STATEMENT

BY

MS MICHÉLE KLEIN SOLOMON
PERMANENT OBSERVER

AT THE 68TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AGENDA ITEM 67: ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

New York • 4 November 2013

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Organization for Migration has for a long time advocated against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. IOM was pleased to see Member States reaffirm this view during the most recent UN General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, where they widely called for the need to improve the public perceptions of migrants. We were equally pleased to see that in the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue, UN Member States strongly condemn the acts, manifestations and expressions of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance against migrants and the stereotypes often applied to them, including on the basis of religion or belief.

We would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance for his report, and would like to raise two points here today.

Mr. Chair,

First, IOM is deeply concerned by the increasing forms of intolerance expressed towards migrants. This may include racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, ethnic profiling, political violence, as well as scapegoating. The most effective route towards the elimination of this intolerance is to integrate migrants as active members into the economic, social, cultural and political life of the host society.

We would like to underscore the important role of youth and young migrants in this regard. Young people are powerful agents for change, and they have the potential to build social, economic and cultural bridges of cooperation and understanding across societies. It is therefore essential to raise awareness and to include youth in migration and policy debates. Social inclusion of migrant youth helps shape positive attitudes among migrants and native youth alike, and brings down social barriers of xenophobia, marginalization and discrimination.
Mr. Chair,

Second, we call for a fundamental shift in the public perception of migration, as a process to be managed – not a problem to be solved. We need to address misperceptions of migration through factual information on demographic and other trends, as well as on the overwhelmingly positive contributions of migrants. Governments, the media, the private sector, civil society and migrants all have an important role to play in this regard.

IOM has just initiated a worldwide information campaign to increase public awareness of the positive contributions of migrants to home and host societies and to help bring about a more favourable, documented and balanced attitude towards migrants. More information about this campaign can be found on the website migrantscontribute.com.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, let me reiterate that we must all work together to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It is essential that we improve the public perception of migrants, and IOM offers its strong partnership and commitment in this regard.

Thank you.