



Opening REMARKS

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International Dialogue on Migration 2012
Managing Migration in Crisis Situations

Intersessional Workshop
Protecting migrants during times of crisis:
immediate responses and sustainable strategies
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Your Excellencies,
Dear Ambassador Strohal,
Distinguished Officials,
Members of the United Nations Family,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the second workshop of the International Dialogue on Migration of 2012. I'd like to thank Ambassador Strohal for his support to the IDM this year and for his succinct summary of the previous discussions which I unfortunately could not attend.

In my remarks, I would like to (*slide – outline*) chart a brief overview of:

- (a) IOM's involvement in crises which had a significant impact on migrant populations; and
- (b) Some steps that IOM has taken to ensure that we are prepared for similar situation in the future.

I.- Response to Migration in crisis

- A. Kuwait. As early as 1992, IOM repatriated international migrants stranded in the Middle East following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. In less than six months, IOM helped 165,000 people escape the fighting and return home to Egypt and various countries in Asia.
- B. Lebanon. In 2006, during the conflict between Israel and Lebanon, IOM organized the evacuation and return of some 13,500 migrant workers. Many of them were female migrant domestic workers who had been isolated in their employers' homes and had been unable to seek safety and assistance.
- C. MENA (*Slide*) Then came 2011 and with it uprisings all across North Africa, as all of you will remember well. Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers who had been the motor of the Libyan economy fled the country – that is, if they were among the more fortunate. Others remained – and remain to this day – stranded inside Libya and some became the targets of xenophobia, violence and suspicion in the turmoil that engulfed the country. These cases demonstrate that where respect for the human rights of migrants is weak

and anti-migrant sentiment is rife, migrants are especially exposed and vulnerable when extreme situations of conflict and natural disasters develop.

- D. Syria (*Slide*) As our attention turns to the deeply worrying situation in Syria, IOM has already responded to requests by numerous governments to assist in the evacuation of their nationals from Syria. To date, IOM has helped to evacuate more than 1,300 foreign nationals from Syria to countries as far apart as Bangladesh, Chile, Romania, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Côte d'Ivoire.

II.- Steps taken for Future Emergencies (*slide*)

As Mohammed Abdiker and Gervais Appave will elaborate further, **migration crises** – which are humanitarian crises in which the movement of people is one of the most significant features – take different shapes and forms. And as the examples I cited show, crises in which migrants are among the primary victims are not new. Human mobility is on the increase, however, and potentially crisis-prone areas of the world are host to growing migrant populations. Such migration crises are likely, therefore, to become more frequent. IOM has taken a number of steps to ensure it is prepared to face similar situations in the future:

- A. Inter-agency collaboration:** close cooperation with our humanitarian partners is paramount and a guiding principle of IOM's involvement in international humanitarian responses. The joint humanitarian evacuations cell set up by High Commissioner Antonio Guterres and myself last year in the context of the crisis in Libya was a particular successful example of inter-agency collaboration and we are pleased to see this model continue. We will hear about the functioning of this mechanism later on today from a representative of UNHCR who was directly involved in the cell.
- B. Predictability of response:** (*Slide: MEFM*) rapid mobilization of resources is and remains a challenge, especially in a humanitarian crisis where the difference between one day and the next is measured in human lives. At the 100th Council in December 2011, IOM Member States decided to establish the IOM Migration Emergency Response Mechanism, which represents a major step forward in improving the Organization's preparedness to migration crises. I would like to thank all donors who have already made contributions to this fund. I have recently authorized the first activation of the mechanism to enhance IOM's response in Syria.
- C. Organizational coherence:** IOM constantly strives to improve its service delivery and the support it provides to governments and migrants alike. As we draw lessons from our extensive field experience, we felt the need to sharpen the focus on the aspect of human mobility in crisis situations. This year we have worked, in consultation with the IOM membership and our partners, to bring together our expertise in human mobility and crisis response into a coherent operational framework.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all speakers who have come from near and far to contribute the points of view and experiences to the debate:

We are particularly honoured by the presence of *(Slide: with names, titles)*

Her Excellency Dipu Moni the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh;
His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat the Minister of Foreign Affairs and African Integration of Chad;
His Excellency Joseph Lual Achuil the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management of South Sudan;
The Director General Claus Sørensen for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission
And other high-level participants

... as well as many others who – from the podium or from the floor – will add to the exchange of ideas, experiences and practices and joint learning which are the hallmarks of our IDM.

I wish us all a successful workshop.
