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**DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE
112TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL**

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Introduction

1. Excellencies, I have the pleasure of delivering this statement on the second day of our Council session, after we have already engaged in serious discussion on the key challenges facing travel, migration and mobility in the context of a pandemic still affecting us all. I thank you all for your commitment and collaboration on this important topic. IOM has heard your concerns. We will continue working with you to ensure that public health is fully integrated into cross-border mobility, as we find ways to re-establish predictable systems for safe, orderly and regular migration for the benefit of all, and ensure that migrants and others on the move receive the support they need.

2. Exchanges such as these are key to linking the work IOM undertakes around the world – from large-scale operations to local, but critical initiatives – to the decisions that are faced by you as governments and stakeholders. As we learn, we hope to pass that learning on to you, and to support choices informed by evidence and the experience IOM can bring.

Mobility

3. As our discussion has amply demonstrated, the impacts of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) are still deeply felt across the world. But they are experienced highly unevenly. Until a few days ago, in some countries, a fragile return to a quasi-normality could be discerned; economies were rebounding, and people were returning to offices, schools and social lives, even while further setbacks, and variants, loomed large. In other parts of the world, life and livelihoods have remained deeply uncertain, and economies under pressure, with little hope of progress in the near-term.

4. We have already spoken about the risks of continued disruption to travel and mobility from ongoing border restrictions, and the need to ensure a level playing field. At IOM, we have two further concerns, which we continue to address through our programming.

5. First, the inclusion of migrants in all programming to aid social and economic recovery, and the need to ensure the continued health and safety of people on the move. This ranges from socioeconomic inclusion in employment, access to welfare support and inclusion in vaccination programming, to efforts to ensure healthy living conditions for migrants and displaced persons across the world.

6. Inclusion can often seem like a sound bite – oft repeated, but rarely realized in full. For IOM, it is a principle we operationalize in all our activities. As special measures put in place by governments to support households come to an end, many migrants remain economically vulnerable, and some are still far from home and stranded.

Box 1. What the pandemic has meant for mobility

As of 1 November, a total of 229 countries, territories and areas had issued 111,456 travel-related measures, a slight increase over the previous month. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the nature of these measures has shifted away from travel restrictions to conditional entry. Today, the majority of measures (85,255) relate to conditions for entry.¹

IOM estimates that by mid-2020 over 3 million people had become stranded around the world. While many have now returned home, others have been prevented from travel. The number of air passengers alone dropped by 60 per cent in 2020 compared with 2019 (down to 1.8 billion from 4.5 billion), and IOM estimates that, as a result of COVID-19, there were around 2 million fewer migrants in 2020 than had been projected. Permanent migration flows to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries alone declined by more than 30 per cent in 2020, falling to the lowest level since 2003. Temporary labour migration also decreased sharply.²

Similarly, lockdowns and mobility restrictions caused global working hours to decline by 8.8 per cent in 2020 (relative to the fourth quarter of 2019). The Group of 20 (G20) countries alone lost the equivalent of 195 million full-time jobs in 2020, which led to a labour income loss of 8.1 per cent (USD 3.2 trillion).³ Migrants have been impacted by job cuts, particularly those working in cyclical sectors such as hospitality and construction, and now generally experience more precarious working conditions.

Despite this, migrants have proved resilient in terms of support, with remittances falling only slightly during 2020 to USD 702 billion, down from USD 718 billion in 2019. Migrants have also proved critical to the COVID-19 response, particularly in the health, agricultural and food service sectors, with some governments making critical exceptions to allow travel for seasonal workers.

7. According to the World Health Organization, if global COVID-19 vaccine supplies had been distributed equitably, the world could have already reached 40 per cent coverage. Instead, we continue to see huge disparity in access, with 51 states that have vaccinated less than 10 per cent of their populations. This is not just an issue of vaccine availability, but also of lack of infrastructure for effective delivery. There is a critical need to bring vaccination directly to local communities and those most in need.

8. IOM's own survey reporting shows that in many countries across the world, migrants are still struggling to access vaccination programming. Of the 177 countries we surveyed, 122 provide COVID-19 vaccination access to regular migrants in practice. But while 67 countries provide access to irregular migrants, the situation for irregular migrants in most countries remains quite unclear in practice.

