

IOM 105th Council Session

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director General,
Madam Deputy Director General,

I would like to begin by thanking you for convening this Council session. I hereby renew the support that Portugal has consistently striven to give to IOM and reiterate my country's commitment to the goal of the organization. I would also like to warmly welcome IOM's new members and observers, as well as to our new Chairman.

I will now focus on specific matters which are of specific interest to Portugal, while sharing and reiterating the views already expressed earlier on behalf of the European Union.

Portugal strongly welcomes the two main lines of action that the Director General has recently alluded to: working to transform the narrative on migration at the global level, and how to manage constructively cultural diversity. Portugal, as a country that finds its place on every stage of the migratory process, believes that it is not only important but urgent that public and private perspectives towards migration be subject to thorough discussion at the political, economic, social and academic levels.

We believe that a significant dimension of the effort to improve the narrative on migration is connected to the principles and values woven into such narrative. Ethical labour recruitment practices, governed by transparency and efficient regulation, for instance, have a strong impact in public perception of migration and of migrants' role in society and economy. In international forums, this discussion would benefit from being expanded to include rule of law, predictability and the fight against arbitrary practices towards migrants at the national and sub-national levels, including border control, the concession or withdrawal of work permits and, finally, expulsion and repatriation.

Ethical practices and, overall, the rule of law, allow for the management of migration by stronger institutions and prevent ad hoc, potentially abusive action by public authorities. They help fight extortion and abuse of power at borders and labour inspections; finally, a broadened perspective of ethics in the context of migration, in the terms described above, reinforce a dignified and humane vision of the migrant in the destination country, thereby stressing the fact that migrants are people, not numbers.

This brings me, Mr. Chairman, to the second and final point of my statement. Portugal has been, and will continue to be, a strong supporter of a human-rights based approach to migration. In the post-2015 development agenda, we believe – and hope – that this dimension will increase in importance as the deadline for a document approaches. We also believe that a human rights based approach can play a decisive role in overcoming cultural friction and bringing to fruition cultural diversity in the most positive and constructive way.

The world will continue to shrink in a significant number of ways. Migration, as any complex phenomenon, will be the subject of multiple influences and will itself be a strong influence on all countries touched by it. It is incumbent upon us, and on IOM as the leading international and multilateral organization for migrations, to make sure that the wealth of knowledge and development triggered by migration serves humankind.

I thank you