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STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Mr. Brunson McKinley

at the Eighty-sixth Session of the Council

18-21 November 2003

Geneva

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Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

1. This year's Council continues and strengthens the policy debate launched two years ago and now a regular feature of our year-end meeting. The world is reflecting more deeply than ever on how best to manage migration. We shall contribute strongly to that reflection this week through the statements of governments, international organizations and independent experts.
2. In a few minutes, we shall hear from my colleague, Gervais Appave, an analysis of the changing dynamics of migration. In our general debate and workshops, we shall touch upon the growing list of activities in IOM's policy and programmatic ambit. We shall hear progress reports on regional and thematic developments.
3. In the course of today and tomorrow, members of the new Geneva Migration Group and personalities active in setting up the new Global Commission on Migration will give us their views. Speakers will address the subject of IOM-UN relations, particularly as the Secretary General has just designated a blue-ribbon panel on the future of collective security broadly conceived.
4. With such a wealth of discussion in the offing, I intend to keep these first remarks brief, simply highlighting a few developments this year that I find particularly important.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. **The economic, social and developmental aspects of migration** are now recognized as fundamental to building a more prosperous, fairer world. Here are some examples of how this dimension of our work is growing.
6. Developing countries are looking for ways to channel remittance flows into productive, job-creating investments in the home country. Remittances constitute a large and growing share of hard-currency transfers to developing countries. Too often remittances are, in effect, re-exported in the form of consumer purchases. IOM pilot projects in remittance management can provide models for new thinking.
7. Last week we organized here in Geneva a seminar on Migration and Trade. It provided an opportunity to build greater understanding between the trade and migration policy communities on issues, opportunities and challenges. You will be hearing more about its conclusions in due course.

8. The Conference of Asian Labour Ministers in Colombo was a first attempt by ten countries of Asia with substantial workforces abroad to harmonize efforts in the fields of education, placement, preparation and protection. The Philippines will host the next ministerial meeting.

9. In parallel, there are many lessons to be learned from the Gulf States' experience in contract labour. IOM will organize a dialogue, together with the Asia-Africa Legal Consultative Organization, of sending and receiving countries interested in contract work. Many migrants want the chance to work and save abroad and then return home to a better life.

10. The Egyptian Government has recently launched an ambitious experiment in registration and placement of nationals for work in industrialized countries. Other governments are engaged in similar programmes designed for graduates who cannot be accommodated by the national job market. This is a trend to watch.

11. As India, North Africa and other nations have convincingly shown, overseas workers and professionals can bring home new ideas, skills, contacts and job-creating investment. African countries have come to see that regulated migration can usefully replace spontaneous (and dangerous) exodus. Countries that manage relations with their citizens abroad can turn brain drain into brain gain.

12. These and other efforts to harness the human development resource of workers and professionals abroad deserve our attention and support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. IOM has devoted considerable time and attention over the past year to **the migration needs of the Islamic nations**. History, geography and current events have created particular migration challenges for countries from Morocco to Indonesia.

14. Muslim communities are growing in every part of the world. Members of those communities are engaged in a daily dialogue of civilizations whose successful outcome is of capital importance to all of us. It is therefore gratifying to take note of the attention that Islamic countries now give to migration questions.

15. This year IOM concluded an agreement with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and attended the OIC summit in Kuala Lumpur. We co-sponsored with the League of Arab States a conference on Arab migration in the era of globalization. We are in the process of establishing a migration academy in Teheran in cooperation with the Iranian Government. Kuwait has joined the ranks of our donors.

16. These developments help position IOM as an interlocutor and facilitator for Islamic States across the spectrum of our activities, whether in the economic, social, developmental and security areas or in our important post-conflict programmes in Afghanistan, Iraq and – soon – Sudan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

17. If I have dwelt on the Islamic world, it is not to minimize our **progress in all regions**.

18. Europe is increasingly engaged in the migration policy debate. Its outcome will have a profound impact on the nature of the enlarged European Union and its relations with neighbours to the south and east. IOM has become a partner of the EU on such major emerging issues as counter-trafficking, voluntary returns, integration and capacity-building.

19. The second ministerial meeting of the Migration Dialogue in the Western Mediterranean (5+5) took place in Rabat last month and agreed on a plan of action for the implementation of the Tunis Declaration. Algiers has agreed to host the process next year.

20. Latin America and the Caribbean are redefining their relations with global migration. IOM is supporting regional processes throughout the Western Hemisphere. Brazil is moving to rejoin IOM. Latin America will build new relations with Asia, Africa, North America and Europe in reaction to changed migration patterns.

21. In the year ahead, I shall pay renewed attention to Asia. There and in the Middle East, IOM is still relatively weak, despite the enormous opportunities for migration programmes and assistance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

22. In our **management agenda**, we shall move ahead with measures to strengthen decentralization, to recruit more nationals of underrepresented Member States, to make regular rotation the rule and to boost the role of women. In 2003, for the first time the number of women in professional positions in IOM Headquarters exceeded the number of men.

23. By year's end we shall have in place new leadership in several of the main Headquarters departments and a modest restructuring, as described in the Blue Book. In Geneva and in the Field, our management structures and personnel are stronger than ever.

24. We shall continue to use the Manila Administrative Support Centre to achieve cost efficiencies and will be looking to revamp processes and procedures. Staff security requires even greater attention, given the accumulating threats to international staff and the inadequacy of current responses.

Ladies and gentlemen,

25. The coming year promises to be more active and interesting than ever before. In the expectation of strong Member State support for our attempts to maintain a minimal core structure, all of us are confident that IOM will be up to the new challenges. We look forward to supporting your ever-greater needs in migration management.