

WORKING GROUP ON IOM–UN RELATIONS AND THE IOM STRATEGY

Twelfth meeting

22 April 2016

UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENTS

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1. As part of the continuing discussions between IOM and the United Nations on the IOM–UN relationship, an informal briefing was held in New York on 18 April 2016 for United Nations Member States. The briefing was convened by the President of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, Mr Mogens Lykketoft, and given by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Jan Eliasson, and the IOM Director General. The following statements given at the briefing are attached for information:

- Annex I: Opening remarks by Mr Mogens Lykketoft, President of the seventieth session of the General Assembly
- Annex II: Remarks by Mr Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Annex III: Statement by Mr William Lacy Swing, IOM Director General

2. At its meeting on 19 April 2016, the General Committee of the United Nations General Assembly decided to recommend that the General Assembly adopt a new agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and IOM. The following documents relating to this request are attached for information:

- Annex IV: Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the seventieth session (document A/70/233), and an extract from the *Journal of the United Nations*

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Briefing on UN-IOM relations

4pm, 18 April 2016, CR1

**Opening remarks by H.E. Mr Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th session of the General Assembly**

Excellencies, Deputy Secretary-General Mr Jan Eliasson, Director General Mr William Lacy Swing, ladies and gentlemen, you are all very welcome to this informal meeting.

Exactly one year ago, the world was shocked to the core by the loss of nearly 800 migrants in one single incident in the Mediterranean Sea.

Today, we are hearing some equally disturbing but unconfirmed reports of loss on a similar scale.

I sincerely hope that these reports will be proven to be untrue.

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They do, however, illuminate the context in which we must view migration today.

It is not a new phenomenon.

It is a human reality.

It is part of our history, part of our present and will very much be part of our future.

Every UN member states knows from their national experiences that migration contributes to sustainable development and that migrants have, since time immemorial, contributed to the social and economic advancement both of countries of origin and countries of destination.

Migration also, however, poses political, cultural and other challenges for many countries – all of which must be addressed within the framework of international human rights law and international law more broadly

Given today's refugee and migration situation across the globe, world leaders have two major meetings coming up through to address these challenges –

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the World Humanitarian Summit in just over one month and the high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 19 September on large movement of refugees and migrants.

IOM, as the organization leading the international effort on migration, plays a key role in addressing this important issue, together with the UN.

It helps to protect migrant rights, to assist displaced people and migration-affected communities, including in the areas of resettlement and returns.

The UN and the IOM have a strong mutual interest in strengthening their institutional relationship.

I am therefore very pleased to be able to organise this briefing and look forward to hearing the presentations from our speakers and the views of the membership on the evolving UN-IOM relationship.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS AT BRIEFING TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON UNITED NATIONS-
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (UN-IOM) RELATIONS****New York, 18 April 2016**

[as prepared for delivery]

I am very pleased to be here, together with Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As a well-known and much respected head of the leading intergovernmental migration agency active all over the world, Bill needs no introduction in this room and in this company.

Whilst IOM is not formally part of the UN system, we can at least be considered cousins! Both at Headquarters and in the field, our working relationship is very close as you all know.

There has been much debate over the years, about the place and role of migration in the UN and also about the relationship between IOM and the UN. Ten years ago, for instance, the Global Commission on International Migration proposed that IOM become the leading global agency for migration in the UN System.

In recent years, there has been a dramatically sharpened focus on refugees and migration both on the national and international agendas. Our deliberations and thinking about migration has also broadened and deepened.

The 2013 Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development recognized the contributions of migration to the achievement of the MDGs. This paved the way for including migration in the new transformative sustainable development agenda adopted by all Member States last September in New York.

The new Sustainable Development Goals address the drivers of involuntary migration. They also call for well-managed migration policies and for reducing the costs and enhancing the benefits of migration.

All this reflects a paradigm shift in the role of migration on the United Nations' agenda. The success of the government-led Global Forum on Migration and Development established in 2007, has also played a crucial role in this change of perspective.

