

EIGHTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 29 November 2001, at 10.15 a.m.

Chairman: H.E. Mr. P. KARIYAWASAM (Sri Lanka)

<u>Contents:</u>	<u>Page</u>
General debate: Migration challenges for the 21 st century (continued)	1
(c) Statements by Members and observers (continued)	1

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Agenda item 8 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE: MIGRATION CHALLENGES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (continued)

(c) Statements by Members and observers (continued)

1. Mr. AL-QOBATI (Yemen) commended IOM on its work to promote dialogue on future migration policies and to achieve sound relations between development and migration. Problems relating to globalization and new technologies presented unprecedented challenges for those dealing with migration and called for better understanding of the emigration phenomenon. He welcomed IOM's initiative of giving priority to dialogue on migration policies to mark its fiftieth anniversary and considered that the dialogue should be expanded to include related governmental and non-governmental bodies, as migration touched upon many other fields, including human rights, health, labour, security and related international instruments. With its long history of interaction, integration and coexistence with peoples from different cultures, Yemen considered that peace was an unavoidable prerequisite for comprehensive development.
2. In recent times his region had attracted considerable international labour, but following the economic recession in the international oil markets many of those migrant workers had returned to their countries of origin, including his own. In response to that challenge his country had developed migration programmes to support the Yemeni communities abroad and link them more closely with their home country. Technical cooperation from IOM was required to enable his national authorities to undertake its duties towards the Yemeni communities abroad numbering approximately 6 million persons. A comprehensive project had been submitted concerning cooperation with IOM. IOM's increased membership called for further consideration of a number of issues: a question of North/South migration; improved mechanisms of representation of its Member States; equal opportunities in the allocation of annual expenditure and the management of human resources; and representation of IOM Offices in various parts of the world to improve coordination mechanisms. Yemen supported the proposal by UNESCO to launch a study on migration issues in cooperation with other organizations.
3. Mr. CHUNG (Republic of Korea) said that migration was increasing because of globalization and international economic integration, as well as frequent refugee crises causing migration trends or change, not only in scale but also in nature, and becoming more complex with multiple effects in other spheres – economic, political, social and cultural. He commended IOM on its excellent work over the past 50 years, particularly in the provision of transportation, technical cooperation and capacity-building programmes. He also welcomed the publication of the first World Migration Report and the launching of the new Migration Policy and Research Programme (MPRP) with its objective of identifying and sharing best practices in migration policies. Irregular migration continued to be a major threat to orderly migration. Trafficking and smuggling in human beings had become a global business and trafficked migrants were often subject to exploitation and violation of their fundamental human rights. He therefore appreciated IOM's counter-trafficking programmes and its support for regional consultations on that issue. With the growing complexity of migration, the importance of international dialogue and cooperation to exchange information and experience and solve common problems was essential if orderly migration was to be established. He noted with appreciation IOM's expanding membership and increasingly close relations with other international organizations.

4. Mr. NOGAWA (Japan) welcomed IOM's expanding membership and the broadening scope of its activities in cooperation with other international organizations. He emphasized the need for special consideration to be given to the reintegration of migrants with their families in their countries of origin. His Government, in cooperation with IOM, had implemented the Resettlement to Japan Project since 1981, inviting the families of Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees living in Japan to be reunited and settled in Japan. 2,200 people had now been resettled. New challenges facing the international community included the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons, persons seeking protection from criminal organizations, false asylum seekers motivated in fact by the search for better economic conditions, persons seeking protection from the effects of terrorist activities and, in the Asia and Pacific region, the problem of refugee boats in the South Pacific.

5. The Government of Japan, in appreciation of the work of IOM on those matters, had provided financial assistance to IOM programmes including assistance for the victims of trafficking in human beings, the APC (Intergovernmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants) and the Manila Process (Regional Seminar on Irregular Migration and Migrant Trafficking in East and South East Asia). It had also provided financial assistance to IOM in the field of assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons, in particular USD 2.76 million to IOM for emergency relief programmes for refugees and internally displaced persons in Afghanistan. Effective and cooperative migration management of those programmes was important.