9. Even in countries where migrants are formally included in programming, there are informal barriers, such as the need for identity documentation and lack of access to information, that inhibit actual vaccine uptake. We are also increasingly concerned that misinformation about the safety of vaccines may further inhibit vaccination within groups most vulnerable to infection, including people on the move.

¹ IOM, Global Mobility Restrictions Overview: Weekly update – 1 November 2021. COVID-19 Mobility Impacts Update Series.

² OECD International Migration Outlook 2021 (Paris, 2021).

³ OECD, International Labour Organization, IOM, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021 Annual International Migration and Forced Displacement Trends and Policies Report to the G20 (2021).

Box 2. IOM COVID-19 vaccination and health support for migrants

IOM is assisting 38 Member States with COVID-19 vaccination efforts for migrants, including with the administration of COVID-19 vaccines distributed by the COVAX Facility in five countries. This assistance is further supported through critical activities such as social mobilization and outreach, including risk communication and community engagement activities, to address vaccine hesitancy and support uptake improvement.

IOM is also providing operational support to support service delivery, including transport and logistics, cold chain support and supply chain enhancement. The expectation is that the number of countries assisted by IOM will rise as vaccine availability through the COVAX Facility increases.

10. Second, we must continue to rebuild and reinforce legal channels for migration while mitigating the long-term scarring effects of the pandemic, both on migrants and on the many countries that are highly dependent on migration, before our collective ambition to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 starts slipping further away.

11. We have seen many countries around the world experience general and sector-based labour shortages, while others are struggling to support large-scale returns of migrant workers. Still more countries have recognized the value of skilled mobile workers, creating visa opportunities for so-called “digital nomads”, earning through remote work, but spending salaries locally. The pandemic has brought home the deep connection between migration and economic health, but also the vulnerabilities of those migrants with precarious employment contracts or recruited into unsafe working conditions.

12. It is not clear, in my view, how far we will return to the status quo or whether we will find a new normal post-pandemic. But we must ensure that the choices we make today do not impede opportunities for those who wish to move, or for those who wish to welcome them. And many governments are indeed redoubling efforts to bring migrants into their national labour markets. This presents an opportunity to recalibrate – to reconsider the value of migrants not just to our economies, but also to our societies, and to ensure that the relationship between governments, employers and migrants can promote fairer, more decent working conditions, including access to health care.

Box 3. Returning migrant workers to the Philippines: impacts and responses

In 2020, IOM undertook a survey assessing the impact of COVID-19 on returned overseas Filipino workers. The survey covered over 8,000 returning workers, the vast majority returning from the Gulf region. In fact, 2020 saw the return of over 790,000 Filipinos out of the 10 million living abroad as of 2019, while the number of workers deployed overseas through private recruitment agencies dropped by 75 per cent during the same period, from 2.16 million in 2019 to just under 550,000 in 2020, the lowest since 1990.

The impact on both individuals and the country as a whole has been significant. Almost half of those surveyed – the vast majority of whom are of working age – reported a more than 60 per cent drop in household income. Moreover, 83 per cent were still unemployed three months after arrival, a situation made more acute by the fact that some returnees had not received their final wage payments or compensation for the early termination of contracts. While nearly half of those interviewed expressed an intent to start a business, only 27 per cent had the capital to do so. More than half expressed a desire to upgrade their skills. Unemployment doubled in 2020, reaching 10.2 per cent, compared with 5.1 per cent in 2019.

Based on the results of the IOM survey, the Government doubled the amount of the reintegration grants provided to migrants in situations of vulnerability. Additionally, IOM and the Government are

actively working to update reintegration frameworks for returning migrants in situations of vulnerability, ensuring an individualized case management approach that includes comprehensive psychosocial assistance in addition to economic support.

Nonetheless, nearly half of those surveyed expressed a desire to re-migrate internationally, once it is possible. In this regard, IOM and the Government continue to work together with the private sector to enhance and promote ethical recruitment of overseas Filipino workers.

13. There is no room for complacency. There is no room for xenophobia and racism. And there is no room for exclusion, as has been clearly stated by the Secretary General in his common agenda.

