

Mr. Chairperson, Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Malta aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union.

We thank the Director-General for the presentation of his report, and we would like to welcome the new members Botswana, Swaziland, Central African Republic, Lesotho and Timor Leste who have joined the Organisation.

In recent years, Malta has witnessed a considerable increase in irregular migration flows, largely due to its geographical position. Given its high population density, coupled with limited human and financial resources, and having received nearly 13,195 illegal migrants since 2002, Malta is all too aware of the social and economic challenges faced as a direct consequence of illegal migration flows through the Mediterranean. Consequently, Malta has called upon other State actors and International Organisations, among them the International Organisation for Migration, to assist Malta in addressing and combating illegal migration, which is not only the result of international criminal activity, but which also brings with it tragedy and loss of life at sea.

Within this context, Malta is grateful to the International Organisation for Migration for its assistance in the creation and implementation of projects that support the Government of Malta in migration management. Together with Maltese Government Ministries and other International Organisations represented in Malta, the International Organisation for Migration has started to implement projects that support Malta in migration management. These include resettlement, both to the United States of America and other European Union Member States, assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes, and support and assistance to asylum seekers and migrants held in closed centres. We are grateful to the IOM for their technical cooperation support to the Government of Malta in all these fields, which go hand in hand with the human rights of migrants.

An intra – EU pilot project entitled - *Pilot Project for intra-EU re-allocation for Malta – EUREMA*, is currently underway and last month a group of 96 irregular migrants were assisted by IOM to leave Malta for Germany where they have begun new lives. Besides the 96 beneficiaries who left for Germany, 95 have departed for France, 6 for Luxembourg, 10 for the United Kingdom and another 6 for Portugal. Moreover, another 8 beneficiaries of international protection are expected to leave for Slovenia on the 29th November 2010.

This project aims to relocate beneficiaries of international protection from Malta to other EU Member States in a bid to help relieve some of the pressures Malta faces due to demographic and its geographic realities.

This project is carried out in close coordination and cooperation with the relevant government authorities, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and a local non-governmental organization.

This project contributes towards the implementation of the commitment towards solidarity in the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum and the Stockholm Programme, although more such efforts are required with a view to continue addressing the situation in Malta.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Government of Malta thanks the International Organisation for Migration for its ongoing assistance and looks forward to further strengthening the collaboration between Malta and the IOM with a view to coherently and effectively continue to address the challenges posed by irregular migration in the humane and constructive spirit to which we are committed.

Thank you