

International Dialogue on Migration 2012
Managing Migration in Crisis Situations

Intersessional Workshop
Moving to Safety – Migration Consequences of Complex Crises
24 and 25 April 2012

H.E. Ambassador Christian Strohal
Introductory Remarks

Excellencies,
Dear Deputy Director General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the first workshop of the IOM International Dialogue on Migration in 2012, “Moving to Safety – Migration Consequences of Complex Crises”.

It is a pleasure and honour for me, as Council Chair, to open this event.

As you know, the International Dialogue on Migration - the IDM - was created by the IOM Member States in 2001. It is one of the pioneering fora for global debate and exchange on current and diverse migration issues. The IDM fulfils an institutional mandate of IOM (I quote the IOM Constitution) **“to provide a forum to States as well as international and other organizations for the exchange of views and experiences, and the promotion of co-operation and co-ordination of efforts on international migration issues”** as rooted in the IOM’s Constitution. The IOM 12-Point Strategy, which Member States passed in 2007, affirms IOM’s role in “promoting, facilitating and supporting regional and global debate and dialogue on migration, including through the International Dialogue on Migration...”.

Allow to me underline a few other features of the IDM: it is an **inclusive and open forum**, which welcomes IOM Member and Observer States, international and civil society organizations, migrants themselves, academic experts, and on occasion the media and the private sector. The IDM aims to promote an informal space for genuine, substantive and constructive debate, which allows all actors to make their voices heard. As I look around the room, I am happy to see that this workshop lives up to this ideal of a diverse audience.

For **2012**, the IOM membership selected **“Managing Migration in Crisis Situations”** as the overarching theme to guide the IDM. This subject will also be discussed in the SCPF by drawing on the debates we are having in the IDM.

Today and tomorrow **we start this process** with the first IDM workshop in the 2012 series, “Moving to safety: migration consequences of complex crises”, which the Deputy Director General will introduce in more detail.

After the SCPF in May, the process will continue with the **second workshop of the year – “Protecting migrants during times of crisis: immediate responses and sustainable**

strategies” – which will take place on 13 and 14 September. It will further develop some of the themes we will be discussing over the coming two days and during the May SCPF, but specifically consider the situation of migrants caught in crises, conflicts and natural disasters in their destination countries with no means of returning home or ensuring their own safety.

In **October, the IDM will go to New York**, reaching out to the diplomatic and UN community there in order to flag the issue in a more global migration context and also with a view to the preparations for the High-Level Dialogue in the UNGA in 2013. A half-day seminar, organised in collaboration with the International Peace Institute on 9 October, will be devoted to the theme: “Migrants in times of crisis: an emerging protection challenge”..

A thorough debate of the theme is more than just timely. I hardly need to remind you of the events in and around Libya last year to underline the topicality of the theme. I believe it is a duty for us who are engaged on the issue of migration to pay urgent attention to the suffering such crises entail for migrants, and to engage in a constructive debate on practicable, operative solutions.

In this regard, **the IOM Member States have agreed that IOM’s institutional response mechanisms need to be further strengthened.** In December 2011, on the occasion of IOM’s 60th anniversary, Member States adopted as a first step the **Resolution on the Establishment of a Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism.**

We will continue this process this year by further developing the concept of migration crisis and IOM’s programmatic activities in responding to migration crises and assisting and protecting migrants stranded in crises. As I have said before, this work will take place through IOM’s formal governing bodies’ meetings, our Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance (SCPF), in May and October 2012.

As usual, the IDM year will conclude at the IOM Council in November. It is my hope that **by that time we will have advanced in our thinking and come to some conclusions on a possible IOM operational framework for managing migration crises** as well as on improved mechanisms and measures to assist and protect migrants caught in crisis situations.

I am pleased to support the IDM this year in my role as Council Chair. I wish us fruitful deliberations over the course of the next two days and encourage you to contribute actively to the discussions this year.

Thank you.