14. Today, we see a defensive posture towards migrants emerging around much of the world. Despite the high-cost and short-term gains inherent in building walls across borders, many countries are resorting to barriers alone, rather than undertaking comprehensive approaches to complex mixed movements. This is taking place even while governments, communities and the private sector have recognized anew the value of migrants in their workforces and communities, particularly in countries experiencing acute manpower sector shortages.

15. But the gulf between these dynamics – migrant as saviour, migrant as villain – is widening, and points to a deeply misplaced understanding of migrants and migration.

16. We see too many migrants being used as instruments – and thus making them victims – of geopolitical wrangling, caught in disputes which matter little to them, but for which their lives are put on the line. We see too many migrants left vulnerable by dangerous journeys, including along routes which do not often reach our global headlines but still cause deep distress to families at home and put migrants in the hands of unscrupulous smugglers and traffickers. So far in 2021, IOM has counted at least 4,266 dead and missing migrants across the world.

Box 4. Dangerous journeys

IOM works in all regions of the world to protect those undertaking dangerous, potentially fatal, journeys, and supporting voluntary return for those in need. Drivers such as income asymmetry, lack of employment opportunity, social violence and political conflict are increasingly mixing with the adverse impacts of climate change and weather-related disasters.

Along the Eastern Route – from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula – IOM counted 37,535 migrants arriving in Yemen from the Horn of Africa in 2020, a 73 per cent decrease compared with 2019, largely as a result of pandemic-related mobility restrictions. Despite the drop in numbers, IOM witnessed an increase in the number of migrants stranded along the route. Migrants are now taking equally risky return journeys back to the Horn of Africa, sometimes aided by smugglers, in part due to the lack of work in Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

So far in 2021, over 109,000 migrants have arrived in Europe (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain) along several Mediterranean routes, with nearly 2,500 losing their lives. While numbers vary across the different routes, the aspiration to move remains strong, despite – and in some cases because of – the COVID-19 pandemic. But many experience violence and danger, some even losing their lives, long before they reach the Mediterranean Sea.

Migration north from Central America has increased significantly in recent years, with the range of nationalities of migrants becoming more diverse, as individuals travel from further south and also from other regions of the world. The Darién Gap has proved to be particularly dangerous; despite this, the Panamanian government estimates that more than 91,300 people crossed the jungle between January and October 2021.

17. I welcome the efforts of those adopting a more rounded *and compassionate* approach, even while enforcing the rule of law. I welcome the efforts of those who understand that borders can be managed humanely – with due respect for the human rights and humanitarian needs of those who seek to cross – even if this does not result in either asylum or allowing residence. I welcome those who recognize the value that pathways for legal entry offer not just for migrants, but for the countries into which they arrive. And I welcome those who are sincerely engaged in addressing the drivers that impel people to move – particularly for those travelling from regions of crisis – and in combating the unscrupulous actors who seek to exploit migrants’ desperation.

18. This comprehensive approach is essential in contexts such as Central America, where IOM is working with all countries in the region to address the underlying drivers of migration, while managing the very real vulnerabilities created by dangerous journeys to the United States–Mexico border, not least through the Darién Gap.

Box 5. Innovative thinking and action to generate sustainable migration outcomes

IOM works with many Member States to develop innovative thinking and action to reduce vulnerabilities, while meeting very real social and economic needs.

IOM’s sustainable reintegration programming – across Africa, the Middle East, Central and South America and Asia – continues to focus on tailoring approaches to identified needs. For example, through the UK-funded Operationalizing an Integrated Approach to Reintegration (ORION) project, IOM piloted a mentoring programme in Guinea, Morocco, and Senegal. Twelve mentors from the local community in each of the three countries provided focused follow-up and assistance to a total of 222 returnees.

To promote youth employability in Tunisia, IOM has facilitated targeted short-term employment assignments in Belgium, providing concrete opportunities for young graduates to scale up their skills and increase their chances of finding a job or opening their own business.

19. The movements we have witnessed across Central America also reflect the fact that migration decisions are increasingly shaped by a number of underlying drivers, including the adverse impacts of climate change. Climate impacts threaten to reverse development gains and contribute to instability in fragile regions. By 2050, as many as 216 million people could move within their own countries due to slow-onset climate change impacts. This is a global emergency that no country can afford to ignore.

