

**STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON MISSING PERSONS
AT THE 111TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

Excellences,

Director-General,

Distinguished Council Members,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the 111th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on behalf of the Commissioners and Director-General of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP).

After gaining observer status last year, ICMP is eager to contributing actively to the deliberations of the Council and to the further strengthening of cooperation with IOM.

On 8 March 2013, IOM and ICMP concluded a Cooperation Agreement to facilitate acting in close collaboration on matters of common interest. Since then, the issue of migrants who have disappeared or gone missing in large numbers has been one of the areas of common interest on which our organizations have consulted closely and extended mutual support.

Addressing the issue of disappearances on migratory routes is an important facet of upholding human dignity and the rule of law globally and for all persons. Establishing a sustainable process to account for missing migrants is possible. Key steps can be undertaken to reach this goal, and cooperation with IOM and other international agencies remains essential to its achievement. These steps include:

- Fostering stronger cooperation among governments and others involved;
- Building the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and families;
- Promoting joint solutions for the processing and exchange of collected data among government authorities, international and other organizations, CSOs, and other actors; and
- Improving scientific capacity to handle the issue, including through assistance in DNA testing and matching.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the extent of human vulnerability and created uncertainty over the fate of large numbers of people. As the current COVID-19 pandemic takes its toll, reports from around the globe reveal a new and growing missing persons problem, including in the context of migration. As the only specialized international organization mandated to work exclusively on the issue of missing persons, ICMP remains attentive to any development regarding this problem and ready to support government authorities and others to account for missing persons; in taking this endeavour, interagency cooperation is a core element, including in relation to missing migrants.

ICMP looks forward to closer cooperation with IOM, and we are confident that the partnership between our two organizations will advance the security and wellbeing of persons that we are mandated to help, including in these difficult times.

I would like to thank the Director-General for providing this opportunity for ICMP to address the Council. And I would like to thank all of you for your attention.