

IOM Council
Item 12 General debate

Intervention by Special Envoy Kaia Bilton on behalf of Norway

Genève, 30 November 2022

Chair, Director General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Norway is proud to be a committed partner to the IOM, an organization with increased reach, influence and importance to migrants - all over the world.

We have a tough year ahead, as already been underlined during this autumn's Standing Committee on Program and Finance, as well as during the recent International Dialogue on Migration. Needs will continue to rise in 2023, as climate change, food insecurity and conflict force people into displacement in countries such as Ukraine, Pakistan and Mali, to name only a few.

Norway deplores the Russian aggression in Ukraine in the strongest possible way, not least its implications for forced migration. We would like to highlight that we receive echos from the field that the IOM is providing crucial support on the ground, in Ukraine itself and in neighboring countries. We recognize the difficult circumstances your staff on the ground are experiencing. Norway has donated civilian, military and humanitarian support to Ukraine and its neighbours, who are shouldering the burden of the increasing displacement, at a total of USD 1 billion for 2022 and 2023. This week we were able to bolster our support to IOM in this globally devastating crisis.

Norway recognizes the important work that has been put down to reform the IOM, organizationally and financially. We welcome the budget reforms as well as the strengthening of core functions. We request continued updates on the implementation, as well as further work on risk management and a results-based approach in the entirety of the organization. We also need to continue to emphasize audit and oversight, as well as systems to implement our common zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

Norwegian partners to the IOM have taken note of improvements in the management of our bilateral agreements, reflecting the increased capacity of the organization. On our side as a donor, we are committed to provide pluri-annual and non-earmarked support, in line with our intention to provide continuity, predictability and flexibility to the organization. As a host society, Norway has the responsibility to facilitate and regulate legal pathways and inclusion into the Norwegian labour market and society. We also need to work towards common, responsible and efficient return policies so that irregular migration does not undermine legal migration.

The Norwegian government has put into place an initiative which endeavors to address support to displaced populations and their host communities simultaneously. In order to address internal displacement and forced migration, discourage secondary movements and prevent irregular migration, we need to build resilience and create sustainable livelihoods in host communities, in countries of origin as well as transit. Reflecting many statements in the High-level segment of this Council, we need to work out the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in practice, if we are to be able to address the complex migratory challenges ahead.

Thank you.