20. IOM is more committed than ever to do its part. Our priority is to support our Member States in the long term. In our Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021-2030, we have identified three overarching objectives that guide our action: (a) address environmental drivers of migration by supporting ambitious climate action; (b) strengthen how migration is managed in the context of climate change, including by facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration; and (c) provide assistance and protection to migrants and people displaced by environmental impacts and disasters.

21. IOM’s particular value comes from our ability to link our operational expertise to high-level policy debate, partnering with a diverse range of stakeholders, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Climate Vulnerable Forum, to support policy development, governance dialogue and knowledge-building in different parts of the world, from West Africa to Asia and the Pacific, including the Caribbean. We support efforts that break new ground in regional approaches, such as the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative, and are playing a leading role in the development of a Pacific regional framework. We work directly with migrants and host communities worldwide to build resilience and improve lives in climate-vulnerable areas.

22. As the Twenty-sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) has just concluded, under the able leadership of the United Kingdom, I would like to appeal to you to give due consideration to the mobility dimensions of climate change, which unfortunately have not featured, in my opinion, high enough, in your deliberations. In the next few months, I intend to engage with Egypt, as well as our partners, in order to advocate greater attention to aspects such as adaptation, and loss and damage. And I would like to welcome the recent report issued by the President of the United States of America on climate change and migration.

23. I believe we have an opportunity to step up our collective efforts on this topic. No country, whether developed and well equipped, or already vulnerable to instability and upheaval, will avoid experiencing the impacts of climate and environmental change. We must work together to achieve meaningful change.

**Box 6. Regional initiatives to address climate and environmental change,
migration, and development**

The intersection of climate, development and migration activities is critical to safeguard the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure shared prosperity into the middle of the century and beyond.

In September 2021, the African Union Commission, together with IOM, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change launched the Africa Climate Migration Initiative. This aim of this global partnership is to generate political momentum and resources to harness the potential of mobility in the context of the climate crisis, as well as address climate-forced displacement and migration across the African continent.

In the Asia-Pacific region, IOM, is working with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the International Labour Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Platform on Disaster Displacement to enhance protection and empowerment of migrants and communities affected by climate change and disasters.

Resilience

24. Even during the pandemic, newly critical political and humanitarian emergencies continued to dominate headlines around the world, including in Mozambique, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Sahel. IOM has continued to respond to these emergencies and, where necessary, scale up that response. But we remain acutely aware that some emergencies have faded into the background. They have become no less acute, I can assure you, but have sometimes stopped drawing the collective attention of the international community, and that is clearly reflected in the level of funding.

25. Just over three months ago, we were presented with a rapidly deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. To be clear, even prior to August, the country was in crisis, with large parts of the population highly dependent on humanitarian aid after more than four decades of conflict and impoverishment, and a severe drought leading to one of the worst food crises in the world. Meanwhile, a health system close to collapse was attempting to provide an ongoing response to the pandemic.

26. Today, our concerns cannot be overstated. With nearly half of the population in need of life-saving assistance before August, the World Food Programme and the entire United Nations system estimate that almost one in three Afghan nationals are now facing emergency levels of food insecurity.

Our own surveys show that food costs are rising while household income is falling, with the biggest concerns being access to food, water, cash and health care.

27. Although the number of internally displaced persons has, at least, stabilized for now, our concerns are for the whole population of Afghanistan, as winter approaches and universal poverty threatens to become a reality in 2022.

28. Excellencies, I would ask you to urgently consider and act along three lines.

29. First, there is an urgent need for Member States to agree on clear exemptions to sanctions to enable humanitarian agencies and their partners to deliver life-saving services and supplies in Afghanistan. IOM, together with other United Nations agencies, advocates a broader definition of the humanitarian space – namely humanitarian assistance and activities that support basic human needs – that would allow unimpeded access to populations in need and rapid delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance unhindered by conditions or sanctions.

30. This is a race against time, before the harsh winter months make matters considerably worse. The lack of access to cash is severely impeding United Nations capacity. IOM intends to stay and deliver in Afghanistan. But we need your support to do so effectively and avoid a catastrophic outcome.

31. Second, there is a need to take a historical, integrated and holistic view of the situation in Afghanistan. While saving lives, we must also work to sustain livelihoods, strengthen community resilience and preserve the social and economic gains that have been made throughout Afghan society, by Afghans themselves, over the past two decades. Ensuring the development dimension is fully integrated with humanitarian and peacebuilding activities will be critical for longer-term stability. IOM will continue to support income-generating activities for internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities, as well as efforts to strengthen economic infrastructure and improve access to basic services across the country.

