

Statement by H.E. Mr. Zamir Akram
Permanent Representative to the 98th Session of the IOM's Council
(23-26, November 2009)

Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Council. The Council will take important decisions under your able guidance during the four days of discussions and deliberations on various aspects of migration and development.

My appreciation also goes to Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General and Amb Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General, and their able team for effectively steering the Organization and placing it at the centre-stage of migration issues.

The global economic crisis has turned into a job crisis posing new migration challenges. We see a more difficult environment of economic and financial instability than in the past. International price crisis for food and energy, environmental degradation and climate change and other variables that affect poverty levels have put further stress on developing economies. The crucial challenge is to ensure that the world is better equipped to manage that human component of globalization that consists of diverse forms of human mobility.

IOM therefore needs more capacity to adapt its approaches and activities to the changing character of migration. As the international community works at rebuilding the economic system, there may be an unprecedented opportunity to find ways that migration can most effectively be managed to contribute to the solution.

We are happy that the organization has risen to the occasion and is moving in the right direction. We fully support the initiatives of IOM in the form of activities like Global Migration Group and International Dialogue on Migration and Development.

The Colombo process is another step that enjoys our positive support as it provides a regional consultative forum on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour to its Asian members.

We believe that these initiatives hold bright prospects for providing guidance and policy responses to tackling evolving face of migration in the face of economic and job crisis.

Pakistan also appreciates the efforts of the office of the Director General for presenting a valuable report to the Council on the issue and believes that the organization will address the challenges in an effective and comprehensive manner under the leadership of Director General Swing.

The Director General's report rightly analyzes that migration is becoming one of the primary geopolitical and geo-economic issues of our time. We fully agree with the five areas identified in the report that can have an impact on migration. We endorse the point of view reflected in para 13 (iii) of the report that measures taken by several governments to reduce quotas for regular admission of migrants and to criminalize irregular entry are almost certain to prove counter-productive. Pakistan also fully supports the need for a reform process. The reform process that meets aspirations of wider international community, addresses issues of technical and major support to developing and poor countries in handling their migration issues, promotes democratic values and enhances transparency in decision making will elicit maximum support from Pakistan. Pakistan has remained in the forefront in this objective. During the 91st session of IOM Council, Ambassador Masood Khan, in his capacity as the Chairman, presented the Report on IOM Strategy. He highlighted the need for the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to review its strategy of migration policies and mandates in the light of changing migration realities and international developments.

We also stress upon the need for mainstreaming migration management policies into national development policies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs (PRSPs) as there is an intractable link between migration and development. We call upon the IOM to develop specific projects aimed at supporting the efforts of developing states in the area of labour migration, in particular short-term movements, and other types of circular migration. Such support and assistance is particularly needed by labour sending countries in the developing world, which do not have either the experience or the financial resources for labour migration management. Emergency and Post-crisis Migration Management, Emergency and Post-Emergency Operations Assistance is yet another area where there is lot of scope for international cooperation. After the terrible earthquake of Pakistan in 2005, we laid down solid foundations of post-crisis management cooperation through the establishment of Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) which together with IOM and other agencies successfully launched relief and migration initiatives.

Pakistan has also imbibed upon Community Stabilization Programme (CSP), which aims to strengthen governance and development in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) within the general framework of the government's Sustainable Development Plan. Through a programme of direct assistance to meet community-prioritized development needs, the ATA CSP will

contribute to the goals of conflict mitigation, rural community stabilization, and community development.

Mr. Chairman,

In the concluding remarks, I would say that in order to address the migratory phenomenon from an integral and holistic perspective, including links to development, the Organization needs to enhance the humane and orderly management of migration and the effective respect for the human rights of migrants in accordance with international law. The Organization should offer advice, research, technical cooperation and operational assistance to states, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, in order to build national capacities and facilitate international, regional and bilateral cooperation on migration matters.

Thank you.