

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

First, allow me to express my gratitude to **Director General Mrs. Pope** for her comprehensive report, her dedication, and the initiatives undertaken since the beginning of her mandate. I also appreciate IOM's transparency and consultative approach, particularly in the development of its new Strategy. This strategy rightly places migrants at its heart.

In a rapidly changing world, I believe more than ever in **flexible, multiannual unearmarked funding**, which enables IOM to better plan, deliver, and execute initiatives. Belgium commends the establishment of the Special Sub-Committee on Flexible Funds and we encourage other Member States to increase their share of unearmarked contributions.

Belgium also reiterates its commitment to facilitating IOM's work in Brussels, where the organization is establishing **global, regional, and country offices**. This as a recognition of the role our country plays as a hub for international cooperation.

Excellencies,

Legal migration is a cornerstone of Belgium's comprehensive migration policy. Efficient and accessible pathways are not just tools for migration management; they are **drivers for sustainable economic growth**. For Belgium as well as the European Union, attracting third-country nationals with specific skills and profiles remains crucial to maintain economic competitiveness on a global scale.

In alignment with the **EU Pact on Asylum and Migration**, my country has taken significant steps to establish legal migration pathways. We have implemented training and recruitment programs in several partner countries, leveraging initiatives such as the **EU Talent Partnerships**.

During the Belgian Presidency of the Council, we also played a key role in developing a **Talent Pool** to facilitate the recruitment of third-country nationals. These efforts aim not only to streamline the recruitment process but also to improve access to vital information about safe and orderly migration pathways, while reinforcing the systems in countries of origin.

Similarly, Belgium remains committed to **resettlement and complementary pathways** for persons in need of protection. These efforts are integral to our humanitarian responsibilities and to creating safe and legal alternatives to irregular migration.

In this context, Belgium is proud to support initiatives like the **DT4E project**, which offers complementary pathways for individuals in need of protection, and the **O-Remit project**, which highlights the impact of remittances and the diaspora community. These projects exemplify how targeted national funding and our collaboration with IOM can lead to meaningful outcomes for migrants, refugees, and their families.

Director General, Excellencies,

Migration is a **shared challenge and an opportunity** that requires collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to the principles of humanity and solidarity. Belgium will continue to support IOM as it leads global efforts to make migration safer, more orderly, and better managed, for the benefit of all.