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STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

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at the Eighty-fourth Session of the Council

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MICEM/7/2002
Page 1

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Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

1. Your presence here today is strong evidence of the growing importance of migration questions around the world. Our new Members and observers make the same point. We have before us an intense and important debate over three days. Inside and outside this hall, policy-makers and opinion-makers will be following our deliberations closely.
2. In my remarks this morning I intend to concentrate on three themes:
 - the scope and nature of migration management,
 - IOM's approach to the future, and
 - international institutional arrangements.
3. Underpinning consideration of all three themes are two fundamental propositions:
 - the idea that migration is an essential, inevitable and potentially beneficial component of the economic and social life of every State and every region; and
 - the emerging consensus that governments can and must manage migration through international cooperation and policy approaches that address all facets of this complex phenomenon.

The scope and nature of migration management

4. All of you will have seen by now the diagram entitled "Managing Migration", which the IOM Administration prepared as a kind of road map for the general debate. It identifies four main areas of migration policy as well as the cross-cutting activities that apply to all our work.
5. The four main areas are **migration and development**, **facilitated migration** (more and more often for work), **migration control** and **forced migration**. These four areas also correspond to four communities of actors, both within societies and governments and internationally. These are, roughly speaking, specialists in development; labour market management and globalization; law enforcement; and humanitarian action.

6. The “Managing Migration” diagram is meant to be thought provoking, not definitive. All of you could produce a better, clearer, more comprehensive version. The value of the diagram is to demonstrate how complex and interconnected migration management really is and how many areas of modern life and public policy it touches.

7. Some of the entries in the diagram point to traditional IOM activities like resettlement, cultural orientation, rescue of stranded migrants or return of qualified nationals. Others represent newer programmes, like counter-trafficking, remittance management, integration of returning combatants and international recruitment of workers.

8. A related observation: we have seen that “one-box” approaches to migration management do not work. Control measures do not address the causes of migration. Development assistance alone can promote unintended loss of precious human resources. Migration for work programmes can have unforeseen social consequences. Humanitarian imperatives cannot substitute for migration policy. This is why IOM has always advocated an inter-ministerial approach to migration policy within governments

9. One last point about the diagram: next to every single item on it you could write in an IOM programme or project – some big, some small, some old, some new, some traditional, some experimental – designed to address a need, a problem or an opportunity brought to us by a Member government or other partner.

IOM’s approach to the future

10. That brings me to my second theme, IOM's approach to the future.

11. In the years to come, IOM needs to blend **continuity and change**. We have always been a service organization, helping governments with the challenges of orderly migration and proud of our responsiveness, flexibility, creativity and pragmatism. That must not change even as the different forms of IOM assistance develop rapidly in our post-Cold War, globalized world.

12. Our tradition of **activity-based funding** is another great strength. Because we design and carry out programmes and projects to measure – coordinating intensively with all our partners at every stage – we enjoy the certainty that our work is relevant. Over the years, IOM has been able to follow the evolution of real needs, expanding, adapting, retooling and avoiding hackneyed responses.

13. IOM has succeeded by adopting an “**inductive**”, **grass-roots approach** to migration management. Through our projects, we bring new ideas to the test, accumulate real-world experience, identify talent and make ourselves a repository of effective practice, the basis of good policy.

14. Successful projects can and should lead to **consolidated programmes**. These are the activities for which IOM will be the point of reference and preferred partner and for which we can design our recruiting and develop our staff. Less successful projects will tell us what to refine or abandon.

15. IOM should not seek to become a custodian of migration doctrine. Instead we should act as a catalyst for positive change, helping governments identify challenges and working together to find practical, humane and effective solutions.

16. **Regional processes** are fundamental to IOM's approach. The catalogue of established regional initiatives for migration management is impressive and covers more and more of the globe. This year South America, West Africa and the Mediterranean Five-Plus-Five joined the list. The Bali Conference should soon lead to better cooperation in Asia in countering trafficking and smuggling. Good progress has been made with the League of Arab States, in the Black Sea region, in the Caribbean and among Asian countries with large national labour programmes.

17. Avoiding doctrine is not the same as shirking **policy debate**. With the strong support of our member states, the IOM Council has become a forum for international discussion of migration trends and responses. We shall reinforce this positive development as we seek to shape the consensus on migration policy that has begun to form.

18. For the elements of a **global consensus** are at hand. In the year 2002, it is no longer controversial to view migration as a core element of global social and economic change. Countries of origin, transit and destination broadly agree on the analysis of causes, especially as most countries are themselves all three. All want to put in place migration policies that will satisfy economic and development needs, accommodate the inevitable growth of social diversity, enhance respect for migrants and provide them regular jobs and decent working conditions.

19. Some of you have expressed concerns over the growth of IOM's **membership**, perhaps fearing the introduction of political quarrels that could divide the Organization. This seems to me unlikely, both in the light of the analytic and policy consensus to which I have referred and because of the pragmatic, results-oriented approach for which IOM is known. In fact, in the decade of rapid expansion, political disputes have not broken out inside IOM.

20. The new Members and observers, big and small, come to IOM out of realistic and sincere interest. In the early days of IOM, only a relatively few countries dealt with migration and the flows were relatively simple. Now migration flows are universal, multidirectional and complex. We are all in the same boat.

