

## **110<sup>th</sup> IOM Council Statement from the United States of America**

*Full statement, submitted to IOM*

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, and Distinguished Colleagues:

I wish to begin by recognizing IOM for its service around the globe to member states and to people in crisis. IOM has provided invaluable partnership in some of the most difficult operating environments time and again. IOM's strength is in its flexibility and adaptability which allows it to work with governments to respond to humanitarian crises and to develop safe, orderly, and legal migration processes while fully respecting states' sovereign rights to manage and control their borders, consistent with their international obligations.

I congratulate Ambassador Jespersen and the rest of the Council Bureau on their election to the IOM Council Bureau and I welcome Lebanon as the newest IOM member state and all new observers. As members of the IOM Council, our challenge – and our charge throughout the coming year – is to be responsible stewards of this important and unique organization, to set it up for success, so that IOM is a more resilient partner.

We know we must protect the unique characteristics that drive IOM's success and have enabled its growth: its adaptability, its operational focus, and its non-normative status. At the same time, we are now at an important crossroads. As IOM member states, we have the opportunity to move forward on two important management challenges: first, modernizing IOM senior leadership structures, and second, supporting IOM's efforts to refine and implement its internal governance systems, both which will contribute to strengthening IOM's efficiency and effectiveness.

First, on modernizing IOM senior leadership structures - Director General Vitorino has made a clear appeal to the IOM member states for additional senior leadership positions. The U.S. Government supports the Director General's proposal and urges states to agree upon a solution that uses a competitive, merit-based process to

provide IOM with a cohesive leadership team at the top of the organization for years to come.

IOM's programmatic budget has grown by more than 500 percent in the past twenty years, and much of this work is implemented in increasingly complex operational environments. However, the leadership structures have remained unchanged. IOM needs qualified senior leaders that can focus on the management and the operations of the organization. In pursuing such structural reform, we also encourage IOM to continue striving for the increased presence of women among its senior leadership, both for the Organization's benefit and to project a tone of gender parity from the top.

Second, on internal governance systems, IOM's internal governance structures have been similarly strained by immense growth of the organization. As member states, IOM is our organization, and we must ensure its core structures are fit and scaled for purpose. The internal governance framework outlined by Deputy Director General Thompson this past spring identifies gaps that require urgent attention and action from the IOM administration and IOM's member states.

IOM's internal justice system – including the Office of the Inspector General, the Legal Advisor, and the Office of Human Resources – is overstretched and in need of urgent reform. Supporting sufficient independent investigatory capacity to examine claims of fraud and abuse, and thus prevent further malfeasance, is a fundamental underpinning of any organization. Failure to invest in these basic functions creates a tremendous risk for IOM, and us, the member states. We appreciate efforts IOM has undertaken to better support internal justice, including launching the *We Are All In* reporting initiative in August. In fact, the United States is supporting internal justice reform efforts by providing earmarked funding to initiate some of these changes – but this is just the beginning of an essential journey.

We call upon IOM member states, the Director General and his senior administration to engage in a comprehensive dialogue on the internal governance framework that includes detailed implementation plans, funding needs, and benchmarks of success. We encourage the IOM Council Chair to lead the IOM

member states in discussions on the Internal Governance Framework within the IOM budget reform working group. This working group should consider a full menu of options to support the internal governance structures of IOM, including prioritizing funding from overhead income for management and support functions.

The Strategic vision shared last week and in the Director General's presentation this morning adds to this busy agenda. The scope of this document has expanded beyond that of an internal document discussed last Spring. As a member state-led organization, IOM member states play an invaluable role in setting the agenda and direction of the organization. We therefore also ask that the IOM Council Chair and the IOM administration lead discussions on this proposed strategic vision in the IOM working group on IOM-UN relations and related issues.

Mr. Chairman, Director General, Fellow Member States,

The United States has been a strong supporter of IOM since it was established in 1951. The preamble to IOM's Constitution acknowledges the need to ensure orderly migration, and this is as true today as it was in 1951. We appreciate IOM as a strategic partner working with every member state in different ways to advance shared goals of legal, orderly, and safe migration, and we look forward to working closely with other member states to achieve the goal of a stronger and more enduring organization

Thank you.