

## 96<sup>th</sup> Session of IOM Council

### General Debate

#### **Statement by H. E. Mr. Swashpawan Singh, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of India**

(December 2, 2008)

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the Government of India, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as the Chair of the 96<sup>th</sup> session of the IOM Council. I would also like to thank the Director General and other officials of the IOM for their statements and presentations. May I also extend our felicitations to the delegations of Saudi Arabia and Qatar; the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and the NGO December 18 on the commencement of their association with the IOM?

India is a major country of origin, destination and transit of migrants. There are over 25 million people of Indian Diaspora overseas and about 20 million non-nationals reside in India. Indians have achieved success abroad and earned India the reputation of being a “knowledge economy”. Back home, they have contributed significantly to economic growth and development in the country. The role played by returnees in the growth of IT industry in India is well known and deserves to be studied in detail by this Council. India is now the largest recipient of remittances accounting for about 10% of total remittances. The Indian Diaspora has started making long-term capital investments in the country. Based on our own experience, we can say with confidence that international migration can be a win-win phenomenon.

India became a full member of the IOM earlier this year. Our experience of engaging with IOM in the past has been very positive. We value the assistance provided by IOM from time to time in repatriation of stranded Indians. Currently, our engagement with IOM focuses at capacity building in the area of outward labour migration. We have also

benefited from our participation in the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue which bring together the countries of origin and destination to address the issues concerning labour mobility in Asia. We look forward to build upon this positive experience and deepen our engagement with IOM in the coming years.

Mr. Chairman,

International Migration is an essential element of international reality today. It is an inescapable dimension of globalization. It is, therefore, imperative for the international community to address this phenomenon in a comprehensive and positive manner. The ongoing global financial crisis will have a serious impact on migration and migrants, which needs to be analysed carefully. As the world economy slows down, a large number of migrants, particularly, those from developing countries, face the risk of losing their jobs and consequently, a premature return. The international community must find ways of mitigating their hardship. ~~We look forward to our discussion on this pressing issue tomorrow~~ *In this connection the discussion we just had with the Special Panel is useful*

Mr. Chairman,

The efforts of the international community should aim at forging partnerships between countries of origin and destination and turning migration into a win-win situation for all. We note with satisfaction that such sentiments are now being expressed across the spectrum and were reiterated in the last meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Manila. Greater exchange of experiences and best practices will help in identifying practical ways of maximizing the benefits of migration and achieving enhanced protection for migrants. In this context, we find our deliberations in the framework of International Dialogue on Migration of the IOM very useful. India, as a major stakeholder in this process, remains committed to contribute actively in this effort.

Thank you.