

Statement by the Delegation of Nepal at the 103rd Session of the IOM Council
November 27, 2013

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director-General
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates**

First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. I also congratulate the vice chairs and the rapporteurs on their respective elections. Please be assured of my delegation's full support in your efforts to lead the business of this Council to a successful conclusion.

We appreciate the commitment and dedication of the Director General Ambassador William Lacy Swing and commend his proficient leadership of the Organization. We also express our deep appreciation to the IOM staff for their hard work and dedicated service.

My delegation welcomes new members and observers to the Organization.

We welcome the Director General's report entitled "Continuity, coherence and change—Guideposts to dignified, orderly, safe and humane mobility". His report presents succinctly the 'highs and lows' of the past, clear priorities for the present and focused 'guideposts' for the future. As we try to present a compelling case about why migration matters for post-2015 development agenda, the continuity of three-pillar priorities of proprietorship, partnership and professionalism coupled with the introduction of new initiatives for change seem to be quite promising in the present context.

We concur with the Director General's assessment that the United Nations second High-level Dialogue's consensus declaration is a milestone in our efforts to make migration dignified, safe, humane and orderly. We support the Organization's follow-up actions towards implementing the key recommendations of the declaration. It is our view that a due focus has to be given to the aspects like protecting and promoting the rights of migrant workers, addressing the plight of migrants in crisis and enhancing migration partnership and cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

We are living at a time when one in every seven persons is a migrant. This 'mega-trend' of migration is likely to remain for some decades. One of the challenges for us, then, is to manage migration by linking it to development. We should ensure that migrants are seen as 'development agents' in both sending and receiving countries. To achieve this objective, we have to fight the 'anti-migration' sentiment that is unfortunately prevalent in some places.

Today, our societies are increasingly becoming multicultural. Migration has a significant role to play in this process. Respecting the rights of migrants and promoting their well-being would be an essential step towards having harmonious societies in real terms.

Migration's contribution is more significant in the context of the least developed countries. At present the share of remittances in the national economies of these countries is on the rise. Remittances cannot, however, be considered a substitute for FDI, ODA, debt relief or other public sources of finance for development. While the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the LDCs underlines its importance as private financial resources, it also calls for an enhanced and scaled-up level of international support to address a multitude of development challenges they confront.

Mr. Chairman,

Migration has been a backbone of Nepalese economy for last many years. We have witnessed a growing trend of migration for foreign employment. About 1500 people leave the country every day for employment abroad. We have about 2.8 million Nepalese working abroad as migrants, which is about 10% of the total population of the country. Remittances contribute approximately 23 percent of our GDP at present.

Foreign employment has become a compulsion, not a choice of the Nepalese people. However, dealing with this compulsion of people has always remained a top priority of the Government of Nepal. We have three-fold challenges in this regard: regularization of this sector, producing skilful workforce and ensuring their rights in the country of employment. Many of our migrant workers are facing various problems due to low level of skills. This results in low quality jobs with significant hazards to their safety and well-being.

To address these challenges the government has taken a number of measures including the formulation of substantial legislation and procedures to promote safe and quality migration. We are ever effortful to promote migration and development linkages for the creation of jobs and the overall development of the country.

My delegation highly values the constructive support we have been receiving from IOM. We value IOM's technical support and cooperation extended to the government agencies and our labour migrants.

The Government of Nepal appreciates IOM's assistance for the third-country resettlement of over 75,000 Bhutanese refugees. This problem, we believe, needs a lasting solution that allows dignified, safe and voluntary repatriation of the refugees to their homeland. We view the third country resettlement as only a short term measure.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we would like to reiterate our commitment to work closely with IOM for the overall management of migration. We expect IOM's assistance in capacity building, skills development of our migrants and factoring the 'fruits' of migration into development gains. We believe that it is only through a stronger partnership among IOM, its member states, civil society and the international community that we can harness the development gains of migration.

Thank you.