



B E L A R U S

STATEMENT

by His Excellency Yury Ambrazevich
Permanent Representative of Belarus
to the UN Office at Geneva
111th session of the IOM Council
General debate

Mr. President,

Director-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, the delegation of Belarus would like to thank the Director-General for his annual report.

As many speakers have already stated, the past year was marked by the **serious challenge** posed to the world by the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

In this regard we cannot but praise the International Organization for Migration for its proactive involvement in responding to the pandemic, not least by launching in February its hallmark initiative – **the Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19**, which was aligned to national priorities of affected states.

Belarus very much appreciates **the Organization's efforts to deliver on its mandate at this very difficult**

time, when nations closed their borders and when migrants too often became victims of violence, xenophobia and discrimination.

We commend the **IOM's assistance** rendered during the acute phase of the pandemic crisis to **thousands of most vulnerable people, especially victims of trafficking in persons**.

As for our national response to the pandemic, **we in Belarus have successfully found the balance** that allowed us, on the one hand, to optimally maintain the viability of the state, primarily its economy, and, on the other hand, to protect people from the pandemic to the maximum extent possible.

Importantly, we did not use the pandemic crisis to erect barriers for the international agencies operating in the country. Indeed, all international agencies represented in Belarus, including the IOM, continued to fulfill their mandates effectively.

In particular, we continued to work closely to implement the IOM's landmark 3-year project titled *"Helping Belarus Address the Phenomenon of Increasing Numbers of Irregular Migrants"*, which has been financially supported by the European Union.

We are glad that despite the pandemic crisis the IOM continued its important work related to the implementation of the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**.

In particular, we praise the activities of **the UN Network on Migration**, led by the IOM Director-General, and its vital contribution to organizing the regional reviews on the Compact's implementation. By the way, **Belarus has submitted its national voluntary report** as an input to the European regional review, held on 12-13 November.

Mr. President,

The Global Compact sets out a number of important practically-oriented measures to deal with the **consequences** of migration. This work, however, may ultimately prove to be futile **unless we address the root causes**.

Indeed, according to the Global Compact, there are **various drivers and structural factors** that underlie migration.

War and conflict are certainly among those. Unfortunately, **the UN Security Council** far too often cannot intervene to resolve them, because of disagreements among **great powers**.

Over the past several years, Belarus has vigorously advocated the need for a **global comprehensive security dialogue**.

We believe that such a dialogue should bring about more constructive international relations, which will allow us to restrain war and conflict, and, thus, to attenuate the challenge of forced displacement.

Thank you for your kind attention.