Today, the reality both on the ground and at the policy level is pushing us to update our approach even further and take qualitative stages forward in our work and approach on migration.

Globally, the number of international migrants — persons living in a country other than where they were born — reached an estimated 244 million in 2015. This is an increase of 71 million, or over 40 per cent, compared to the year 2000.

These figures are likely to increase in the future. Persistent economic and social inequalities are driving much of migration movements. Ineffective governance, high unemployment and a general lack of opportunities often exacerbate these trends. Another factor affecting the growing migration is demographic disparities, with populations ageing in some countries and continuing high birth rates in others.

On displacement, the number of persons forced to flee within and across borders has reached a staggering 60+ million. Nobody in this room needs to be reminded that this figure is higher than at any time since the founding of the UN. Clearly we are at crisis point.

This figure is unlikely to drop soon. Displacement situations are becoming more protracted. New outflows occur and continue, growingly also as a result of floods and droughts related to climate change. And voluntary return is at an all-time low.

International solutions are needed more than ever. And they are also in the national interest of individual countries, I would claim.

Given these realities, the UN needs to work even more closely with IOM. The two organizations must together continue to respond to the large movements of refugees and migrants, often under unsafe, uncontrolled and precarious circumstances.

We should also recognize that IOM is well positioned to assist in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda, as you know, calls on governments to facilitate mobility of people and orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration.

This can be achieved through effective international cooperation and through well-planned and well-managed migration policies. IOM has considerable expertise in this area and can offer valuable assistance to Member States.

All of these factors — the attention to migration issues as part of the 2030 Agenda, the record number of persons on the move, and the need for international solutions in response to recent large population movements — point to a clear conclusion:

A closer working relationship between the UN and IOM is not only natural and desirable. It is also needed for achieving our new development goals for 2030.

An agreement that sets out a closer relationship between the United Nations and IOM would facilitate IOM's participation in a number of United Nations coordination mechanisms, globally and in the field.

This would enhance the collaboration between the IOM and the United Nations Funds and Programmes as well as its Specialized Agencies. This in turn would have a direct positive impact on the ground. And it would make possible a more effective multilateral response to the mounting challenges of migration, to the benefit of millions of people.

In November 2015, the IOM Council asked its Director General to investigate how the legal relationship between the UN and IOM could be improved.

The Secretary-General is now seeking the approval of the General Assembly to enter into substantive negotiations over a new legal relationship. The Secretary-General has asked that a new item be included in the agenda of the 70th session of the General Assembly.

If approval by the General Assembly is granted, the Secretary-General will enter into negotiations with IOM. He will present a new relationship agreement to the General Assembly later in the 70th session.

The Secretary-General and I hope that, with the approval of the General Assembly, the newly approved relationship agreement can be signed on the occasion of the very important 19 September Summit which is to address large movements of refugees and migrants.

With these remarks, let me now turn over the floor to my dear colleague, Bill Swing. After that, we would welcome your comments and questions.

Thank you.



Statement by
H.E. Mr William Lacy Swing
Director General of the International Organization for Migration
at the briefing on the cooperation between
the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations
New York, 18 April 2016

Thank you very much Mr President;

Mr Deputy Secretary-General,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour for me to be with you today and I wish to thank you, Mr President, for this very important initiative you have taken, which is so much in line with the personal commitment and interest that you have shown throughout your mandate on the question of migration. I am very grateful to you for that. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General. He has been a driving force in this whole debate about migration over several years now and a mentor for many of us who are trying to work purposefully in the field of migration. I will not keep you long. I would like to make just three points so that we may be able to get to the discussion very promptly.

I will, first of all, give you a little background on IOM. Secondly, I will talk about IOM-UN relations, and thirdly, I will talk in a more general way about the way forward. I do this in recognition of your role here in New York. I want to make sure that you have the same level of knowledge and understanding as your counterparts in Geneva who work on this on a more regular basis. It is only fair that we should make sure you have access to the same information.

