

Statement by Ambassador Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, Permanent Representative of Nepal, at the 99th Session of the IOM Council, November 30, 2010 in Geneva.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me extend warm felicitations to you on your well-deserved election to the Chair of the 99th session of the IOM Council. We are confident that with your wisdom, vast experiences and able leadership, we will reach a successful conclusion. Please be assured of our fullest co-operation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

My delegation places on record its appreciations to Director General Ambassador William Lacy Swing for his able leadership of the Organization in these challenging times.

I would also avail of this opportunity to welcome the new fellow members to the Organization, namely the Kingdom of Lesotho, Central African Republic, Republic of Botswana, ~~and~~ the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste *and the Kingdom of Swaziland.*

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Director General for his comprehensive report presented to the Council yesterday. We appreciate his vision, and share areas of concerns that were outlined.

Nepal welcomes the Director General's key priorities to enhance both institutional capacity and performance of the organization through Member State's ownership, collaborative partnership and enhancing staff professionalism, efficiency and ethical standards.

We believe that DG's constant engagements and interactions with representatives in a variety of forms including periodic information afternoons and special briefings can help bring the membership closer to the Organization and ensure its effective functioning.

We take positive note of his commitments on expanding the areas of capacity building and the ambit of humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

Human mobility has become a defining feature of the 21st century. Migration has emerged as a force for change. We welcome the World Migration Report 2010

published by the IOM calling for a comprehensive approach to capacity building to manage the migration and change. The Report provides the figure of 214 million international migrants which stands as the highest ever figure. The number has increased 'rapidly in the last few decades'. 40 million people became migrants in the first decade of the 21st century alone. Both push and pull factors of diverse kinds have contributed to this, ranging from domestic conflicts, coercion, insufficient economic opportunities, natural disaster and vagaries of climate change at home to the search for better way of life, better opportunities and safe environment in the destination countries.

The 2010 Report of the UN Secretary-General on International Migration and Development reveals some useful signs to establish migration as a predominant aspect of relations between the developing and the developed countries. Six out of every 10 international migrants (128 million) reside today in developed countries, and the majority of those (74 million) come from developing countries.

In line with the spirit of the report and mandate of the Organization, we emphasize that IOM needs to effectively assume the lead role in emerging issues related to migration. The first requisite for this will be enhanced resource availability and augmented capacity of the Organization. This will help make its presence widely visible and provide timely response to the needs of the affected people.

Mr. Chairman,

The developed countries are confronted with the shortage of workers. The workers, experts and youth from developing countries maintain vibrancy of economy in developed countries. If we go by the UN definition of youth between 15 to 24 years of age, almost 85% of the world's youth live in developing countries. In least developed countries, 70% of the population is below the age of 30. If this group of dynamic, productive and driving population can be engaged in productive and constructive channels, there is no reason why we could not create islands of creativity, innovation, stability and prosperity around the world. It is a win-win situation at both ends:

countries of origin using remittances as effective instrument of poverty alleviation and a source of development finance, and countries of destination maximizing the development potentials of migration.

The World Bank Migration and Development Factbook 2011 expects global remittance to reach \$325 billion in 2010, which is almost three times higher than the average annual flow of ODA. Remittance flows are expected to increase by 6.2 percent in 2011 and 8.1 percent in 2012, to reach \$374 billion by 2012 while such predictions have been rare in projection of foreign aid. In some countries remittances contribute almost 50% of their GDP. In my own country, the figure stands at 23%. Given the pivotal role of remittances in least developed countries, IOM can help in assessing the ways and means of sustaining the flow of remittances, channelling remittances towards productive investment and advancing trade and development interests of these countries. Non-monetary benefits from migration in forms of social capital resulting from flow of ideas, technology transfer, knowledge and skills are no less significant as an effective vehicle of socio-economic transformation. As we look to the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs in Turkey early next year, we feel that this aspect should be factored into development discourse for improving the life of over 800 million people living in the LDCs.

Several reports reveal wider diversity of ethnic and cultural groups than ever before. They show that women have come to constitute a substantial proportion of migrant workers reaching almost 50%. If this has to some extent contributed to the empowerment of women, they are also seen to be vulnerable to gender based discrimination, health related risks and trafficking. This calls for provisions for the protection of migrants rights and dignity. Easing migration process could save migrants from unnecessary cost and hurdles. The World Bank report of 2006 puts that migrants in average spend from USD 700 to USD 1700 unnecessarily owing to existing migration hurdles. The same report further argues that 'the wage disparity can be reduced by 10%, through eased migration, inter alia, there will be a welfare gain of USD 774 billion

annually.’ A more prosperous world is also going to be more peaceful, safer and stable. IOM, with its underlined objective of ‘promoting international cooperation on migration issues’, needs to play a proactive role in sensitizing the benefits of safe and well facilitated migration. This has become particularly important in the face of growing anti-immigration sentiments and stigmatization of migrants witnessed in various parts of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

We are pleased to note constructive engagements and cooperative relations with the Organization ever since Nepal became its member in 2006. We appreciate the critical support and cooperation, the IOM has provided for our migrant workers in times of distress. We also remain thankful for IOM’s technical support in the establishment of migration resource centre to provide pre-departure training and orientation to the potential migrant workers and facilitate regular migration process. IOM, as an overseas processing entity, is currently engaged in facilitating third country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees who have been sheltered in the refugee camps in Nepal for 2 decades. So far 36 thousands Bhutanese refugees have been resettled in third countries. I would like to avail this opportunity to thank the Core Group countries led by the United States of America for their willingness of burden sharing and thank IOM for facilitating the process on humanitarian ground.

Finally,

We welcome Director General’s commitment to achieving greater gender balance and geographically balanced staffing at all levels, and wish him all the best for the success of IOM’s new organisational structure. We look forward to further deepening cooperation and strengthening constructive partnership with the Organization.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.