6. Ms. BEDLINGTON (Australia) said that Australia was a living example of the significant benefits that flowed from migration. The diverse range of skills, languages, cultures and backgrounds of the Australian people was its greatest resource. While some countries considered diversity to be a source of problems, the opposite was true in her country. In achieving integration emphasis was placed on proficiency in the national language as a critical key to full participation in Australian society, breaking down isolation and determining employability.

7. The introduction of migration programmes alone would not, however, be sufficient to eliminate irregular migration. Migrants in an irregular situation were increasingly turning to smugglers to reach the destinations of their choice and misusing asylum mechanisms to try to gain entry to a country and permission to stay. Migration policies must therefore accommodate protection principles both for the receiving country and for the migrants themselves. Australia had taken a strong approach to irregular migration, placing emphasis on migration and refugee resettlement and integration programmes. She pointed out that whereas international instruments addressed the rights and obligations of migrants, there was no comprehensive instrument addressing the rights and obligations of States with regard to migration matters. It was important to recognize that the right to migrate required the consent of the destination State. Except for refugees directly fleeing persecution, movement across international borders was a two-way contract. A set of internationally agreed principles to assist States in managing migration flows was required. She welcomed the preparatory work that the Swiss Government had undertaken on the Berne Initiative.

8. IOM stood at a crossroads between remaining essentially an operational service delivery agency or going in the direction leading to migration policy matters. She welcomed the policy focus in the current Council session and considered that IOM should take a greater strategic role

in assisting States to develop a coherent international approach to migration in which a number of misconceptions concerning migration might be dispelled and a clearer conceptual framework built up for understanding migration, evaluating its advantages and disadvantages and promoting capacity-building based on better understanding of the impact of migration on national identity.

9. Mr. HAMMARBERG (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic States, called for a comprehensive approach to migration covering refugee, integration and return policies as well as cooperation for development. The Nordic countries supported the proposal to strengthen the Council as a forum for migration policy dialogue. Regional organizations as well as international organizations could and should support States in the design and implementation of sound migration policies. In that context he welcomed the Migration Policy and Research Programme (MPRP).

10. The Nordic countries had a policy of encouraging family reunion and welcoming refugees, and had legislation for labour migration in certain fields of expertise where labour was in demand. They did not, however, have specific national policies on demography or a joint position on labour migration.

11. It was important that IOM cooperate with all other international organizations dealing with migration, in order to avoid overlapping of activities and to achieve added value from their combined action. He particularly welcomed IOM's close cooperation with UNHCR on migration management and the establishment of the joint IOM/UNHCR Action Group on Asylum and Migration. IOM's Missions with Regional Functions, such as the Mission in Helsinki, made a particularly useful contribution to the application of migration policies in the regions.

12. Noting the inclusion of a seventh service area into the Organization's core functions – that of Labour Migration – he urged IOM to be prudent when assessing how to expand its activities towards areas which were not firmly set within its core functions. Such programmes should not be embarked upon without proper dialogue with Member States. The Nordic countries expressed concern over the alarming amount of outstanding contributions which hampered the effective functioning of the Organization. Unless the situation improved, there would be a need to begin applying Article 4 of the Constitution or considering other sanctions. He reiterated the Nordic countries' attachment to the integration of gender considerations into all the Organization's activities, an area which should receive more funding. The Nordic countries welcomed IOM's careful process of decentralization, shifting certain functions from Headquarters to the Field and relying on its network of Missions with Regional Functions.

13. Mr. VAIKULIS (Latvia) welcomed IOM's expanding membership and broadening services. It was increasingly recognized that the implementation of migration policies was largely dependent on cooperation and bilateral, regional and international partnerships. The Baltic Sea was situated at the crossroads of two core integration areas: the European Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), making regional cooperation particularly important, notably through the Baltic Migration Committee. Through the IOM Mission with Regional Functions in Helsinki and the IOM Office in Latvia, different projects were being effectively implemented: research, information and legislation on trafficking in women in the Baltic States; assistance to non-citizens of Russian origin for their voluntary return to Russia;

assistance to repatriated Latvians and recent immigrants; and work on projects to be put into effect on Assistance in establishing foreigners' registers and Managing asylum seeking, refugee and human rights' protection in the Baltic States.