We were founded in 1951, largely joined at the hip, if you will, with UNHCR, our traditional partner over the last 65 years. Former High Commissioner, and good friend, António Guterres used to say that the problem was that, while we were born as twins, they lost IOM's birth certificate. And in point of fact, our relationship over the years has been very close. We have worked assiduously together on many, many issues, but IOM's Member States have always wanted to preserve our independence, our agility, our ability to produce a fine product quickly and at low cost. And so we have stayed independent. We initially were founded to bring European refugees ravaged by the Second World War to safe shores and new lives. We thought we would go out of existence after that but then a series of things happened. We suddenly had massive displacement. We had the Hungarian Revolution 60 years ago. We began to see displacement-producing revolutions in various parts of the world – Indochina, the Congo, Central America and elsewhere, and our operations became much more regionalized. And then in 1990, the third phase of our development began, roughly around the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall. We became a truly global organization.

A few simple figures tell the story: 20 years ago we had 67 Member States. Today, we have 162. We had a quarter of a billion dollar budget. Today it is 1.5 billion. We had 120 field locations; today, we have 480. We had 1,000 staff then; today, we have 10,000. We had nearly 700 projects then; and today we have nearly 3,000. The growth has been exponential. In point of fact, what we have been witnessing is the importance and significance of migration in recent times. This trend is going to continue if we are to believe the demographers and the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. We believe that it will be a mega-trend of our century; a global issue on the agenda and docket of every government in the world.

We have continued to expand in response to the complexity of migratory realities. Why do we provide assistance for out-of-country voting, like the South Sudan independence referendum? Why do we assist in the reintegration of former combatants of fighting forces, like the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka or the ex-FARC in Colombia? Because these are responses to the consequences of forced migration. They contribute to population stabilization. They bring order and dignity to the lives of migrants and help create conditions for voluntary movement. We do all sorts of things – I can go into that in the question and answer period – but basically, we are available. We have just moved 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada at the request of the Canadian Prime Minister. We responded immediately to Ebola, built the first three Ebola Treatment Units outside Monrovia. The idea is to maintain the flexibility to help migrants and to help Member States to make human mobility something that occurs voluntarily and with dignity.

Turning to the issue of our relationship with the UN, we have, over the years, worked closely together, but we have also entered into some formal agreements. In 1993, we became a Permanent Observer, and I am proud to say that the then-President of the General Assembly was none other than the current Deputy Secretary-General. In 1996, we signed a cooperation agreement. Then in 2007, IOM Member States decided to review the relationship and at that time the importance of migration was not as evident as it is now; eight years later, IOM Member States asked to review the relationship once again.

Finally, I would like to make some observations about where we are in our evolving relationship with the UN. It has been well laid out in the Deputy Secretary-General's remarks which you will have shortly, either online or in hardcopy. In a certain sense, what has brought us to this new review of our relationship is that the earth has moved beneath our feet. What do I mean by that? First of all, we have, now suddenly, the global issue, this mega-trend of so many people on the move – one in every seven persons in the world being in some form of migratory status, including my own family, by the way, on four continents. We have also had the issue of the UNDOCO document which decided – correctly, in legal terms, but not necessarily politically – that although our relations with the UN were tighter and better and more effective than ever, we could no longer be members of the UN country teams because, by definition, we are not part of the UN system. We were informed that we could no longer sign UN Development Assistance Frameworks, although we have signed 69 of them. We were also concerned about IOM access to multi-donor trust funds. Although we are still in most of the UN country teams, our overall relationship has been somewhat affected.

In addition to all of this, there is the good news that migration is now incorporated in the Sendai document on disaster risk reduction, in the SDGs that were approved last September, and in the Paris Agreement on climate change of last December. Basically, migration is in the UN, but migration does not have a home in the UN. There is nowhere in the organigram that speaks of migration.

