on a business transformation process. We will build a more strategic IOM by developing regional and thematic strategies derived from the five-year Strategic Vision and be ready to take on the challenges of the next decade.

35.   I would like to set out more concrete timelines for implementation for both the Internal Governance Framework and the Strategic Vision. First, however, I wish to emphasize that IOM is not starting from scratch. For example, IOM may not have an innovation strategy, but innovation is already built into the DNA of the Organization. For IOM staff, innovation is merely the problem-solving they undertake every day, overcoming barriers which traditional practices cannot overcome. IOM does not need to reinvent the wheel in every part of its work – and particularly not its operational effectiveness, which has made it such an essential partner – but rather ensure that the full value of IOM's knowledge and expertise is leveraged for the good of those we serve.

36.   As I indicated at the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, IOM's enterprise resource planning system will reach the end of its functional life at the end of 2025, and the Organization is taking this opportunity to embark on a major business transformation process. The planning for this transformation has already begun under the auspices of the Internal Governance Framework. The solution must enable our objectives of increased responsiveness, transparency, control and informed decision-making. In addition to the technology solutions, a comprehensive set of work will be required to align policies and procedures.

Box 8. Business transformation in IOM

With a project of this complexity, which will redefine our way of providing services to the field in areas such as risk management, finance management and human resources management, to name but a few, a thorough planning process will precede the construction and delivery of the defined solution through to 2022, with the aim of going live in 2023. This will be accompanied by mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the delivered solutions.

We will look to further embrace cloud-based technologies, where applicable, so as to decrease project risk, and to enable phased cycles of implementation which will allow the delivery of some benefits even before the core enterprise resource planning system has been fully deployed.

---

37.   To ensure the Organization is ready for the new work methods and systems, a comprehensive change management programme will be integrated from the beginning. This work will initially involve communications and dialogue with our regional and country offices and administrative centres to gain mutual understanding and ensure that the solutions developed meet the goal of improving field operations.

38.   From the Strategic Vision we have derived a series of strategic objectives, which are now being translated into a second-generation results-based management framework which will ensure that IOM's work can be mapped against key documents such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. While much of the organizational change that we seek to embed will be hard to capture, through this new results-based system, we will endeavour to support IOM staff to report on their work at a time when reporting requirements within the United Nations system have increased, while also measuring progress towards realizing the Strategic Vision.

39.   In terms of implementation, there are three broad components:

●   Foundational cross-cutting elements;

●   Regional-level strategy development;

●   Thematic and institutional strategy development.

40.   The foundational elements are closely linked to the Internal Governance Framework and are key enablers of the Strategic Vision. First, there is a need to enhance IOM's capabilities, from developing IT systems to support knowledge management and data analysis, to developing more comprehensive results-based management, monitoring and evaluation. Second, any deep organizational change requires both a change in the mindset within an organization, as well as support to develop new skills for those in key positions. We are already seeing teams across IOM reflect on how the three pillars of the Strategic Vision – resilience, mobility and governance – may affect how they approach their area of work. It is – right now – a testament to IOM staff commitment that many are still working on strategic development in addition to their daily work. The lights burn late in IOM offices.

41.   IOM's staff will need to have the time and resources to invest in the reflection and engagement that will be demanded of IOM in the future as a thought leader. The Policy Hub, launched in April this year, is one key enabler of this process, supporting staff in possession of unique field expertise to develop organization-wide learning from their activities, underwritten in many cases by unearmarked and flexible funding.

42.   At this moment, a series of regional and subregional strategies are being developed across the Organization which draw from both the priorities set out in the Strategic Vision and the realities on the ground at field level. This process is designed to align regional strategies to cover the same 2020–2024 period, following a broad template, while respecting regional contexts and specificities. In addition, IOM is developing a pan-African strategy, which will offer a more strategic perspective on the Organization's engagement in the continent and engagement with key regional governance structures such as the African Union. These strategies will then inform country-level planning and offer a framework for offices to provide constructive input and framing within United Nations country teams.

43.   Lastly, a number of institutional and thematic strategies are being developed across the Organization, working across programmatic areas.

