

Statement of Ambassador He Yafei, Head of the Chinese Delegation,

At 99th Session of the IOM Council

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to congratulate Mr. ... on his election as the president of the Council. We are confident that under his leadership and with the concerted efforts of all participants, this meeting will be crowned with success. I also wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation of IOM for its active participation in the Shanghai Expo. I would like to congratulate Mr. Swing on his fruitful visit to China last March and thank him for the message of sympathy he conveyed to the victims of earthquakes, floods and landslide in China.

Mr. President,

The march of the globalization has opened the door to ever faster communication and more frequent movement among peoples. The number of migrants around the world now stands at 214 million, or 3% of the global population, and it is still growing by 2.9% a year. Migration has led to more cultural exchanges and trade ties, and has opened up new horizons and expanded the space for contacts among different peoples. At the same time, however, it is also bringing new problems, such as rising transnational crimes involving illegal immigration and human trafficking, while issues like racial discrimination, violation of immigrants' rights and difficulties of integrating into local societies are posing serious challenges to the survival and the upward mobility of migrants.

How to maximize the benefits of migration and reduce its negative impact while promoting common development? This is a challenge facing the whole international community. By selecting "*The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change*" as the theme of the World Migration Report 2010, the IOM has demonstrate its ability to stay ahead of events. In our view, greater efforts are required to build up capacity in the three following areas in order to change the current migration situation and bring tangible benefits to migrants.

Firstly, there should be more channels for regular migration flows. Shutting up the door to legal migrants will force them to seek clandestine access. That is why the best way to prevent and curtail illegal migration flows is to expand the channels for legal migration and place such movements under effective control. We are now still feeling the impact of the global financial crisis. As a vulnerable group, migrants are hit twice, both by the crisis and by the restrictive measures taken by some states. The international community should fairly and objectively acknowledge the economic and social contribution made by migrants and seek to harness their development potentials by helping them to mitigate the impact the financial crisis and thus to play a greater role in economic recovery.

Secondly, managing migration is equally important. This involves effectively protecting their legitimate rights, combating xenophobia and related intolerances, better regulation and encouraging their contribution to local societies. They should also be allowed to earn a decent living for themselves and their families and thus help reducing pressures at their home countries. All countries should adopt a friendly and inclusive approach in working for solutions to problems faced by migrants in employment, family reunion, education, health care and social welfare and protect their basic human rights.

Thirdly, cooperation is the key. In today's world, countries are becoming increasingly interdependent. We stand or fall together. Like many other issues, migration also calls for enhanced international cooperation. We believe that countries of origin, of transit and of destination should work on the basis of shared responsibility and mutual respect and seek with an open and practical attitude to strengthen cooperation and exchange best practices if we all want to have a win-win outcome. Developed countries should honour their commitment on assistance to developing countries in the fields of financial, technical and human resources and trade, and help them to build up capacity to prevent and suppress illegal migration and human trafficking and to achieve sustainable development as the best way to tackle the problem of migration.

Mr. President,

Since the implementation of the reform and open door policy, along with the expansion of flourishing economic, trade and cultural exchanges with other countries, more and more Chinese have travelled abroad. At the same time, our fast economic and social development has attracted a huge number of foreigners to China. In 2009, the number of foreign visitors reached 44 million. China is no longer just a country of origin for migrants; it has also become a country of transit and of destination.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to the question of migration. In recent years, we have worked continuously to improve our immigration policy and related laws and regulations in light of new developments, with the view to enhancing the efficiency of immigration clearance and facilitating regular movement of persons. We have also beefed up law enforcement efforts in order to prevent and crack down on illegal migration activities. In 2009, we identified and detained 3,400 people trying to leave or enter China illegally, and received 48,500 people who were repatriated by foreign countries.

China is actively engaged in international cooperation in the field of migration. We have participated in every session of the “Global Forum on Migration and Development.” We have also joined regional dialogue mechanisms, such as the Inter-Governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC), the Colombo Process and the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT).

China has maintained good cooperation with the IOM. In 2007, China and IOM signed the “Memorandum of Understanding on Capacity Building for Migration Management in China”. By June of this year, all the projects in the memorandum were successfully implemented with positive results. The Chinese Government views favourably our second phase of cooperation projects with IOM. We are ready to further strengthen such cooperation. We are convinced that Director General Swing and IOM will continue to follow the new issues in the field of migration, deepen their exchanges and cooperation with all governments and play a greater role in helping developing countries to build up their capacity.

China will continue to work with the international community in our common effort to further facilitate regular movement of persons around the world in the interests of the development and prosperity of all countries.

Thank you