32. It goes without saying that this includes persistent work to ensure the continued and full participation of women in society, as well as the economy. We must not lose sight of the treatment of women and girls; what we say and do in Afghanistan will resonate around the world, sending a message about what is – and what is not – acceptable. On this issue, we must stand firm.

33. Third, we must view this crisis from a regional perspective. We, like you, remain extremely concerned that the continued deterioration of conditions in Afghanistan may lead to greater displacement of people, including to neighbouring countries. Indeed, while we did not witness a major outflow in the beginning, we are seeing today, and over the last few weeks, a steady increase in those moving irregularly across borders. IOM's experience indicates that migrants fleeing crises tend to stay close to their homes and home country, at least at the onset of a crisis. The same observations hold true for Afghan nationals seeking safety abroad. We call for donors to support neighbouring countries in their efforts to be better prepared to assist migrants, regardless of their status, and to protect vulnerable populations.

34. Of course, Afghanistan is just one of many crises. The situation in Ethiopia remains, for me, deeply problematic. IOM has launched a multisectoral response in Tigray, Amhara and Afar based on the United Nations core values of independence, neutrality and non-discrimination, with more than 1 million instances of assistance so far in 2021. But we see deepening food insecurity and violence, particularly gender-based violence. We are struggling to access the regions that are most in need, and we now risk running out of basic supplies, including fuel for transport, which, as you know, is essential to reach beneficiaries.

35. By several metrics, Yemen continues to be the setting for the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with two thirds of the population needing assistance and 4 million people internally displaced. Aid has made a huge difference. IOM, along with non-governmental organizations and humanitarian actors, supported over 6 million Yemenis and migrants present in the country last year; this year, our collective interventions have prevented famine. What we urgently need now is an end to the conflict, access to people in need and funding.

Box 7. IOM's system-wide contribution to the Yemen response

What sets IOM apart is that the Organization directly implements humanitarian activities in Yemen and is present in multiple and sometimes extremely remote locations across the country. As such, it plays a foundational role, one which is key to facilitating the response of other United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners.

IOM co-leads the Refugee and Migrant Multisector and the Rapid Response Mechanism, and is an active member of other key clusters at the national level.

Critically, at the subnational level in Ma'rib governorate, IOM is the lead organization in the region. In this role, it leads clusters on camp coordination and camp management; shelter and non-food items; water, sanitation and hygiene; and protection. IOM has opened a temporary humanitarian hub in Ma'rib city, supporting access and service provision by humanitarian partners and thereby enabling them to scale up delivery.

Finally, IOM leads the Task Force on Population Movement, which monitors both displacement and those who are in transit. The Organization's Displacement Tracking Matrix assessments serve as the operational baseline for the humanitarian response targeting internally displaced persons, returnees and migrants.

36. An additional concern is the situation of migrants stranded in Yemen. While arrivals slowed in 2020, those stranded increasingly face life-threatening conditions, whether they are in detention, or particularly at the hands of smugglers or in locations with limited access to services. IOM will continue to provide safe, voluntary and dignified return solutions for migrants in Yemen, through its voluntary humanitarian return programme.

37. I referred earlier to the limited attention we tend to pay to those crises which recede from public view, only to resurface as more tragedy occurs. In 2021, we were reminded of the multiple challenges faced by the people of Haiti as the country grappled with a major political crisis followed, in short order, by an earthquake of significant magnitude.

38. Since January 2010, and well before then, IOM has been a steadfast provider of both humanitarian and development aid in Haiti, sustaining internally displaced persons and helping to rebuild destroyed infrastructure, restore essential services and repair the country's fragile social fabric. In many respects, however, the engagement of the international community has gradually diminished over the past decade, which negatively impacted our ability to respond to the latest disaster when it struck the country last summer.

39. I am acutely aware of the tough choices Member States must sometimes make in choosing to extend financial support to our emergency responses, as I know that you also face your own domestic challenges and pressures, your own emergencies, and you must remain accountable to your taxpayers. Donors also grow tired of having to bankroll aid efforts that will not, by themselves, provide much of a solution to protracted situations that require systemic, institutional and political answers.