44.   IOM's data strategy is currently in draft form, coordinated by the Policy Hub, with a view to finalization in early 2020. The strategy sets out key objectives in three areas – strengthening the global evidence base on migration, developing the capacity of States and other partners to enhance the migration evidence base, and enhancing the use of migration data for evidence-based programming and policy advice – and combines these with a series of proposed initiatives to realize them. As with all the global-level strategies, the data strategy is taking a phased and modular approach: setting lofty and aspirational objectives, but developing realistic means of attainment.

45.   With respect to knowledge management, the Policy Hub has been collecting and mapping existing means of developing "collective intelligence" across IOM and offering support to initiatives across the Organization that are designed to bring knowledge together. In addition to this, a migration policy repository which collates all the policy work that IOM has undertaken in recent years is currently being piloted, with full roll-out expected in early 2020.

46.   At the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance last month, my colleagues presented IOM's first thematic strategy, the Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development. This will now move into its implementation phase, while a series of other strategies, on environmental change and migration, identity management, and resettlement, inter alia, begin to be articulated. Not all of IOM's thematic reviews will lead to a strategy. In some cases, as with IOM's ongoing working group to develop IOM's policy on the full spectrum of return, readmission and reintegration, the focus is on bringing together, and clarifying, IOM's institutional position on a complex issue, ensuring that it is reflective of operational realities and changing dynamics.

47.   All of this strategic development may seem – to a cynic – to be navel-gazing at a time when IOM should be looking outwards. In truth, it is a means to ensure that IOM's external partnerships rest on stronger foundations. In order to ensure that its operational work is most effective, IOM needs to understand what works, and what does not. In order to participate fully in United Nations reform – and propose necessary development programming on the ground – IOM needs to understand its own long-term objectives. Through this strategic development, IOM will be able to contribute more robustly to the United Nations system as a whole, respond more effectively to the requests of Member States and meet the needs of migrants worldwide.

48.   As the United Nations approaches its 75th anniversary and contemplates its future role, such thought leadership from IOM can only be timely.

49.   As you can see, 2020 will be a busy year and one in which strong management and leadership will be key. In a couple of weeks, we will mark the one-year anniversary of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and host the first annual meeting of the United Nations Network on Migration. The foundations for the Network which have been laid in 2019, with the establishment of the Secretariat, the Migration Fund and emerging regional and national networks, offer encouraging signs for 2020. The principals of its Executive Committee met recently in New York. This is clearly a shared system endeavour. I was gratified by – and grateful for – the clear sense I took away from that meeting of the commitment of my colleagues to make this Network truly come to life.

50.   The Migration Fund will be an important tool to embed the work of the Network at regional and national level. I am very grateful to those donors who have expressed a commitment to contribute thus far. I look forward, as well, to the first meeting of the Fund steering committee on 10 December. The broad representation on the committee is a commendable reflection of the recognition in the Global Compact that our work on migration can only benefit from the input of all concerned.

51.   It is my belief that 2020 will see further contributions from the United Nations system in advancing our understanding of how to tackle some of migration's most complex issues: in a manner which is practical and principled, grounded in international law and ensuring, at its heart, particular concern for the most vulnerable. It will be important that in 2020 we are able to demonstrate visible gains – in support of Member States and our partners – through this new way of working.

52.   Yet for us to be successful in all of these endeavours, we need your support, and I must tell you that we will need more than rhetoric. The Strategic Vision for IOM that we have set out and the proposals for strengthening internal governance require investment. In 2020, I wish to begin a conversation about the sustainability of IOM's budget, and options for reform. With our core budget

now just 2.5 per cent of the total, IOM has reached the outer limit of what it can achieve without further investment. I wish to thank, sincerely, all those States that have contributed unearmarked and flexible funds to IOM to allow us to embark on a process of revitalization. And I hope that you will continue to trust – and invest – in us based on what you have heard here today.

53.   We also need your support to reinforce the top leadership within IOM, so that we can realize our ambitions.

This week at the IOM Council

54.   We have a packed agenda, and I have already spoken too much. I am looking forward to our discussions over the next four days and the fascinating panel discussions which will elaborate on key topics close to my heart: long-term solutions for the internally displaced, the complex migration situation in the Sahel and, of course, the launch of the "paperless" World Migration Report. (A USB key containing the report – very environmentally friendly – is on your desks.)

55.   It is a privilege to lead this Organization into its next phase of consolidation, development and success at a time when our work is ever more important and central to our collective endeavour to ensure that migration is safe, well-managed and for the benefit of all. I count on your support for this.