Against this background, our Member States decided to appoint a Working Group to consider options. It met throughout 2014 and 2015. I decided last year to seek approval from Member States to move from the non-binding informal discussions that the Deputy Secretary-General and I were having, to more formal discussions and eventual negotiations, because it seemed to me that it was time to move ahead on the question. This is however –

and this is why we are briefing you today – a Member State issue. I have tried to stay totally neutral on this because it is your decision. It is your governments – the 162 IOM Member States – that will decide how we go forward. And so I have tried to be true to that principle throughout.

We have a critical path forward, well described in the Deputy Secretary-General's statement, which would lead us to the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants on 19 September 2016, and the signing of an agreement with the Secretary-General which would bring IOM into a formal association with the UN. But, there are many steps along the way, each one of which the Member States will need to approve. The next step would be the 30 June Special Session of the IOM Council that will take place in Geneva, at which, if things go along that far, a draft resolution with a draft agreement would be on the agenda. If that were approved, then it would go back to the General Assembly – the current seventieth session of the General Assembly – for approval. If both those things happen, then, as mentioned, on 19 September, for the very important Summit, there would be a formal entry into a UN relationship.

I will stop here because I am sure you have lots of questions and I have with me, I am very pleased to say, our Legal Counsel and our Director of Resources Management who are also prepared to answer more technical questions. They have been here several times in New York to speak to their counterparts to address the legal and budgetary questions, and I will try to help you if you have concerns about the implications of a more formal relationship on IOM's operational ability and agility.

Thank you.

United Nations

A/70/233

**General Assembly**Distr.: General
12 April 2016

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Seventieth session**Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda
of the seventieth session****Cooperation between the United Nations and the
International Organization for Migration****Letter dated 1 April 2016 from the Secretary-General to the
President of the General Assembly**

I have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion of an additional item, of an important and urgent character, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration", in the agenda of the seventieth session of the Assembly.

I propose that the item be considered directly in plenary, without reference to a Main Committee.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached. I have the honour to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the Assembly.

(Signed) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex I**Explanatory memorandum****I. Current state of the relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration**

1. The purpose of the present memorandum is to explain the importance of including an additional item in the agenda of the seventieth session of the General Assembly entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration”, with a view to concluding an agreement concerning the relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration.

2. The relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration has developed gradually over many years. Initially, on 16 October 1992, the General Assembly, by its resolution 47/4, entitled “Observer status for the International Organization for Migration in the General Assembly”, decided to invite the International Organization for Migration to participate in the sessions and the work of the Assembly in the capacity of observer.

3. The United Nations and the International Organization for Migration subsequently concluded a Cooperation Agreement on 25 June 1996. In its resolution 51/148 of 13 December 1996, entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration”, the General Assembly, inter alia, took note with satisfaction of the conclusion of the Cooperation Agreement between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration and invited the Secretary-General to take the appropriate measures to ensure effective cooperation and liaison between the secretariats of the two organizations, and requested him to foster systematic consultations on matters of common interest.

4. Those arrangements have enabled the International Organization for Migration to participate, in the capacity of observer, in meetings of relevant United Nations organs as well as in relevant conferences convened under the auspices of the United Nations. The International Organization for Migration has also been allowed to participate, in the capacity of observer, in United Nations coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee through ad hoc arrangements.

5. However, unlike the specialized agencies and related organizations, which have concluded agreements that comprehensively set out the terms of their relationship with the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration has not yet established a relationship with the United Nations of such a broad scope.

II. Recent developments

6. On 24 November 2015, the Council of the International Organization for Migration took an important step forward towards enhancing its relationship with the United Nations. The Council adopted resolution No. 1309, in which it requested the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to “formally approach the United Nations to ... develop with it a way in which the

legal basis of the relationship between IOM and the United Nations could be improved”.