14. Mr. NEGROTTO-CAMBIASO (Italy) said that one of IOM's major achievements in the past 50 years had been the promotion of new ways to deal with cross-border movements of population, in particular in cooperation with other international institutions, and UNHCR in particular. International cooperation in migration required a constant search for more effective instruments for controlling migration flows, implying enhanced information sharing, harmonized policies, joint counter-trafficking measures and promotion of a more constructive dialogue between countries of origin and destination. There could not be any real decrease in irregular migration without an increase in legal migration. Furthermore, migration policies must be based on the concept of migration as a positive resource rather than a problem. In 1999, IOM had provided assistance in setting up a mechanism of technical cooperation for the selection of some 5,000 workers from Albania, based on Italian labour market needs - a successful pilot project. Italy had experienced both sides of migration: first millions of people had left the country in search of better opportunities abroad, and more recently thousands of people from all over the world were moving into Italy in search of economic prosperity. Human capital was IOM's most important asset and its professional expertise should be maximized. He welcomed the fact that the United Kingdom had rejoined the Organization – an important step towards establishing a common European approach to migration issues.

15. Ms. MOHAMED (Kenya) welcomed the recent Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) programme, and the Return and Reintegration of Qualified African Nationals, an area in which the programme evaluation and cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was of particular value. MIDA, a demand-driven capacity-building programme, should be implemented in partnership with all countries, which would enable it to mobilize the resources of Africans in the diaspora in order to promote development of all African countries and subregions. The success of the MIDA programme depended also on clear partnerships and dialogue among governments, civil society, the private and public sectors in countries of origin and of destination. He therefore welcomed the regional dialogue mechanisms which should be expanded to the interregional level. There was a need to provide a predictable and broad financial base for the MIDA programme, and to involve African countries in its development and dissemination. Regarding the proposed project on labour migration in Kenya, she noted that the project sought to develop a database by consolidating existing data in relevant Kenyan institutions, collecting new information and designing a comprehensive information system on the labour market throughout the region.

16. It was important that the trafficking and the conditions that compelled people to resort to trafficking be clearly analysed, as it had intricate links with development issues. Other reasons for migration, such as poverty, unemployment, catastrophes, war and conflict, should also be examined and possibilities for legal migration better defined and facilitated. Emphasis should also be placed on migrants' rights, access to health care, education and legal protection.

17. Mr. PETÖCZ (Slovakia) said that the opening of IOM's Mission in Slovakia five years earlier had been instrumental in promoting solutions to migration problems in his country. IOM's activities in Slovakia included ongoing cooperation with the Minister of the Interior in

managing voluntary returns from Belgium, Finland and the Netherlands of unsuccessful asylum seekers and reintegration into Slovakian society; the return of more than 2,000 Slovak citizens to their homeland and over 500 migrants from other countries to their countries of origin; training activities for administration officers, teachers, journalists and representatives of Roma communities; and the publication of expert studies on health care for migrants, potential asylum seekers, Roma migration and trafficking in women. Slovakia had cooperated with IOM in providing temporary protection to citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1997 and refugees from Kosovo in 1999.

18. As a candidate country for membership in the European Union, his country was endeavouring to harmonize its national asylum legislation with European Union legislation and standards.

19. He welcomed the initiative to launch high-level interactive dialogues on strategic issues, thus going beyond the routine work of the Council's sessions. He stressed the importance of interagency cooperation, particularly with organizations working in the humanitarian field, as in Afghanistan at present. He also welcomed the introduction of the Migration Policy and Research Programme (MPRP). IOM could play a pivotal role in maintaining migration movements within the law and the rules of civil society, while maintaining respect for the human rights of migrants.

20. Mr. EKANAYAKE (Sri Lanka) said that it was essential to gain a better understanding of migration challenges and opportunities, as migration was likely to increase in the twenty-first century. He was pleased to note IOM's greater focus on better management of labour migration flows. Sri Lanka, as a major labour exporting country, looked forward to working closely with IOM in that area. Structured and orderly migration greatly benefited both the migrants themselves and the societies of the sending and receiving countries. At present, approximately 1.5 million Sri Lankans were working mainly in the Middle East as skilled and unskilled workers. Sri Lanka continued its efforts to ensure that its labour migration movements were regulated and demand-targeted and mutually beneficial to all parties concerned. IOM could play a major role in capacity-building of national institutions to regulate humane and orderly migration flows.

