

DRAFT

IOM COUNCIL
USG STATEMENT

Meeting 469
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Time _____
Tape No. _____

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues:

Under the energetic leadership of the Director General and Deputy Director General, IOM management and staff have continued their proud tradition of responsiveness to the needs of millions of refugees, internally displaced persons, trafficking victims, and migrants.

IOM continues to grow and we join in welcoming the Republics of Ghana, Cameroon, Belarus, and Togo to membership. Membership comes with obligations as well as benefits, and in this regard we acknowledge the Administration's efforts to encourage Member States to settle their arrears promptly. We encourage further improvement by member states in payment of outstanding contributions.

As IOM grows in both programs and membership, the Council must exercise appropriate oversight to ensure that the organization's central management and administrative control systems are commensurate with its responsibilities. We caution IOM not to broaden its programs too widely over the spectrum of humanitarian activities and to continue to focus on IOM's mandate and professional competencies, as defined by its core service areas.

In the area of refugees and internally displaced populations, we note IOM's enhanced collaborative efforts with the UN, including UNHCR, and other

international organizations. We commend IOM's work particularly in the repatriation of Angolan and Liberian refugees, assistance to IDPs in Colombia, capacity-building work in Iraq, and out of country voting for Afghanistan. We also commend IOM on another successful IOM-UNHCR joint seminar on Mixed Migratory Flows and contingency planning in the Caribbean, hosted by the government of Trinidad & Tobago in October.

The U.S. government has undertaken unprecedented efforts to combat trafficking domestically and around the world. In September 2003, President Bush announced that the United States Government would commit \$50 million for additional counter-trafficking programs. Through this initiative and other funding, we continue to support IOM activities in this field, particularly in the areas of prevention, assistance to victims, and institutional capacity building. IOM's proactive work to develop performance indicators to evaluate counter-trafficking programs is also to be commended.

As we review the past year, we note that IOM has demonstrated its strength in operational programs. We also note that IOM faces many challenges in the years ahead as it responds to the ever-increasing complexity of migratory movements and related international policy issues. The United States is following closely IOM's next steps in response to the report of the Global Commission on International Migration. We understand that on December 15, there will be

consideration given to expanding the Geneva Migration Group. We would strongly encourage that, in order to maximize the benefits of its coordination activities, the GMG remain an informal gathering of relevant organizations.

We are also following discussions for the September 2006 UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. Given IOM's vast expertise in this area, we look forward to its active participation in and contribution to the High Level Dialogue. We also continue to work with the Administration, the Chairman of the Council, and other Member States to devise a Strategy Paper that focuses on IOM's comparative advantages in the field, as well as goals and objectives for the next three to five years. Particularly given that migration is becoming increasingly complex and receiving greater international attention, this strategy should provide IOM with a focused vision of its future and purpose but should not restrict its flexibility nor weaken the fiscal discipline of project-based funding.

This year's International Dialogue on Migration – Toward Policy Coherence on Migration – is timely. As you know, the U.S. continues to strongly support regional dialogues. These dialogues provide an opportunity to exchange views that inform individual states as they work to strengthen their capacity and increase policy coherence at the national level to more effectively manage migration. We congratulate IOM on the continued successful role it plays in helping to shape

discussions in many of these regional dialogues, such as the Regional Conference on Migration in North and Central America and the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa, to name a few.

The U.S. has found that coordination on migration issues is most effective and concrete when relevant national government officials that have direct responsibility for migration policy come together for informal, frank discussions and to share best practices in migration management. IOM should continue to work closely with member states to help them identify and address their needs. As we noted, while the United States supports coordination on migration issues, we believe that such coordination must have at its core the recognition that migration law and policies are the sovereign right of states. The United States believes that effective coordination on migration issues at bilateral and regional levels, where states share similar challenges and focus on specific, concrete and practical issues, is key to ensuring that migration remains, on balance, a positive phenomenon for generations to come.