

**STATEMENT AT THE NINETY-NINTH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL,
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 29 NOVEMBER-2 DECEMBER 2010.**

I would like to take this opportunity to address the IOM council on behalf of the World Health Organization. During last year's IOM Council, WHO announced its plans to collaborate more closely with IOM in light of the 2008 WHA Resolution on Migrant Health, and to organize a Global Consultation on migrant health in collaboration with IOM and the Ministry of Health and Social Policy of the Government of Spain. We are pleased to inform you that this has been accomplished.

The multi stakeholder Global Consultation took place in Madrid in March 2010. It allowed us to take stock of actions taken by Member States and partners and reach consensus on areas of priority for the way forward, which encompasses improved monitoring of migrant health, policy reorientation, effective use of legal instruments and development of health systems reflective of the diversity of today's societies. We are thankful to the Government of Spain for having hosted this event.

Consultation outcomes were reported to this year's WHA which addressed a progress report on the abovementioned 2008 Resolution on migrant health. In addition, during a WHA side event, the governments of Portugal and Spain highlighted the need for inclusive policies that facilitate access to health services for migrants and shared various models, supported by the governments of Bangladesh, Mexico and Canada as well as the IOM and WHO. Also at regional level, we witnessed important developments. For instance, the Regional Dialogue on the Health Challenges for Asian Labour Migrants, organized by IOM and UNDP in collaboration with partners in Bangkok in July 2010, and the Second Ibero American Forum on Migration and Development, held in El Salvador in July 2010, showed the need to give high priority to the existing gaps in access to affordable and appropriate health services for migrants. The fact that many countries of origin depend on remittances and destination countries depend on foreign workers, requires new approaches to social protection in health. Collaborations between countries of origin and destination in addressing health matters are still scarce today and need strengthening.

WHO is pleased to have joined the Global Migration Group since September and strongly supports its current emphasis on safeguarding the rights of migrants. As a new member, WHO intends to work closely with partner agencies such as IOM and other GMG members as improving the health of migrants will not be achieved by the health sector only.

Lastly, this month's GFMD in Mexico addressed health angles in several of its debates and many governments shared their approaches and models how to address and protect the health of their emigrating nationals and immigrants. These are some of the important steps forward. But, many migrants are still unable to access needed health services. Vulnerable groups such as those displaced by force as well as those in an irregular situation, women and children migrants whose health is greatly at risk due to violence, exploitation, poverty, marginalization and exclusive policies, still have little or no access to health services. Many migrants pay out of pocket for health services leading to delayed and inadequate care or self diagnoses and -self medication with detrimental consequences.

Such situations go against public health, human rights and economic principles. Denying access to preventive services and leaving migrant's health to be managed at the level of emergency care only, is not only a public health problem, it is also expensive.

WHO is well aware of the many challenges it faces in a globalized world with rapidly changing and increasingly complex migration flows. Health policies need to be reoriented, health systems need to develop migrant sensitive services and build the capacity of its workforce to better manage health issues associated with migration, social protection in health needs to be expanded to include migrants and their family members etc.

WHO will therefore continue its efforts to promote the health of migrants in collaboration with IOM and other partners. We look forward taking part in the debates of the coming days.

Thank you.