



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

STATEMENT

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Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) appreciates the opportunity to address the Third Committee on the “Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions related to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions”.

As the High Commissioner indicated yesterday, one of the areas where a complex challenge has emerged in recent years relates to the preservation of international protection in an environment characterized by the growing relevance of the “mixed nature” of many present-day population flows and growing awareness of the complexity of population mobility in general.

Madam Chair,

Traditional notions of “voluntary” and “forced” must today be seen in the context of mobility for a broader range of interlinked reasons. While more people are on the move in today’s globalized world, with demographic and economic factors paramount, often the lines between economic and political reasons for moving can be hard to distinguish. In this environment, safe and principled management of migration which remains attentive to the rights of all migrants while ensuring international protection for refugees is a global challenge.

The world is changing, and so are the modalities of cooperation between UNHCR and IOM. Third country resettlement and voluntary repatriation continue to constitute a large and important part of UNHCR/IOM collaboration. Governments expect this and individuals need it. But these increasingly are joined by newer ventures in response to the different situations of our times. Providing assistance to IDPs, coming to the aid of the victims of displacement as a result of climate change, developing governmental capacity to deal with mixed population flows: these are areas that were not foreseen in 1951, when our two institutions were created, but are very much what is expected of us today.

To tackle coherently these and other aspects, a revived annual consultation between UNHCR and IOM at the executive head level now sets the framework for regular dialogue on common challenges. The most recent, in May 2007, provided an opportunity to discuss a number of issues which have figured prominently in the UN reform agenda and the migration debate. Among these were the “cluster approach” and collaboration in the Global Migration Group (GMG). The GMG, of which both IOM and UNHCR were founding members, represents a promising mechanism to bring together intergovernmental partners at the policy and operational levels and to provide consolidated expertise and support to the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

As an active participant in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), alongside humanitarian partners from the UN system, the Red Cross movement and the NGO sector, IOM has been heavily involved in the elaboration and implementation of the cluster approach. At the request of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, IOM was asked to assume the role of global cluster lead for Camp Coordination and Camp Management in IDP situations resulting from natural disasters. UNHCR has the corresponding lead in situations of conflict-induced displacement. From the outset, in order to avoid overlap, increase effectiveness and exploit synergies, UNHCR and IOM agreed to a unified approach, with joint leadership of cluster proceedings at the global level. This approach prevents duplication while recognizing the

primary responsibility each has in its respective area. For its implementation, a joint (virtual) secretariat has been established. IOM and UNHCR share all aspects of its functioning and see the Camp Coordination and Camp Management cluster as a partnership – which has extended beyond Headquarters-to-Headquarters collaboration to encompass eight joint field training exercises over the past year.

Madam Chair,

Above all, it is at the programme level where everyday work brings together UNHCR and IOM in countless initiatives and humanitarian responses. As we speak, today in fact, a joint regional seminar on Building Capacity to Manage Migration in the Caribbean is under way in the Cayman Islands. This five-day seminar, organized by IOM and UNHCR is bringing together 21 Caribbean governments, regional organizations including CARICOM, OAS and UN-ECLAC, and regional and international experts to review effective practices and tools for addressing mixed migratory flows in prior/during/post emergency scenarios, both natural and man-made.

During the five-day event, participants will discuss contingency planning for mass migration and refugee emergencies; responses to the diverse challenges of human trafficking and ways to strengthen regional integration as well as legal frameworks to better respond to migratory flows and to protect migrants and refugees.

The IOM/UNHCR Regional Seminar seeks to intensify regional dialogue and cooperation on these issues and to strengthen Caribbean capacities to manage mixed migratory flows within a human rights framework to maximize the positive effects of migration.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, we look forward to forging an even stronger working relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees to promote collaboration on areas of common concerns and enhance the protection of refugees within the broader migration context.

Thank you.