

**Statement by**

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Mr. Chairperson, Director-General, Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Ever since our ancient forefathers started walking on two feet, we like to wander. Until not so long ago, we could go as we pleased, since we started controlling our borders only in the last two hundred years, as was mentioned during the presentation of migrant voices yesterday. Of course managing migration is but a feeble attempt at regulating our wanderlust, so we are most grateful to the International Organization for Migration to have helped us in this daunting task for the last 60 years. We are very much pleased to congratulate the International Organisation for Migration with its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and welcome the new members and observers.

While the Netherlands aligns itself with the EU statement, it would additionally like to highlight a few elements of its co-operation with IOM. We can fairly say that the IOM is currently the most important international organization in the field of migration. Its work for those migrants in need of assistance is of paramount importance and the Netherlands appreciates the hands on approach of the IOM staff in the field and at Headquarters to help them find their way. We were particularly impressed with the evacuation that IOM organised for overseas workers that wanted to escape from the recent crisis in Libya and to which we gladly contributed.

It goes without saying that the activities of the IOM respond to a clear need. And its activities will likely be even more needed in the years to come. As Ambassador Swing has pointed out yesterday, we have to find a balance between state sovereignty and individual rights. We will seriously look into the recommendations that are being mentioned in the 2011 World Migration Report, "Communicating Effectively about Migration".

Mr. Chairperson,

Although migration is only increasing in numbers and complexity, we think the mandate of the IOM should not be broadened. Four years ago, after a long negotiation process, member states reached agreement on the IOM Strategy. We think that the IOM should strictly focus on these activities and appreciate the

commitment of the Director General to do so. We are aware that this is a responsibility of both the administration and member states.

For the Netherlands the IOM is a particularly valuable partner in the field of voluntary return, both regarding stranded migrants in crisis areas as well as with respect to the voluntary return of migrants out of the Netherlands. For example a citizen of Bangladesh was helped after a stay of seven years to return home and start up a micro business with a motorcycle taxi. As mentioned by Her Excellency the deputy minister of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone yesterday, IOM and the Netherlands help with the temporary return of qualified nationals, who serve as resource persons in government agencies of Sierra Leone.

A final example of cooperation between The Netherlands and the IOM is the support given by the Netherlands and others to the regional immigration training academy in Tanzania. This centre is assisting countries in the East African Region in enhancing training capacities of immigration departments. These trainings help to harmonize the migration management of different East African countries.

Mr. Chairperson,

To show our delight with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IOM and as appreciation for its excellent work in all these years, I am pleased to present on this special occasion a special token of our appreciation. You know even better than I do that the IOM cannot do its valuable work without qualified and motivated staff members. The Netherlands would like to underline the importance of training young staff members, capacity building and involvement in the IOM by financing an IOM position for a Dutch Junior Professional Officer (JPO) for three years.

Let me conclude by saying that I appreciated the fruitful exchange of views during this Council meeting, which are important for addressing the challenges of migration together.

I thank you for your attention.