40. In this regard, I was encouraged by the report of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement published earlier this year, and I want to reaffirm IOM's full commitment to supporting the implementation of its recommendations that are focused on data collection and effective implementation of durable solutions, in line with the guidance of the United Nations Secretary-General. Indeed, the High-Level Panel represents a unique opportunity to shed new light on internal displacement and work with Member States to identify innovative ways to tackle this major challenge, which remains at the centre of the Organization's humanitarian and development efforts.

41. Excellencies, I cannot discuss this part of our work without mentioning – once again – the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation on human mobility and humanitarian response. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, of the 40 million people who were newly internally displaced in 2020, 30 million were displaced due to weather-related disasters. Across its relief and recovery work, IOM increasingly responds to situations either created, or made worse, by climate-related events.

Governance

42. The response to immediate crises should not obscure the need to invest in the structural changes needed to manage migration more effectively. Our governance systems should help us return to pre-pandemic levels of mobility. And they should also be strong enough to help us address future mobility challenges – the ones we can anticipate, and those we cannot even yet conceive.

43. Support for the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration remains a priority for the Organization. Last year alone, we provided technical and policy support to 108 national governments and 17 local governments.

44. As the Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, we have continued to work closely within the United Nations system to support the implementation of the Global Compact. In this respect, over 50 country and regional coordination mechanisms have been established since 2019, while the Start-up Fund for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Migration MPTF) has been operationalized, with financing now under way for the first nine joint programmes.

45. In a year of turmoil, the Global Compact has remained a robust international framework. Collaborative efforts have facilitated the emergence of a whole-of-United Nations voice on migration, promoted multi-stakeholder dialogue through a series of regional reviews and bolstered the availability of technical and financial resources to support States in their implementation efforts.

46. IOM has also supported national and local governments to strengthen the links between migration governance and sustainable development. Our membership of the core group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group has allowed us to maximize our contribution to the achievement of the SDGs and create synergies between implementation of the Global Compact and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As always, we have invested in new partnerships with key partners, including private sector organizations, academic institutions and local authorities, in particular at city level. Addressing migration challenges cannot simply be a solitary endeavour.

Box 8. IOM initiatives as SDG Good Practices

IOM is increasingly integrated into the United Nations development system and in 2020 became a full member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. Every day in the field, IOM initiatives and activities contribute to positive development outcomes, while supporting people on the move. This year, 10 IOM projects have been identified as SDG Good Practices by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which has showcased them on its website.

One example is the MigraCidades initiative developed by our IOM colleagues in Brazil, which is designed to strengthen local migration governance. Following a pilot phase funded by the IOM Development Fund, a second phase has been launched with the participation of 46 local governments. In Turkey, IOM has been recognized for its pre-employment support programme developed alongside the Government to facilitate labour market inclusion for both Syrian and Turkish nationals. IOM's work in Chad to develop innovative shelter solutions for internally displaced persons in the Lake Chad Basin has also been singled out for its contribution to development.

In addition, IOM is a founding member of the newly launched Integrated Policy Practitioners' Network, an inter-agency network for co-creation and knowledge-sharing on integrated policy in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

47. As we look ahead to 2022, one among many priorities will be to consider how IOM can support the realization of *Our Common Agenda*, the recent report of the United Nations Secretary-General.

48. IOM was actively involved in the inter-agency preparatory work that went into designing *Our Common Agenda*. We are therefore pleased to see that references to migration, climate change-induced displacement, legal identity for migrants, and the Global Compact have all been included in the Secretary-General's vision for the United Nations.

49. Given the extensive work we have undertaken in 2021 on developing institutional strategies regarding migration, the environment and climate change, as well as legal identity, we are in an excellent position to contribute to these United Nations system-wide initiatives – and take the lead where necessary.

Institutional development

50. Excellencies, as you all know, IOM continues to grow, not just in terms of operations and staffing, but in terms of learning, leadership and influence. This follows a concerted effort to invest strategically in the Organization, incorporating the priorities and drivers set out in the IOM Strategic Vision 2019–2023.

