

**VIDEOMESSAGGIO DEL SOTTOSEGRETARIO DELLA VEDOVA PER IL SEGMENTO DI ALTO LIVELLO
DELLA 112MA SESSIONE ORDINARIA DELL'ORGANIZZAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DELLE
MIGRAZIONI**

(Ginevra 29 novembre)

Bozza di intervento

Mr. Director General, let me begin by thanking you and all the IOM staff for having conceived and convened this high-level segment, on the occasion of the 112th Session of the IOM Council.

It is, indeed, a great opportunity not only to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Organization, but also to share our respective experiences in coping with the mobility restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. This, in turn, will help us to identify solutions to arrange a prompt, joint and effective response, with the goal to ensure that international mobility is not hindered again, should we have to confront a similar contingency in the future.

While the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation of already vulnerable migrants and negatively affected direct assistance to migrants in terms of needs, response capacity, financial and human resources to be deployed, the Italian Government has continued and strengthened its commitment to saving human lives at sea in the Central Mediterranean, which has increasingly become the main access gate to Europe for irregular flows.

At the same time, we have dedicated resources and efforts to our dialogue and migration cooperation with Countries of origin, transit and destination of migration flows. A cooperation based on a coherent, sustainable and integrated approach, which on the one side helps prevent irregular flows, by supporting institutions and border control capacities in countries that are most exposed to human trafficking. On the other side, it provides assistance to those in need and promotes the development of local communities, in order to reduce the drive towards migrations.

Our cooperation with IOM has remained central for this approach, even more so during the Covid-19 pandemic, when, through the Migration Fund of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we have financed IOM projects with a specific focus on healthcare assistance, prevention and risk

information campaigns, together with targeted testing and screening in Libya, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia and in other countries. This also ensured safety of assistance in urban settings, reception sites and transit centers, allowing health specialists and assisting staff to continue their invaluable work.

Mr. Director General, the level of cooperation between Italy and IOM is exemplary and it is in our interest, and our intention, to keep on relying on your Organization as one of our main partners in the implementation of the different instruments of cooperation in the migratory field Italy can display.

In particular, we recognize and appreciate the effectiveness of IOM's Assisted Voluntary Returns from transit countries as a way to improve the management of migration flows. We will continue to be staunch supporters of such activity, also at the European level. Indeed, we deem it essential to develop a European framework of cooperation, based on promoting regular migration flows and preventing irregular movements through effective migrants return systems.

Mr. Director General, risk-taking is inherent to migration; the Covid-19 pandemic has made this dangerous undertaking even riskier. Nonetheless, migration will continue to be part of our lives, especially of those for whom migration often embodies the promise for a better and brighter future.

Since its inception, the IOM has strived to ensure an orderly and humane management of migration, while promoting international cooperation on migration issues, and providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people. We will continue to offer our support to such commitment and try to capitalize on the lessons learned during the pandemic, so to ensure that international mobility is as safe, orderly and sustainable as possible, especially in case of disruptive events.