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Meeting 90th Council
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NEW ZEALAND

IOM 90th COUNCIL SESSION

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY MR ANDREW LOCKHART, REGIONAL MANAGER,
IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND

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New Zealand Statement to the IOM 90th Council Session, 1 December 2005

Mr Chairman,

New Zealand joins the many others at this meeting to congratulate Ambassador Khan on taking up your appointment as the Chairperson.

We also join the others to welcome the new members to the IOM and look forward to sharing your participation and involvement as members.

The discussions over the past two days have emphasised that migration is a complex issue and the dedicated work of the IOM has been important in supporting the membership to respond and address these issues and to collaborate both at a local, regional and international level.

We would like to congratulate IOM on the work on the *Essentials for Migration Management*. This is a valuable resource for all members to use in the development and enhancement of their immigration systems and in developing capability and it provides a very real example of the support that the IOM can provide.

New Zealand also welcomes the establishment of a Business Advisory Board and is looking forward to receiving the Terms of Reference and the forthcoming analytical reports in due course.

The focus in the past has tended to be on the countries of origin and development needs. But migration is more than that. As Chairman Khan pointed out, migration is still seen as a "soft issue" and suffers to a large extent from neglect on the local, regional and international policy making level. Migration is Business, as the Business Advisory Board emphasised. Migration is also about balancing security considerations and facilitation of genuine migrants for the benefit of economic and social development. Most importantly: migration includes settling well into the host country, regardless of length of stay. Only then can the full benefits of migration be reaped.

The economic dimensions of migration can not be emphasised enough. Changes in trade and technology combined with population changes will see the issue of labour migration to meet labour market demands grow in importance over the next five to ten years.

New Zealand has itself experienced strong economic growth over the last ten years resulting in low unemployment at 3.4% and the emergence of skill and labour shortages. There are many aspects to the strategy to deal with these shortages but immigration and the migration programme have a key role to play.

New Zealand's migration programme bring 45,000 new migrants to New Zealand each year with 60% of these places dedicated to skilled and business migration.

The new skilled migrant category introduced at the end of 2003 focuses more on the skills New Zealand needs and proactively seeks to attract those with these skills to jobs in New Zealand. This is expected to improve the outcomes for both New Zealand and for those migrating and is supplemented with strengthened settlement support.

The area of labour migration is one where the IOM can play an important role alongside organisations such as the ILO and WTO in ensuring the migration issues we such as those raised at this meeting are being addressed in a comprehensive way. These include such things as managed migration, brain drain, brain waste and wage differentials that see many temporary migrant workers reduced to second class citizens.

New Zealand congratulates the IOM for the excellent work that it does in the operational area which for New Zealand includes the areas of refugee movement, verification and health screening. The IOM has proved to be both consultative and responsive in these areas and have identified and followed up where there is a shared interest across members, such as in the area of health screening.

Whilst this area works well, New Zealand would encourage greater consultation and dialogue with member countries at the early stages of Strategic policy developments and initiatives. Proposed changes in the areas of the overhead charge, the new Stranded Migrant Facility and the proposed Administrative Centre in the Western hemisphere are examples where early consultation could have been improved.

Given the growing importance of immigration for members of the IOM it is critical to ensure that decision making on strategic issues and initiatives reflect the views of the membership in terms of good governance and transparency. We welcome the Strategy document and the key issues it raises. There now needs to be active dialogue with the membership on the most efficient and effective way to ensure the outcomes from this document are realised with full membership support.

We thank the IOM for a good working relationship they have with New Zealand and in particular the support for the refugee resettlement programme. New Zealand also recognises and thanks those involved for the important role IOM has played during the past year in responding to natural disasters in the world, especially in the aftermath of the Tsunami and the earthquake in Pakistan.

Thank you, Mr Chairman