21. Irregular migration across frontiers was a concern for both receiving States and countries of origin. Efforts to ensure orderly migration and voluntary returns were severely hampered by organized criminal and terrorist groups engaged in human smuggling and trafficking. Smuggling in human beings also threatened to undermine the asylum and refugee policies in receiving countries. Effective international and regional cooperation, as well as the implementation of existing international legal instruments, were essential in that area. Any policy framework for migration should also take into account the enhancement of economic, social and cultural rights of peoples which would ultimately contribute to the elimination of inhumane and forced migration flows. Strengthened international cooperation in areas such as poverty alleviation, urbanization, the results of man-made and natural disasters or the HIV/AIDS epidemic would certainly facilitate the establishment of orderly migration.

22. Mr. FULLER (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that, like many others, his country faced new challenges in formulating migration policy. The number of

migrants in the United Kingdom had increased every year since 1983 – in 1999 there had been 180,000 – and the number of those seeking settlement and citizenship had increased correspondingly. The reasons included such factors as the revolution in communication, cheaper travel costs, the integration of labour markets and higher wage levels. Unprecedented numbers of migrants were also trying to gain entry illegally. Some were genuinely fleeing persecution in their own countries, others were simply seeking work, but far too many travelled courtesy of international criminal gangs which engaged in the trafficking of human beings. His Government wished to do everything in its power to ensure the proper protection of those vulnerable to trafficking, particularly women and children. It was therefore supporting IOM's project in the Balkans to combat trafficking.

23. His Government was improving ways of providing legal routes of entry by making changes in the work permit system and by doing more to integrate the work permit and the immigration processes. It would shortly be introducing a new scheme to help highly-skilled migrants. For it went without saying that migrants contributed greatly to British society and economy. Foreign-born migrants had contributed about £2.5 billion to public revenue in 1999 alone. Migrants could help combat the possible problems facing the country as its population aged, as well as filling recruitment needs in specific sectors of the economy. In 2000 an Innovators Scheme had been set up to attract entrepreneurs to the country.

24. The Government sought to give legal migrants every opportunity to maximize their contribution to society by providing English language training and explaining the workings of the system. Changes in migration policy should not, of course, take place at the expense of developing countries, which could not afford to lose their skilled manpower, although they also benefited from remittances and the training received by those returning to their original homes. The Government would therefore be developing “managed migration” to ensure that lawful entry routes were available and proper opportunities given to migrants.

25. Ms. KASYANJU (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, since its inception, IOM's policy had been to encourage orderly migration for the benefit of humanity, difficult though that was in a world of hunger, natural disasters, conflict situations and the horrific terrorism of the kind seen on 11 September. If it was to be effective, therefore, IOM should tackle the situations that precipitated irregular or illegal movements; and that would require closer attention to demography, labour, trade, education, training and investments.

26. Her country was a member of the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community, in both of which migration management issues featured prominently. In the former, it was intended to conclude a protocol on the free movement of persons, labour/employment, establishment and residence. The three East African States, with their combined population of about 80 million, constituted a sizeable market which encouraged economies of scale. Meanwhile, the Southern African Development Community envisaged, apart from programmes to raise people's living standards, the production of a “univisa” regime, facilitating the movement of people. Orderly migration was important for both groupings. It should be IOM policy to assist in migration management programmes, including the provision of technical aid to projects that would harmonize policy, legislation and standards.

27. The migration challenge of the coming decades would best be met through long-term strategies and policies that addressed contemporary problems through regional integration and pooled resources and expertise.

28. Mr. JAKUBOWSKI (Poland) expressed satisfaction that in 2001 IOM had seen growth in membership, in operational funding levels, in the number of offices and projects and in the types of service offered. Another encouraging trend was the increasing prominence of the regional focus. Moreover, in addition to its statutory activities, IOM was currently executing programmes for the identification and indemnification of former forced and slave labourers and for compensation for property losses under the Nazi regime in Poland and other central European countries.

