



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at the 101<sup>st</sup> Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration  
*Geneva, 27 – 30 November 2012*

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation congratulates you for your election and extends a cordial welcome to the new IOM Members and its sincere appreciation to the Director-General Ambassador Swing for his leadership.

Mr. Chairman,

The 72 million forcibly displaced people, refugees, IDPs, stateless persons, victims of violent conflicts, other persons uprooted by natural disasters and development projects, are all witnesses of today's crises that the political will of the international community either has failed or been unable to prevent<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the percentage of forcibly displaced people as part of the overall migration phenomenon is increasing, a situation that calls for a humanitarian response that is coordinated, generous and effective.

These crises are precipitated by non-state actors, by persecution and by state repression, generalized violence and conflicts that are particularly destructive in urban areas. The difficult challenge is providing a humanitarian response that is determined by the degree of vulnerability and need rather than legal categories. The theme of the 2012 International Dialogue on Migration selected by the IOM member states was dedicated to migration crises and how international actors manage them. A human rights approach seems helpful in developing an adequate response. Further reflection on the forcible displacement of people by increasingly unpredictable disasters and explosions of violence can be another tangible contribution of the IOM.

In these circumstances, the expression of international solidarity becomes quite urgent and necessary, but it remains critical to look at forcibly displaced people as protagonists themselves, within the limits of their situation, in finding appropriate solutions to their plight and to their need of protection.

A related concern comes from the protracted situation in which many forcibly displaced people find themselves in: more than 7 million refugees and more than 13

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Zetter, Editor. *World Disasters Report: Focus on Forced Migration and Displacement*. Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2012. Pp. 304

million IDPs have been languishing for years in a condition of marginalization and inactivity. These human resources could progressively be integrated in the host societies and contribute their talents to development and the building of a common future. Overcoming political resistance to local integration is a daunting challenge that only a joint effort of donors, local communities and national governments could address in new ways in the search for some solution.

As migrations grow in number and complexity, and with the persistence of displacement producing crises, leadership in developing a comprehensive framework to guide international actors in responding to crises appears as another timely undertaking. The various attempts made so far remain at an embryonic stage, but they show the felt-need of some global entity that can effectively support the management of today's population movements.

Likewise, the establishment of the Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism<sup>2</sup> represents a substantial step towards ensuring a more effective response to migrants stranded in crisis situations. Recent major emergencies have highlighted the need for a funding mechanism to facilitate IOM's rapid response and intervention. As guests in a foreign country, these persons are vulnerable in times of crisis, often unable to access support networks or resources either from the host country or their country of origin. IOM is increasingly called upon to step into the breach and provide assistance to migrants who have nowhere else to turn. This funding mechanism should be able to reinforce IOM's operational and emergency response capacity by providing the Organization with funds to bridge the gap between the period when an emergency occurs and when donor funding is received.

Mr. Chairman,

Problems for migrants do not end once these persons are evacuated or repatriated to their home countries; to the contrary, return to their communities means additional difficulties related to poverty, psychosocial trauma and lack of employment. Home countries are very often already burdened by poverty, and, in fact, they are very much dependent on remittances sent back by migrants. Thus, for migrants the crisis in host countries risks becoming a protracted crisis in their home. Moreover, many young migrants, faced with lack of resources and job opportunities at home choose to emigrate again even to crisis affected areas or give in to the pressure of recruitment and joining rebel groups in their regions.

Therefore, to alleviate both the burden of migrants and of their home communities, international actors need to combine short-term humanitarian assistance with long-term

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about\\_iom/en/council/100/MC\\_2335.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about_iom/en/council/100/MC_2335.pdf) (ultima consultazione 16 Novembre 2012)

development initiatives that address reconstruction, stabilization and rehabilitation of migrants and sending countries. Migrants could be forgotten too easily once a crisis is over. Many continue risking their lives to ensure their families a decent life, others may become victims of human trafficking and smuggling and even may die while trying to reach better destinations through deserts and seas.

All these issues should become part of any post-2015 global framework since better managed migration is a critical enabler for inclusive social and economic development. Economic and other contributions of migrants to their sending and host countries need to be more fully utilized<sup>3</sup>.

International migration is bringing benefits to both countries of origin and destination, including remittances and reduced labour shortages. The transfer of resources, skills, knowledge, ideas and networks through migration is difficult to quantify, yet significant. Many millions of migrants also have benefited from their experience that helps building a better future for themselves and their families. However, too many migrants continue to work and live in insecure, precarious and dangerous conditions, often marginalized and subject to discrimination and without access to social and health care services. Moreover, disruptions to their family life can have significant social consequences, particularly in the country of origin. However, the link between migration and development is complex. Adequate policies need to be in place to mitigate some of the well-known risks, such as brain drain and health issues.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, the Delegation of the Holy See would like to recall that beyond being considered an additional strain to host communities, migrants are a resource for our societies. Besides the new and rich values and perspectives they are contributing, migrants sustain the economy through their work. In the planning by the international community migrations need to find their place, not only as functional to development and demography, but as a major human rights commitment and comprehensive humanitarian responsibility. Only in this way the interdependence of which migrations are a result and a cause will make our common future a positive force for all.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=10831> (ultima consultazione 16 Novembre 2012).