51. Since the launch of the Strategic Vision, IOM's regional offices have developed their own five-year strategies, while the *IOM Continental Strategy for Africa 2020–2024* has also been published, drawing on the core ideas encapsulated in the global document. Country offices are now engaging in their own planning processes – tailored to size and need – to identify where IOM's key expertise and operational capacity might be best utilized, and where IOM may be needed in the future.

52. Our hope is that through this deeper consideration of the landscape around them, IOM missions will be better placed to advise Member States on the risks and opportunities ahead, and support them with their own decision-making on migration, mobility and displacement.

53. In 2022, IOM will engage in a soft mid-term review of the Strategic Vision to identify the progress made towards its goals, as well as the investments that are still needed. The review will also look at the post-pandemic world and ask whether our core assumptions and priorities have changed. This task will not only be a healthy moment of reflection, but also form part of longer-term preparations for our planning cycle between 2023 and 2028.

54. It is clear that much progress has been made to strengthen IOM over the past three years, not least through the Internal Governance Framework, and I trust that our organizational review of Headquarters will deliver results already in 2022.

55. But beyond these whole-of-organization investments, we have been working to develop and hone capacities that may not, at first glance, be visible. We have been doing this through the careful utilization of unearmarked contributions, and I am very thankful to the fifteen Member States that have recognized the crucial importance of such funding to address the structural limitations of our model.

56. It is clear that IOM has become a stronger policy interlocutor over the past four years, thanks to unearmarked contributions. In South America, a new policy and knowledge management hub is mapping opportunities to strengthen norms and legislative frameworks on migration governance across the region. In South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, IOM is advising governments on how to take a gendered approach to migration policy and programming, most recently working with the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan and national stakeholders.

57. Similarly, unearmarked contributions underpin much of IOM's work on data at the global and regional levels, thereby supporting the effective implementation of the Migration Data Strategy. The regional data hubs that have been established in eight out of nine regions are strengthening the evidence base on migration and building the capacity of IOM offices and government partners.

58. This work has expanded IOM's visibility at the regional level and enabled the Organization to engage strategically with regional coordination mechanisms and forums, international financial institutions, other United Nations agencies, issue-based coalitions, academic institutions and many others to produce quality data products and support the formulation of evidence-based policy recommendations.

59. Tomorrow's launch of the 2022 iteration of our flagship publication, the World Migration Report, further demonstrates the role that IOM can play in providing evidence and analysis regarding changing migration trends and emerging drivers of movement.

60. As we look ahead, unearmarked contributions remain essential for IOM to continue meeting the expectations and requirements placed upon the Organization. But we will continue to engage you all in a conversation about the need to rethink our core structure, strengthen our core functions and evaluate our budgetary sustainability to be ready for the next generation of operations.

Looking forward

61. Excellencies, I would like to conclude by drawing attention to the opportunity presented by the International Migration Review Forum to be held in May 2022, which will give us all a chance to reflect, as well as prepare for the future.

62. In particular, we must look at ways to ensure maximum predictability regarding the best pathways for managing safe migration; maximum protection for those in vulnerable situations, including by prosecuting traffickers and others involved in exploitation; and maximum flexibility to address emerging challenges. No one can be excluded if we are to succeed.

63. We must ask ourselves tough questions and raise our ambition.

64. How do we further the vision of the Global Compact – namely to recognize the benefits of migration – while mitigating the very human tragedies that stem from irregular migration and the responses to it? How do we better ensure that migrants are more effectively integrated into our communities and treated as “one of us”, rather than remaining defined by their migration status? How do we prepare for the future – for new pandemics, for the impacts of climate change, for economic change – in ways that are constructive and collaborative, rather than predicated on fear?

65. If they are to be successful, our commitments to solidarity, our belief in a renewed social contract and our investment in multilateralism must include all of us. The Global Compact recognizes the vital role of all actors and all States, and the fact that addressing one State's migration priorities requires cooperation within and between countries. It is underpinned by a set of cross-cutting guiding principles that protect both national sovereignty and human rights.

66. The period ahead of the International Migration Review Forum will be vital. We have the opportunity to examine what we have done well and what we could have done better, allowing us to emerge from the Forum with a clear set of policy priorities that will amplify the good work already done. IOM is ready to support you in this endeavour, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with you in all aspects of our work to the benefit of all of our stakeholders, for Member States and, above all, for the benefit of migrants.

67. Thank you.