29. In response to the tragic events of 11 September, the Warsaw Conference on Combating Terrorism, attended by heads of State from 17 central, southern and eastern European countries, as well as representatives of other States and international organizations, had been held in November 2001.

30. Turning to financial issues, he said that there should be further discussion of a systemic solution to the question of surpluses in the Administrative Part of the Budget; no conclusion had been reached to date. Moreover, the overall financial situation should be carefully examined. The problem of outstanding contributions persisted, although he noted with satisfaction that payment had been received from a number of countries. The Council should urge all those in arrears to pay their outstanding contributions as soon as possible.

31. Active participation in IOM's work was a priority in Polish migration policy. The forthcoming opening of the IOM Office in Warsaw would give his Government the opportunity to enhance its contribution to the Organization's work. With ever-increasing demands for its assistance, IOM must strengthen its own capacities and its efficiency still further.

32. Ms. RIVERA RAMÍREZ (Honduras) said that the challenges facing migration in the twenty-first century called for a re-examination of all aspects of the phenomenon, in which the experiences and activities of every region should be taken into account. There should be dialogue not only on a bilateral basis but with other agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. The international community should be aware that migration was created by such factors as natural disasters, poverty and social conflict. It was therefore essential to find lasting solutions for the problems of migration, including human rights problems relating to detention, deportation and trafficking in migrant women and children. Migration flows to the developed countries could by no means be considered an invasion of or a threat to the culture and identity of those countries. On the contrary, they represented human capital that assisted the host country's development. A culture of tolerance should therefore prevail.

33. Mr. SOLARI (Argentina) said that, with wealth still concentrated in just a few parts of the world, the average person's standard of living would not improve until there was a massive increase in social, economic and education opportunities for more disadvantaged peoples. His country had therefore opened itself up to foreign migration, principally from Europe, which had had a profound effect on its cultural and social development and on the composition and distribution of its population. The pattern had begun to change from the 1950s onwards:

migrants were coming increasingly from neighbouring countries such as Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay and Peru, while professional or technically qualified Argentines had started to move out to the United States, Canada and, to a lesser extent, Europe. Most immigrants gravitated either to Buenos Aires or to the areas closest to their country of origin. Numbers fluctuated according to the state of the Argentine economy and of the neighbouring countries. The number of women migrants was on an upward trend and it was also noted that most migrants were of an economically active age. One recent development had been the increase in the number of immigrants from eastern Europe, especially Ukraine.

34. His Government had signed migration agreements with Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay, providing for reciprocal treatment of migrants and, in particular, for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers and their families, in accordance with international human rights instruments.

35. The world faced new challenges. The tragic events of 11 September had given rise to an upsurge of mistrust of other countries, which increased the vulnerability of some migrants. Such xenophobia should be resisted. Indeed, to prevent any possibility of such problems - especially in view of the rise in migration to Argentina - his Government was developing programmes to deal with all forms of discrimination. At the same time, he warned that the globalization of business and the internationalization of higher education had led many professionals to work abroad. It was therefore time to re-examine the whole issue of migration.

36. Mr. MAURELIA (Chile) said that, following the tragic events of 11 September, it was important not to link terrorism with migration, for fear of reinforcing negative stereotypes. The war against terrorism should not be to the detriment of the protection of human rights which characterized all democratic societies. Indeed, the defence of freedom was in itself the strongest bulwark against terrorism.

37. IOM's work for migrants, who could be victims of international organized crime networks, xenophobic attacks by extremist groups, arbitrary detention, mistreatment and labour exploitation, among other abuses, should continue into the foreseeable future. His delegation fully supported the proposal for increased dialogue on migration policies which would give States the opportunity to seek a cooperative solution to their problems. Regional bodies such as the Puebla Process and the South American Conference were particularly useful in that respect. The second South American Conference on Migration had been held in Santiago de Chile in April 2001, to follow up the process started at the South American Meeting on Migration, Integration and Development in Lima in 1999 and in line with the Buenos Aires Declaration in 2000. The Governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela had taken part. The next meeting would take place in Quito in 2002.

