

Statement of H.E. Mr. Kenichi SUGANUMA,
Ambassador, Deputy Representative of Japan
for the IOM Council, 23rd November 2009

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, I would like to express my congratulations to Ambassador Laura Thompson on her assumption of the post of Deputy Director General. We are certain that under the leadership of the new Director-General and Deputy Director General, the organization will become even more effective and efficient.

I would also like to express my congratulations to the newly-formed Bureau. In particular, it's a pleasure for us to see Ambassador Kitajima on the opposite side of the podium as the Chairperson of the Council.

Recently, Japan has made new efforts to offer workplaces to foreign nationals through Economic Partnership Agreements with several Southeast Asian countries. There are approximately 2,150,000 foreign nationals living in Japan. Among them, there are nurse candidates and care-giver candidates under these agreements. Although there have been many positive results from this initiative, there remain challenges as well.

The Government of Japan has also decided to start a pilot project to accept Myanmar refugees in Thailand for resettlement in Japan with the support of the IOM and the UNHCR.

In recent years, the Government of Japan and the IOM have held joint symposia on the theme of "Social integration of foreign residents"

in Japan every year, with the IOM Director-General in attendance, which has brought greater attention to these issues.

Though it is a non-UN agency, the IOM qualified last year to be a recipient of the “United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security,” to which the Government of Japan is a major contributor. We are very happy to know that the IOM has already been a recipient of the Human Security Fund. We hope that two on-going projects in Moldova and Thailand will be successfully carried out and encourage the IOM to consider further ways of utilization of the Human Security Fund.

Mr. Chairperson,

As the Director-General mentioned in the conclusion of his report to the Council, a specialized migration organization is probably more necessary today than ever before. And because of this, the IOM has rapidly expanded its organization and activities over the last 10 years. While we applaud the IOM’s flexible response to needs in the field and donor requests, we hope to see the organization consolidate itself for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

In this context, Japan supports the broad objectives of the IOM Structural Review, which has been initiated by the Director-General to adapt the organization to the evolving reality surrounding migration and the IOM. At the same time, Japan asks the Director-General to take into account the views expressed by the Member States for a successful conclusion of the Review. In this regard, we would like to mention three points which we believe will ensure a successful conclusion:

(1) First, ensuring project quality is a critical matter for the IOM whose operational budget accounts for more than 90% of the total budget. Even with this structural review, we must be careful to avoid a situation in which project quality would be negatively affected.

(2) Second, we would like to ask the Secretariat to prepare a paper describing clearly the roles and responsibilities of the Headquarters and Field Offices to ensure the clarity of the respective mandates, to avoid the duplication of work as well as to ensure the streamlining of the organization.

(3) Third, we would also reiterate the usefulness of establishing a periodic review system for the Structural Review in order to monitor the increase of effectiveness and speed of response.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation for the work of the IOM Japan office and our hope that the performance of the Office will improve further through the Structural Review.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.