



Statement by H.E. Ambassador Giovanni Caracciolo di Vietri,
Permanent Representative of Italy, at the 96th session of the Council of the
IOM (Geneva, 2-5 December 2008)

Mr. Chairman,

allow me, first, to congratulate you and your Bureau on your election. I would like to take the opportunity of this first Council under the guidance of Ambassador Swing, in his capacity as the new Director-General of IOM, to reiterate our best wishes for a most successful mandate.

I also wish to commend Mrs. Ndioro Ndiaye for ^{her}~~the~~ strong commitment ~~and sense of responsibility~~ in performing her functions as Deputy Director-General, a task not always easy to accomplish in the fulfilment of a mandate which, we believe, needs to be better defined also in the perspective of the next election.

I am ~~am~~ glad to have the opportunity to welcome our four new observers.

Mr Chairman, Italy deeply shares the thoughts expressed by France in its statement on behalf of the European Union. Italy has been one of the stronger supporters of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum which reaffirms that migration issues are an integral part of the European Union's external relations, that partnership between countries of origin and of destination is essential, that the respect of human rights of all migrants is at the core of the European Unions values and policies.

Italy is particularly sensitive to what migration implies. Having experienced both sides of the coin - migration, in the first place, since the end of the 19th century, up to the second half of the 20th century and immigration at a later stage and to date – my country is in the right place

to understand fully migration in all its different dimensions and stands ready to provide its full cooperation to manage it in the best way possible at the internal and international level.

Chair, we have listened with attention to the Director General's report and very much appreciated his ~~interactive and~~ straightforward presentation. We cannot but welcome the priorities that he has set at the beginning of his mandate.

Italy intends to continue supporting IOM and its technical cooperation activities, but also IOM as a privileged forum of discussion and exchange of views on policies, trends and strategies in the management of the most global phenomenon of the globalisation.

The IOM should continue pursuing its broadening process and stick to the trend that increasingly qualifies it as the main organization in the area of migration worldwide, this without undermining IOM's specific action in providing services, which should remain flexible and aimed at high standards of efficiency.

The international financial and economic crisis is going to have an impact on migration flows. The picture is fast evolving as the crisis continue to show its effects and consequences, most of all on the labour market, with direct impact on labour mobility. Now more than ever the IOM should stand ready to act, by strengthening the cooperation at the international level to protect the most vulnerable. In this respect we look forward with much interest to the round table of the Global Migration Group to be held tomorrow.

Mr Chairman, despite an overall challenging economic situation, which is bound to have budgetary implication in the near future, 2008 has marked a substantial increase in Italy's engagements towards IOM operational activities. We have funded projects in all issue-sensitive

including ~~considered~~ ^{publicizing}
areas, also trying to urgently respond to emergencies and most pressing needs. ~~The effects and results of the projects and programmes funded through our contributions to the operational budget will be evident in 2009.~~ Next year we will concentrate our attention on how better target our action, also in the perspective of a decrease in financial resources. In this respect, we will further strengthen our cooperation with the IOM Regional Office in Rome to follow closely migration management processes in the Mediterranean region, but also to foster cooperation between the Italian Government and IOM, in the first place, as well as interaction with other international and regional institutions based in Rome. Programmes such as "Lampedusa" - an example of excellent cooperation between a national entity and international bodies and NGOs - are a winning pattern and should be replicated as a model of international cooperation at the service of migrants and to improve their protection. Italy will engage more and more in this kind of activities also in the perspective of the involvement of non-state, civil society and private actors in its development cooperation policies and actions.

Mr. Chairman, in analyzing the budget proposal for 2009, Italy bears in mind, primarily, essential aspects such as efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility, and transparency, but also the Organization's necessary expansion. ~~During the last Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, my country indicated its preference for Zero Nominal Growth of the budget for 2009. The reasons of that preference remain valid and we are ready to participate in any exercise to examine different budgetary modalities. Nevertheless, after having listen carefully to the explanation that the Director General himself and the Secretariat have given during informal consultations, and in a spirit of openness, Italy is ready to accept, exceptionally and only for 2009, an adjustment of the budget on the base of Zero Real Growth. We believe that consensus is essential in this respect.~~

~~and that budgetary modalities should be further examined in order not to have to come back to the same debate again.~~

Italy will continue to look carefully at the implementation of the Discretionary Income, notably the 1035 Facility. As one of the countries that have committed resources to the Facility we stands ready to confirm our financial support, should our budget constraints allow us to do so.

Bearing in mind the same constraints, we stand ready to contribute, in more than a way, to the International Dialogue on Migration on human rights, a particularly well chosen issue which must be at the core of any migration policy.