38. There was, unfortunately, discontent in Latin America at the continued fall in the IOM allocation of resources to the region. The proposed staff and budget cuts for 2002 would have a serious effect. It was a matter for concern that budget allocations did not take into account the requirements of the offices which were supposed to cover the planned or existing activities. The Missions with Regional Functions in Buenos Aires and San José would be particularly badly affected. Any budget reductions that affected regional migration initiatives should be avoided.

39. Mrs. FILIP (Romania) welcomed IOM's decision to embark on a debate on migration issues, which would give Members the opportunity to make practical suggestions about future activities. One important consideration was to find ways of synchronizing IOM activities with those of other international organizations.

40. Her Government had introduced measures to ensure a more coherent system to protect aliens temporarily on Romanian territory, prevent irregular movements and curb the negative effects of immigration. A law on foreigners had been adopted in March 2001; a national strategy and legislation to combat trafficking was being developed; and a shelter for victims of trafficking would shortly be operational within the National Bureau for Refugees, with IOM's support. Cooperation between Romania and IOM had, indeed, increased steadily over the three years since the country joined the Organization. A Memorandum of Understanding between Romania and IOM would shortly be signed, focusing on the assisted humanitarian voluntary return of aliens who were temporarily in Romania.

41. Her Government attached great importance to freedom of movement and was therefore anxious for the visa regime for Romanians travelling in the Schengen area to be lifted. Work was under way to fight corruption, organized crime and lawlessness as sources of instability and social tension – an area in which IOM's technical assistance was valuable in developing national strategy and implementation programmes. Vulnerable border services had been strengthened, law enforcement cooperation with other countries intensified and information and experience pooled. The South-East European Regional Centre for Combating Transborder Crime, based in Bucharest, was ready to contribute to the building of barriers against the negative effects of irregular migration. The Centre had already begun dismantling human trafficking networks in the region. In that context, her delegation welcomed the fact that the Centre had recently applied for observer status with IOM. It also welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding between IOM and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe signed in August 2001. More structured cooperation between the two international organizations would improve the quality of the response to migration issues throughout Europe.

42. The key factor in the migration process was trust: trust among the countries of origin, transit and destination and trust of States and citizens in a global migration policy. That trust could be weakened by a perceived risk to economic and social stability on a national level or by the lack of clear and predictable steps to transform irregular movements into legal migration. Tolerance and solidarity were also required: the identity of migrants should be respected and all legal migrants should feel protected in the society of the countries where they lived.

43. Mr. REYES RODRIGUEZ (Colombia), after endorsing the statement by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of GRULAC, said that the closure of borders tended to encourage irregular migration and thus increased the illegal trafficking of human beings, a crime that involved millions of dollars and thousands of victims, especially women, every year. The victims needed international protection and the international community should pool its efforts to strengthen the international legal system and improve police cooperation so that migrants were not penalized but those who exploited their vulnerability were punished. Prevention and rehabilitation programmes should also be developed. To avoid the exploitation of migrants, migration should be made a tool of sustainable development. The international community should work with

IOM, intergovernmental organizations and civil society to find viable policies and establish mechanisms to ensure orderly migration. Bilateral and multilateral agreements to protect migrants were essential.

44. Globalization was based on the free movement of information, goods and, in a very capricious way, capital. Its treatment of people, however, had been arbitrary. Some countries practised exclusion and discrimination, while others ignored historical and cultural links which had developed over centuries.

45. Ms. DUCHATELLIER (Haiti) said, after expressing gratitude for IOM's assistance and support over the past twelve years, that as migration increased it was appropriate to devote more attention to migratory flows. Migration could be managed only if it were fully understood. One important factor was the link between migration and development: it was poverty that drove increasing numbers to migrate. At the same time, underdevelopment was linked with the trafficking of human beings and thus with organized crime. If such trafficking was to be combated, greater international cooperation was required; but any action was doomed to failure if the situation of the potential victims was not improved in their countries.

46. Her delegation renewed its commitment to respect for the human rights of migrants, especially the most vulnerable - women and children. The human being must be at the centre of all the Organization's debates.