21. There are practical reasons to welcome new Members as well. IOM's support for regional arrangements is greatly enhanced if all participants are IOM Member States. The Five-Plus-Five would not exist had Maghreb countries not joined IOM. Puebla is stronger for Mexico's IOM membership. When Brazil joins us, the new South American process will profit greatly. African membership made possible regional dialogues on that continent and opened the door to creative efforts in the area of development and "co-development". China's observership is significant

already; membership would resonate throughout Asia and beyond. We need additional Asian Member States, the representatives of one half of humankind. The more nations of the Middle East and South-West Asia we have in IOM (and several are showing strong interest), the better able we shall become to deal with a host of important and complicated migration questions.

22. For all of these reasons, we should not be afraid of the growth of IOM. Broader membership brings new opportunities for solutions. Thanks to our Regional Offices, we have the structure in place to support expansion with moderate rises in core funding, as we have shown in recent years. The development of our Regional Mission in Manila into an alternative administrative support base will save money and serve the entire Organization. IOMers are now attuned, as never before, to **“the challenges of growth”**. I am confident that we are on the right track.

International institutional arrangements

23. Let us now turn to the third theme, international institutional relationships, a subject that has acquired prominence lately in New York and Geneva, and takes the form, for the purposes of the IOM Council, of this question: Should IOM change its relationship to the United Nations system?

24. Let me say at the start that **the IOM Administration is not campaigning either for or against a change**. IOM has done well by our independence and can continue to prosper as we are. Alternatively, under the right arrangements – ones that preserve our Constitution, our individuality and our special characteristics – I believe we could also prosper as part of the United Nations system.

25. It all comes down to weighing the **advantages and disadvantages**. Of course, this question is fundamentally one for the Council, not the Administration. Nevertheless, because several Members have asked for the views of the Administration, I shall try to provide some thoughts.

26. Recent consideration of IOM-UN issues can be said to start with the Report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly dated 9 September 2002 and entitled **“Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change”** (UN document A/57/387). In a chapter called “Doing What Matters”, Secretary General Kofi Annan identified migration as one of a small number of big issues deserving greater attention by the United Nations. Others are development, energy, conflict prevention, terrorism and international crime.

27. We see therefore that the UN is conscious of a gap in coverage and is looking for ways to fill the gap. What are the options? Creating a new UN agency for migration is problematic and would doubtless be strongly resisted by existing agencies and many governments. UN coordination mechanisms have serious limitations as well. That leads back to IOM.

28. At present, IOM has the advantage of a well-developed set of ties with the UN, its programmes and agencies. These ties are summarized in the paper entitled “IOM-UN Relationship”, which was circulated with my letter of October 25. Within this framework we have been operating acceptably, treated by many as if we were a UN specialized agency, while retaining our freedom of action and our own character.

29. From the IOM Administration's perspective, as I said just now, **the status quo is sustainable**. Independence from the UN permits us to operate a light and flexible management structure and avoid bureaucratic entanglements. We can sometimes operate where the UN system is constrained. Some governments may welcome the existence of an alternative that can deliver expeditiously to their satisfaction.

30. Nevertheless, there are **disadvantages to outsider status**. IOM has to work harder to gain acceptance and recognition, to raise funds, to join inter-agency planning processes and assessment missions, and to acquire the international legal status that comes automatically to UN agencies. Decisions taken by the UN affect us heavily, but we have no voice in their formulation. Moreover, the international community has trouble understanding an international organization that is not part of the international system of governance.

31. Let us remember that UN status comes in many varieties. Specialized agencies under the Economic and Social Committee – like WIPO, ILO or WHO – have succeeded in preserving their individual characteristics and broad freedom of action. There exists another form of association, less closely defined, that of “related agency”.

32. I plan to meet the Secretary General on December 9 to see how he views his options. I shall be listening carefully to our debate at Council for your guidance, including regarding what I should say to him.

33. In any case, whether you decide to ask the Administration to explore joining the UN system or not, IOM will continue to build closer cooperation – **“strategic alliances”** – with agencies and programmes of the UN.

34. UNHCR and IOM will shortly sign a joint letter on assisted voluntary return, the first of a series of agreements to define our respective roles in such subjects as assistance to the internally displaced and technical cooperation in asylum and migration.

35. Similar discussions will be held in the future with WTO and ILO on cooperation in migration for work and with the World Bank, UNDP and UNCTAD on migration and development. Our work with WHO and UNAIDS on migrant health is well developed already and will expand.

Conclusion

36. We shall devote the rest of today and all of tomorrow to a migration policy dialogue focused on the theme of partnership in management. The general debate thereafter will provide an opportunity for discussion of IOM's relationship with the UN system.

37. All these topics require consistent follow-through. As we discuss and debate the issues, let us also give thought to a mechanism whereby the Member States of IOM can carry on a policy discussion with one another and the Administration on a more continuous basis than one Council a year allows.

38. In concluding these brief remarks, let me express my hope that IOM will continue as a dynamic, growing organization, attuned to the needs of migrants and governments and fully able to help our partners adjust to the new realities of migration in a changing world. All of us at IOM are grateful for the support and encouragement you have given us. We pledge you our energy, our ideas and our sense of dedication, whatever the future brings. Thank you for your attention.