



I T A L Y

Statement by Ms. ANGELA PRIA,
Chief of Department of Immigration, Italian Ministry of Interior,
at the 100th Session of IOM Council
(Geneva, 7th December 2011)

Mr. Chairperson, Ambassador Swing Director General of IOM, Ambassador Thompson, Deputy Director General, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates. Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the Polish Undersecretary of State on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Italy has become a country of inward migration instead of a country of outward migration. At the present time there are about 4.5 million migrants legally residing in Italy, which accounts for 7.5% of the population. Since January, however, as a consequence of the so-called Arab Spring, more than 60,000 migrants have reached the Italian coasts by boat, of which 28,362 from Libya and 28,079 from Tunisia. The island of Lampedusa alone has received more than 50,000 people. These figures are too large to warrant a passive or individualistic approach: a single State cannot cope alone with such numbers.

This is particularly true in the European Union, where we have created an area that envisages the free movement of people. And even more in Italy, given our geographical location as a bridge between two continents.

The management of the mixed flow of migrants reaching the Italian coasts is a challenge not only for Italy but should involve the whole of Europe. There should not only be an even sharing of economic aid for the reception of the migrants and external border control but also for the liaison with the countries of origin and the transit of such large flows. It is also for these reasons that the involvement of IOM is essential.

That is why, since we consider IOM the leading organization on migration issues, IOM can count on our continued support, particularly this year that marks the 60th anniversary of the organization. The anniversary

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will be celebrated also in Rome next week in joint partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We see it as an opportunity to reflect on the way to address the new challenges of migration. [It is in this spirit of continued partnership that we presented our candidature to the IOM Executive Committee and we thank all the Member States for our re-election.]

Let me also warmly thank IOM and its Director General for the constant assistance the Organization, together with UNHCR, has been giving to Italy since January. The help of IOM has been crucial in contributing to the life and security of hundreds of thousands of people. This is the best example to show that international migration is indeed an inescapable and vast phenomenon and that we need common approaches to it.

We really value our long standing cooperation with IOM, also because, from our own direct experience, we consider this organization as extremely efficient in accomplishing its mandate with outstanding professionalism. In this respect, we would once again commend the Director-General's efforts in the field of human resources, budget and structural reform that he has brilliantly outlined in his report.

Moreover, as the current financial crisis has one of its epicentres in the Eurozone, with severe consequences for our country, Italy welcomes the Administration decision to present again a Zero Nominal Growth Budget for 2012 and confirms its full support to the resolutions already adopted by the Council.

Let me conclude my remarks by welcoming the new members and observers to the IOM family and I'm looking forward to renewed cooperation, in the mutual understanding that migration enriches both the countries of origin and the countries of destination.

Thank you.