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Remarks by

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for Internal Administration
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**on behalf of
the Portuguese Republic and of the Presidency
of the Council of the European Union**

**Excellencies,
Ministers,
Ambassadors,**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to start by thanking IOM for the kind invitation extended to the Presidency of the Council of the European Union to be here today and brief this distinguished audience on some of our initiatives on the subject of Migrations.

Portugal chose this important issue as one of the main priorities of our Presidency of the Council of European Union. The choice was made bearing in mind:

- **The urgent need to share and deal with migratory issues, in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility;**
- **The fact that answers to this phenomenon cannot be found strictly at national level, but rather in a regional and global perspective – and with special attention to the North/South and South/South migratory flows;**
- **The strategic line of thought that points out that migration policies should be multi-dimensional and coherent, covering management of migratory flows, integration of migrant communities and promotion of development.**
- **The need to involve international organizations (such as IOM) and NGOs in the decision-making and enforcement of policies.**

Migration has many facets. The tragic images we see each day from the media should make us keep in mind its role as a tool for economic and social development. Of the countries of origin (by making the most of remittances and facilitating circular and temporary migrations that will foster cooperation

and co-development that, in turn, will support return and reintegration). But also of Europe, as the European economic, social and demographic backdrop recommends a global and balanced policy that regards migration as a fundamental issue. The success of this policy will certainly be beneficial to all parties involved.

According to the new Lisbon Treaty the member States

will keep the competence to set admission rules. Yet, the European Union badly needs better coordination - in deed, a common and integrated migration policy. With this purpose, various bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements have been signed and several EU legal instruments have been put forward - such as a Directive on family reunion, a Directive on long term resident status and two Directives concerning the admission of researchers and the admission of students.

Bearing these objectives in mind, Portugal organised a High Level Conference on Legal Migration in mid-September, which helped emphasise the need to promote, by all possible means, legal migratory flows.

As it is known, the Commission has put forward two proposals that we fully support. Those Directive proposals concern the common framework of rights of legally employed third-country nationals already accepted in a Member-State (who do not hold a long-term residence permit), and set common acceptance requirements and residence of highly qualified workers. The Presidency supports these initiatives and we are confident that, in due time, its implementation will be fruitful.

The Portuguese Republic also organised the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Migration that recently took place in Algarve. During this Meeting, Barcelona Partners and European Union Ministers and High Representatives underlined the need to strengthen joint management of migratory flows in a spirit of partnership, shared responsibility, mutual benefit and solidarity. As a sign of clear support, the European Commission promptly announced that, as of the beginning of 2008, five million euros would be made available to finance the projects suggested and agreed to be implemented during the Euromed Meeting. Germany offered its expertise to carry out the agreed workshop on return and readmission of emigrants, whilst Morocco will carry out the workshop on management of legal migration for seasonal workers. Other States expressed their commitment to very concrete initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many signs show us the need for greater inclusion of development-related dimensions in legal migration planning and outlining and also in the drafting of circular migration and mobility partnership initiatives.

Three main issues encompass Portugal's action in the field of migration and development:

- Firstly, the importance of remittances should be outlined, bearing in mind its potential for development. The Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting in Algarve launched

efforts to reduce the transaction costs of remittances. In that occasion, we took the opportunity to present the prototype of a EUROMED website regarding remittances and announced our availability to take part in efforts to facilitate effective channelling of financial capital flows into actual investment leading to development;

- **Secondly, it is vital to promote ways that help avoid or mitigate *brain drain*. While it is certain that development cooperation cannot resolve these issues *per se*, it can provide instruments to identify key sectors that require adjustment. In order to counterbalance this trend, the EU should support initiatives to ensure the implementation of Codes of Conduct for ethical recruitment of highly-skilled workers, namely those in the health and education sectors.**
- **Finally, the role of the Diasporas has to be taken in due consideration. Development can be stimulated through the activation and reinforcement of political, economic, social and cultural ties by migrants with their countries of origin and destination. Immigrant associations, for instance, should be seen as players in the development cooperation policy making. Alongside other stakeholders, they can effectively serve as partners in co-development projects that allow:**
 - i) **use of migrants' human and social capital in their countries of origin;**
 - ii) **foment of opportunities for migrant reintegration in their home countries; and**
 - iii) **better integration of migrants in the destination countries' societies. Thus, the effect of transnational entrepreneurial activities upon home and destination country development must be further conceived and discussed.**

Portugal acknowledges that attaining these purposes largely depends upon the need to foster and promote dialogue and coherence at the local, national, regional and international levels, and thus we became deeply involved in the drafting of Council Conclusions to the European Commission's report on Policy Coherence for Development, which were adopted at the General Affairs and External Relations Council.

My final remark will be on the importance of the

coming EU/AFRICAN Summit. The aim of the Summit that will still occur under the Portuguese Presidency is basically to set the general goals of the EU/Africa relations in the upcoming years, a crucial goal.

We sincerely believe that Europe and Africa must work together to find solutions to our common problems. We aim at the adoption of a joint strategy on specific cooperation areas and at common positions regarding important issues on the international agenda.

Concrete initiatives such as the ones I mentioned in the last few minutes point out the way forward. We sincerely believe that a global and coherent approach to migration can extend the possibilities for mobility and can ensure that all stakeholders and parties involved can draw benefits therefrom. Well-managed legal migration and instruments such as circular migration and mobility partnerships not only will reinforce coherence and dialogue, but also, more importantly, can allow for more efficient transfers of human, social and financial capital between origin and destination countries.

Furthermore, the increasingly debated issues of co-development also rely upon legal possibilities for migrants and countries to contribute to poverty reduction, capacity and infra-structure building, good governance and rule of law reinforcement, investment in financial sectors of countries of origin.

Let us join efforts and work fast!

Thank you for your attention!