7. Subsequently, in a letter dated 9 December 2015, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration transmitted resolution No. 1309 to the Secretary-General, and sought advice on the next steps that the Secretary-General considered appropriate.

8. In his letter of reply dated 5 February 2016, the Secretary-General expressed his support for the resolution and outlined options for a closer relationship, including the option of concluding an agreement with the United Nations, to be approved by the General Assembly.

9. In his letter of reply dated 10 March 2016, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration informed the Secretary-General that, based on the discussions within the IOM Working Group on IOM-UN Relations and the IOM Strategy, he was prepared to initiate formal discussions with the United Nations on improving the legal basis of the relationship between the two organizations and to develop an appropriate proposal in the form of a draft relationship agreement “for expedited submission to the current General Assembly”.

10. In the same letter, the Director General stated that:

[S]trengthening the relationship between our organizations has become increasingly important in what is widely recognized as an era of unprecedented human mobility. This has brought greater urgency to include migration and human mobility issues in the multilateral system of the United Nations. In the declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/4 of 3 October 2013, it was recognized that international migration is a multidimensional reality and a cross-cutting phenomenon requiring close coordination among all organizations, and in particular between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration. The Assembly will again consider relevant issues of migration on 19 September 2016 during its high-level plenary meeting, when it will address large movements of refugees and migrants.

11. The Director General further stated in his letter that “IOM’s Council has decided to pursue the strengthening of the relationship between our two organizations to enhance and make more effective the collective efforts of the international community in providing assistance, advice and support on issues related to migration and human mobility”.

12. He then requested the Secretary-General to “facilitate the process on the United Nations side to have this matter of strategic importance to both our organizations taken forward”.

13. It is noted that the Council of the International Organization for Migration is scheduled to hold a special session on 30 June 2016, at which it intends to take action on a draft relationship agreement between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration.

III. Conclusions

14. In light of the above, it is requested that the General Assembly approve the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of its seventieth session, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration", as soon as possible.

15. The General Assembly is also requested to adopt a draft resolution by which the Assembly would invite the Secretary-General to take steps to conclude an agreement concerning the relationship between the United Nations and International Organization for Migration and to submit the negotiated draft agreement to the Assembly for its approval.

16. If the General Assembly was to take the actions described above, the intention of the Secretary-General would then be to negotiate a draft relationship agreement with the Director General of the International Organization for Migration and submit the draft agreement to the Assembly in an expeditious manner, with a view to its approval by the Assembly during the seventieth session.

Annex II**Draft resolution****Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 47/4 of 16 October 1992 and 51/148 of 13 December 1996,

Recalling also the Cooperation Agreement between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration of 25 June 1996,

Taking note of the resolution of the Council of the International Organization for Migration, adopted on 24 November 2015, concerning the relationship between the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations,

Taking note also of the letter of the Director General of the International Organization for Migration dated 10 March 2016, in which he informed the Secretary-General of his intention to initiate formal discussions with the United Nations on a draft relationship agreement,

Recognizing the need to establish a closer relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration,

1. *Invites* the Secretary-General to take steps to conclude an agreement concerning the relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration and to submit the negotiated draft agreement to the General Assembly for approval;

2. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-first session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration".

Tuesday, 19 April 2016



Journal

of the United Nations



Programme of meetings and agenda

Tuesday, 19 April 2016



Official meetings

General Assembly Seventieth session

General Committee

09:30 3rd meeting (closed) Conference Room 4

Organization of work of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: Request for the inclusion of an additional item by the Secretary-General (document [A/70/233](#)) [item 7]

General Assembly Thirtieth special session

Special session on the World Drug Problem

[webcast]

10:00 1st plenary meeting General Assembly Hall

1. Opening of the session by the Chair of the delegation of Denmark [item 1]

(continued on page 2)

Security Council

10:00 7674th meeting Security Council Chamber

[webcast]

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. The situation in Somalia

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