

Statement by Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal, H.E. Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, at the 98th Session of the IOM Council, November 24, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal congratulates you on your well-deserved election to the Chair of the IOM Council. My delegation also congratulates the Bureau for their well-deserved elections. We pledge our full support to you, Mr. Chairman, in the discharge of your responsibilities. My delegation extends a very warm welcome to Ambassador Laura Thompson in her new role as the Deputy Director General of the IOM.

Mr. Chairman,

We appreciate the Director General Ambassador William Lacy Swing for his comprehensive and analytical report to the Council. We welcome his priorities to enhance institutional capacity and performance of the organization through Member States' ownership, building partnership and enhancing staff professionalism and efficiency. His commitments to ingrain transparency and State ownership in the works of the organizations are demonstrated through his constant engagements with the representatives in Geneva as well as in capitals. We commend his initiation of 'information afternoons' as well as the move for the strategic restructuring of the organization.

This, we believe, will introduce new dynamism to the work of the organization. We hope the proposed reforms as outlined in his report in three major areas of the organization, staff rotation, structure review and budget reform will be able to renew the organisation and give necessary energy to it. Periodic review and evaluation of such major reform process and sharing of the results to the membership would give the organisation the distinct strengths to deal with the emerging challenges in migration. We appreciate the willingness of the Director General from day one in his office to engage with all member States and stakeholders to ensure inclusiveness and transparency in the work of the organization. Nepal supports his pledges to build an organization that is dynamic, adaptable, adjustable and capable of addressing the emerging challenges, the global migration phenomenon is facing in the midst of multiple crises of global nature.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Director General says that we live in an era of greatest human mobility. The scale and intensity of migration has touched all countries in the world turning it as an important catalyst of growth and development both in the countries of origin and destination. In this increasingly interdependent world, migration has potentials to create a win-win situation to all. Globalization and advancement of transport and communication means has facilitated the free flow of capital and goods but the cross border movement of people has been far from smooth and swift as expected in the process. People have increasingly come up against high walls of immigration and legal barriers to their movements. This has limited the scale of migration and undermined the spirit of the contemporary form of globalization process.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the most important questions international community facing today relates to the impact of financial crisis on migration. Nepal concurs with the Director General that global economic crisis has direct bearing on job losses, decreased remittances, reduced migration options, discrimination and stigmatization of the migrants and induced return of migrants without proper preparation for their reintegration. The adverse impact of the crisis has sent worrisome signal across the world. As migration is an interdisciplinary issue with close links to peace, security, stability and development, any forced reversal in migration pattern will inevitably slow the economic recovery and have impact on social and political stability.

We live in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. This calls for concerted and coordinated efforts for economic recovery including the improvement in global economic governance to reflect the emerging realities. Migration has a role to play in the process of rebuilding and revamping economies. We call for proper management of migration premised on an appropriate financial mechanism and infrastructure network which take care of the sensitivity of diverse cultures, and urgency of social, economic and humanitarian issues including the potential stigmatization of migrants in the face of financial crisis. The human face of migration must be upheld in all circumstances. This, we believe, will help both the host and home countries, to derive maximum benefits for development.

Remittances have proved as an effective instrument of poverty alleviation and recognized as a source of development finance. The World Bank estimates that about 2/3rd of foreign direct investment and almost twice of the official aid come from remittances. Reports indicate that every dollar generates an additional three dollars by way of economic activity in receiving country. The share appears even larger in case of LDCs. IOM can help countries in assessing possibilities and constraints for channelling remittances towards productive investment and thus help generate multiplier effects in the development. Remittances also have social, cultural, intellectual, financial and political impact which can be important vehicle for socio-economic transformation. However, remittances must not be considered as a substitute for development aid.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal has been actively engaged with various activities of the IOM ever since it became a member of the organization. We acknowledge the critical support and cooperation, IOM has provided to our migrant workers in times of distress. We appreciate IOM's technical support for the establishment of migration data centre to provide pre-departure training and orientation to the potential migrant workers and facilitate regulated migration process. IOM, as an overseas processing entity, is currently engaged in facilitating third country resettlement of a large chunk of Bhutanese refugees who have been sheltered in the refugee camps in Nepal for over 18 years.

We have also been actively participating in the important regional consultation process, such as the Colombo process, and the Abu Dhabi dialogue. Such regional processes have provided unique opportunity to the participating countries to forge cooperation and partnership and reflect on their priorities to find a workable common ground for a regularized and cost effective labour mobility.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.