47. Mr. KREID (Austria) said that his country and IOM had both had to face their first major test in 1956, when IOM had assumed responsibility for the resettlement of some 180,000 Hungarian refugees, most of whom had fled to Austria. IOM had also organized the resettlement of 40,000 Czechoslovak refugees in Austria in 1968. Altogether, about a million people had settled in Austria since 1945, which meant that over 10 per cent of its population had been born abroad.

48. His delegation supported IOM's regional approach to migration problems. The Mission with Regional Functions in Vienna, for example, was responsible for liaison with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as cooperating with other Vienna-based organizations, such as the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. There was also cooperation in the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe on the Migration and Asylum Initiative and in the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings. The Central European Initiative had also recently announced its intention to add migration management to its activities.

49. IOM expertise was crucial, but if the international community was to capitalize on the renewed attention directed at global migration, IOM must maintain a constant exchange of information with other actors in the field.

50. Mr. KRISAFI (Albania) said that his country's relations with IOM dated from the beginning of the 1990s, when thousands of migrants were leaving the country. Owing to its geographical position, Albania had sometimes been used as a stepping stone for irregular migrants from the Middle East to the West. IOM's assistance and support, then and since, had

been most beneficial to the Albanian people, helping them to identify migration problems and reducing, as far as possible, any harmful consequences for Albanian migrants.

51. The Government was attempting to create a political, economic and social climate of promoting legal migration while combating the illegal entry of migrants and trafficking in migrants. In order to prevent the illegal trafficking of migrants or of drugs, a regional centre had been established in Vlora, in the south of the country. The Government was also seeking to establish a partnership among the countries of origin, transit and destination. In close cooperation with the authorities of several countries of destination, and IOM, it was seeking to create favourable working and living conditions for Albanian migrants. The integration of migrants should be seen as a process of development that established a reasonable balance between the needs of the newcomers and the needs of society.

52. Mr. ASADOV (Azerbaijan) said that, as a frequent victim of terrorism itself, his Government had been among the first to react to the tragic events of 11 September, which constituted a challenge to democracy and human rights.

53. Following the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, many had suffered forced migration and there were currently a million refugees and displaced persons as the result of the continuing occupation of 20 per cent of the country's territory. The occupation had also caused the destruction of several thousand industrial and agricultural enterprises, with the loss of some 3,000 jobs. In view of that situation, his delegation was deeply concerned at the reduced attention paid to the country's problems by international organizations. IOM assistance was all the more necessary, especially given that labour migration from the country was on the increase. Accurate figures were unknown, but the number was estimated at nearly 700,000. In that context, he pointed out that many Azerbaijanis applying for refugee status in western countries were in fact labour migrants.

54. The geopolitical location of Azerbaijan, together with the process of globalization, had caused increased illegal migration through the country. International organizations had forecast that the country could become a main transit point for illegal migration in the future. In cooperation with IOM experts, the Government had issued recommendations on preventing illegal migration and bringing border checkpoint procedures into conformity with international standards. The Government also attached great importance to the IOM's cluster project, which provided for various activities, including an information campaign regarding irregular migration. The Government was ready for active participation in the project.

55. Mr. HOVORKA (Czech Republic) expressed satisfaction with IOM's accomplishment of promoting increasing international cooperation in migration policy matters and placing migration on the global agenda. IOM had become an indispensable tool for enabling governments to strengthen their migration management capacities and ability to cope with emergency situations. It had also been instrumental in promoting synergies among positive aspects of migration and had been efficient in promoting initiatives to combat illegal migration and trafficking, while evolving into a truly global institution. IOM must continue to pursue actively its policy of adapting to a new environment and challenges. Patterns in world migration had changed, calling for new approaches and concerted efforts at national, regional and global levels and making evident the growing need to address migration policy issues more coherently and

comprehensively, while taking into account changes produced by globalization. The Czech Republic was pleased to note that there was every reason to be optimistic about the future and to remain committed to the objectives and principles of IOM. IOM had provided support to programmes aimed at assisting the return of migrants to their homes from the Czech Republic, had focused on various aspects of migration and had provided targeted technical assistance. The Czech Republic had also participated in several successful projects in response to the Kosovo crisis.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.