

Statement by H.E. Mr. Md. Abdul Hannan
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh
at the 100th Session of the IOM Council
Geneva, 07 December 2011

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first felicitate you most warmly on your well deserved election. We are confident that with your prudence and diligence, you will guide our work to successful conclusions. In the same vein, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to your predecessor Ambassador Idriss Jazairy for his astute leadership. Bangladesh congratulates the fellow members of bureau on their election. We are grateful to the Membership for the trust and confidence reposed on us by electing Bangladesh as the First Vice-Chair.

Bangladesh warmly welcomes the newly admitted 14 Members States as well as the observers and organizations. We believe that their contributions will further enrich our work and strengthen the Organization.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of IOM, let me congratulate DG Swing and the 8,300 plus dedicated IOM staff around the globe who have ample reasons to be proud of an Organization which has been serving the migrants. The evolution and progression of IOM is a testimony of its increasing relevance in global migration debate.

Mr. Chairman,
Director General Swing
Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking Director General Swing for his informative and topical reports.

Truly, we meet at a time when the world is witnessing the highest number of migrants ever. In the changing demographic landscape, socio-economic and climate change realities the trend is surly to continue. This makes our work all the more important and IOM all the more relevant. We would, therefore, encourage IOM to continue to play a leading role in policy area through collaborative partnerships and contributions to policy debates, particularly in the run-up to the 2013 high-level event.

We fully concur with the DG that there is a clearly recognized need to improve the perception about migrants. An adverse public perception tends to distort national policy debates against the interests of the migrants in the destination countries. This becomes even more pronounced during times of economic stress, as we have been witnessing during the lingering effects of global financial and economic crisis. There have been xenophobic and racial backlash against migrants and their families in a number of countries. In many cases, migrants were the first ones to have lost their jobs and were repatriated without adequate compensation and irrespective of their past records and contributions. Again, in some cases, there were cancellations of recruitment contracts for migrant workers in the face of opposition from internal pressure groups. A closer look would reveal a common element running through all these situations: Migrants are often misperceived as the “other” or the “outsiders” posing potential threats or competition in various forms. In some cases, they turn into easy targets for maligned campaigns

or racially motivated attacks. Public perception may not be changed overnight. It would require a sustained multi-pronged effort involving various actors to develop a balanced and well-informed public opinion about migrants. In this regard, we find the World Migration Report 2011, particularly its first chapter to be relevant and timely. We would encourage IOM to continue to work on dispelling the misperceptions about migrants. States have critical role in this process, first and foremost being protecting the rights of the migrants and ensuring their fair treatment.

Mr. Chairman,

We laud IOM's role during the recent crises in the Africa. Thousands of Bangladeshi migrants were provided shelter and repatriated with the assistance of IOM. We also thank the neighbouring countries who provided support and shelter and the donors who provided financial and other assistances in these huge operations. The challenge now is to rehabilitate these return-migrants, who came back mostly empty-handed, in compelling situations which were not of their making and where appropriate, arrange for their return to their respective occupations in their host countries.

Learning from these experiences, the Colombo Process Ministerial Meeting in April 2011 in Dhaka, *inter alia*, called for an institutional response capacity to deal with such crisis situations. We are therefore very pleased that the IOM Membership has adopted the resolution on migration emergency funding mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

We also greatly appreciate IOM's response to natural disaster hit regions. Alongside the erratic climatic events, we must also be mindful of the adverse impacts of climate change which are silent but sure. By some estimates, the world may see up to a billion climate-change induced migrants by 2050. As a climate change frontline state, Bangladesh believes that IOM has a greater and important role in addressing climate change induced migration and will have to mainstream the issue in its future work.

Mr. Chairman,

Providing migration services is one of the founding purposes of IOM. The Organization is already doing commendable work on border management. We would expect IOM to provide greater assistance in other areas of migration services which would help in building migration management capacities.

Mr. Chairman,

In the current economic backdrop, funding for IOM's core structure is maintained at zero growth while the operational part is growing. This is an unsustainable situation. We shall have to revisit the idea of maintaining zero growth budget. We invite the Working Group on Budget Reform to seriously consider the issue with a view enhancing support for the core structure in near future. We would request the donors to make un-earmarked contributions which would provide temporary respite for IOM. We commend the DG's initiative to raise the funding for 1035 facilities to the level of US\$ 10 million. Responding to the migration mega-trend and its fast growing Membership, IOM will have to scale up its activities in future. This will not be possible unless we, the Members, provide the Organization with necessary wherewithal.