STATEMENT
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AT THE 68TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AGENDA ITEM 69: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
New York 31 October 2013

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is pleased to take the floor today and to speak on the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Declaration of the recent UN General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) reaffirmed “the need to promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants,” a sentiment strongly shared by IOM. Respect of the human dignity and promotion of the well-being of migrants, in accordance with international law, is central to IOM’s mandate as conferred by its Member States. Promoting and supporting States with the ratification of the international normative framework is a top priority, as is the actual provision of protection and assistance to migrants.

It is of utmost importance to recognize that at all times and in all places in the world, migrants’ rights are human rights. As the principal intergovernmental organization working on migration, IOM would therefore like to make reference to three of the reports supporting today’s agenda item.

Mr. Chair,

First, on the Report by the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants (A/68/283), IOM is in full agreement that the issue of the human rights of migrants is not a separate, free-standing set of rights. It underpins all other migration issues, which issues are in and of themselves interwoven. IOM employs a rights-based approach in its projects and programmes and helps States design rights-based migration policies, which in turn reduce migration-related risks and help increase awareness and protection of migrants’ rights.

IOM agrees that migration governance should be focused on human rights and in this regard would welcome increased dialogue and collaboration between the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and IOM. We endorse the Special Rapporteur’s recommendation, that, I quote, “migrants should always be seen first and foremost as human beings with inherent human rights, rather than agents for development,” and that “only when conceived of in terms of human rights will migration be able to fulfill its potential as an enabler of human development.”
IOM also supports the Special Rapporteur’s call for the decriminalization of migration and migrants in an irregular status, which is also at the center of IOM’s work as well as in the context of the Global Migration Group (GMG), which IOM is currently chairing. We agree that we need to combat xenophobia and violence against migrants by promoting diversity.

IOM has, however, raised concerns over certain aspects of the Special Rapporteur’s report in reference to the Organization, which have been expressed separately on the record.

Mr. Chair,

Regarding the Secretary-General’s Report on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, including Ways and Means to Promote the Human Rights of Migrants (A/68/292), there is consensus emerging around the notion that the post-2015 UN Development Agenda must leave no one behind. The new agenda should be a universal one; it should tackle exclusion and inequality; and it should focus on human beings and their human rights. These are sentiments that IOM strongly supports and reaffirms. However, if we are to truly succeed in our ambition to leave no one behind, the post-2015 agenda must address all migrants’ experiences of discrimination, violence, abuse and exploitation, and should keep track of their human development outcomes compared to the general population.

The labour and human rights and well-being of migrants should be addressed in the new agenda through appropriately disaggregated indicators. Goals and targets on health, education, productive employment and decent work for all, good governance, protection or gender equality, amongst others, should contain indicators that are disaggregated so that the situation and human rights of migrants, including migrant children and other ‘at risk’ groups, can be appropriately assessed and monitored. *Examples might be to disaggregate indicators related to employment or decent work; health; social protection and social security; or access to education, to assess whether and to what extent migrants receive equal treatment compared to the rest of the population.*

Mr. Chair,

With regards to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), IOM would like to reaffirm its work in this area through a wide variety of emergency response activities focusing on IDPs displaced by conflict or by natural disasters. One of IOM’s responsibilities in emergency efforts around the world is as the global cluster lead for camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) in natural disasters. The Organization’s activities are aimed at assisting and protecting IDPs, returnees and host communities with the aim of contributing towards durable solutions and stability. We assist IDPs both within and outside of camp settings.

*IOM’s specific activities include providing shelter and non-food item distributions and health assistance; integration or reintegration assistance tailored to the needs of specific target groups including former combatants; capacity-building to help local administrations...*
develop the skills necessary to address emergency displacements, including the innovative Displacement Tracking Matrix used by many governments and other partners to identify and assist populations in need; population stabilization and livelihood recovery activities, including solutions for land and property right disputes as underscored by the Special Rapporteur as necessary to transitional justice; and medical and psychosocial assistance.

IOM works closely and collaboratively within the humanitarian system and the cluster approach to support national and local authorities in carrying out their responsibilities to protect and assist people affected within their territory. IOM has been a key partner within the Inter Agency Standing Committee in working on issues of internal displacement.

The multi-faceted character of internal displacement requires strong partnership and coordination, with governments, with partner international organizations from a range of areas of expertise and with many actors in civil society, from academia to direct assistance service providers. Working with many partners in leveraging expertise to meet the protection, assistance, and recovery needs of the affected populations is critical for IOM’s operational work.

It is in this light that we fully underscore the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations to ensure systematic and early engagement of humanitarian and development actors, from all relevant sectors, to develop solutions strategies and identify mechanisms to promote an integrated approach to solutions from the early stages of displacement onwards. We also support the Special Rapporteur’s recommendation to systematically integrate durable solutions into peace building and stabilization processes.

In conclusion Mr. Chair,

Protecting migrants’ rights helps ensure that migration is beneficial not only for migrants and their families but also for the communities and countries with which they are affiliated. These rights apply to all, including to migrant workers and IDPs.

IOM offers its ongoing support and commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights of all migrants worldwide.

Thank you.