

**MICEM/7/2005**

**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL**

**Mr. Brunson McKinley**

**at the Ninetieth Session of the Council**

**29 November – 2 December 2005**

**Geneva**

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Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

**Migration in 2005**

1. Migration is the focus of international attention. In 2005, migration has been the subject of unprecedented international scrutiny. It has been a topic of intergovernmental consultation in every part of the world, from Brussels to Beijing and Bali, and from Vancouver to Vienna.
2. Three significant reports. This year saw the publication of a new *World Migration Report* from IOM; the *Report of the Global Commission on International Migration*; and the World Bank's *Global Economic Prospects 2006*.
3. *WMR 2005*. IOM's biennial report addressed the theme *Costs and Benefits of International Migration* in broad social, economic and political terms, and laid out the opportunities and challenges it offers.
4. GCIM Report. The GCIM Report *Migration in an Interconnected World* undertakes a comprehensive examination of the way states and other stakeholders are addressing the issue of international migration and puts forward both global principles for action and recommendations for enhanced inter-institutional cooperation.
5. GEP. The central theme of the World Bank's GEP 2006 is the economic implications of remittances, in particular, how policies can increase the role of migrant-created capital in reducing poverty. The report is an indication of the growing cooperation between IOM and the World Bank.
6. Convergence. Each of these documents has been developed from an independent standpoint, but there is a remarkable degree of convergence in both their views about the nature of contemporary migration and the broad policy orientations they propose.

The economic dimension of migration

7. Remittances. By now we are all conscious of the need to identify and reinforce the proper role of remittances in promoting development. The recorded amounts rise year after year, reaching USD 232 billion in the latest report of official flow, with USD 167 billion going to developing countries.
8. Labour migration in Asia. This year's meeting in Bali of the three-year-old Colombo Process saw a breakthrough. For the first time, Asian labour sending countries met at Ministerial level with counterparts in the receiving states of Asia and the Gulf and found major areas of

common interest. Asia is also the theatre of enhanced interagency cooperation on migration through the ambitious programme of research and publication undertaken by IOM and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

9. Business Advisory Board. The first meeting of the BAB was interesting and shows promise for the future. Through it we hope to involve the private sector more directly in the debate on the global labour market, where companies are already major players.

#### Institutional Developments.

10. IOM Council and the high-level dialogue. We see again this year that our Council has become the annual gathering of policy-makers in the field of migration. Next year's Council will be well placed to draw conclusions from the high-level dialogue on migration and development to take place in New York in September.

11. Expanded GMG. The concept of direct coordination by interested agencies in the Geneva Migration Group received a strong boost through the report of the Global Commission. On 15 December the GMG will meet to agree on enlarged membership. I shall propose that the GMG report regularly to the IOM Council, as it has in the past.

#### Other partners

12. Capacity-Building in the Regions. IOM's *Essentials of Migration Management* has made it possible to reinvigorate our training efforts for governments in the context of major regional consultative processes. The *International Agenda for Migration Management* has been a useful tool in those activities.

13. EU and its Neighbours. The Austrian Presidency of the European Union in the first semester of 2006 will focus on a Vienna Declaration on migration. IOM expects to play an important support role. The East-West migration axis is of growing importance to the states of the CIS. Our proposal for trans-Mediterranean dialogue between Europe and Africa can be useful in the joint effort to moderate clandestine flows.

14. Health. On November 16, WHO and IOM signed a Protocol covering five priority areas of cooperation. IOM is committed to assist states with the migration dimension of the avian influenza crisis.

#### **Year of natural disasters**

15. Sadly, 2005 was also a year dominated by natural disasters. IOM has played a leading role in the international response, bringing emergency and reconstruction help to tens of thousands of displaced victims.

16. Tsunami. Our assistance to Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand in the wake of the tsunami was instant. It continues to build up as we enter the reconstruction phase. In Aceh and on the East Coast of Sri Lanka, we have built thousands of transitional shelters. In Aceh we are assisting the former rebels to return as well to a new life in their communities.

17. Pakistan Earthquake. The Winter Race for shelter is still being run. The international community needs to inject more funds into this effort. In my recent visit to Pakistan, IOM reached an agreement to replicate the successful Aceh model for construction of schools, clinics and other public facilities. We hope to create employment and help resurrect community life beginning next spring.

18. Clusters. IOM has taken the lead coordination role in the shelter cluster in Pakistan, the first try-out of the new IASC cluster concept. We have had many partners in this enterprise, most importantly the IFRC.

19. Central America. With some regret I must report that we were unable to mobilize funding for the victims of the tropical storms in Guatemala and other countries of Central America. There too we could have helped significantly, as we did in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

### **Conclusion**

20. In a rapidly evolving world, migration is both a cause and a result of change. International migration, especially labour migration, generates a complex set of costs and benefits for the country of destination, migrant workers and country of origin. IOM remains committed to working with its Member States, institutional partners and the community at large in the design, development and implementation of policies that will better manage population mobility, ensure the protection of migrants and enable them to contribute effectively to the social and economic development of their countries of origin and employment.