

Standing Committee on Programme and Finance- IOM
Meeting at Conference Room, XVI, Palais des Nations

10 May, 2010 at IOM

Mr. Chairperson,

Following India's joining IOM from May 01, 2008, the Government of India has increased its engagement with this important inter-governmental organisation dealing with the issue of migration, especially in areas of interest to India such as those relating to improving conditions for Indian workers abroad.

2. It may be recalled that IOM helped airlift several of our nationals in 1991 during the Kuwait War. IOM was of much help also when some 300 Indian nationals had been stranded off the coast of Mauritania in 1991 and in another incident supported 59 stranded Indian migrants in Kamsar in Guinea Konakry and facilitated their safe repatriation.

3. India has had a long history of attracting and sending people to other lands and today it is estimated that more than 30 million people of Indian origin live in other countries, while another 25 million migrants including a large number of irregular migrants, are in India. India's unique civilization and free and tolerant society have drawn sustenance from the diverse migrants who have settled in India over centuries. India is proud of the achievements of its diaspora living abroad. The establishment of a full-fledged Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to promote all matters related to overseas Indians is a manifestation of India's commitment to engage with its diaspora and with the established multilateral mechanisms and institutions on migration. India favours a regular, non-discriminatory and orderly process for migration.

4. India has been part of the Colombo Process and also actively participates in the meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, including the most recent Second meeting of the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum held in Geneva on 28-29 April, 2010.

5. India is part of a pilot project including the Philippines and UAE for testing a pilot scheme of providing low-cost migrant loans and engaging bank partners in reintegration support programmes within the framework of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

6. These activities have been elaborated in some detail in order to demonstrate India's responsible commitment to the issue of migration, and the importance India accords to the important role and function of IOM in both GFMD and the Colombo Process.

7. Furthermore, as the incoming External Auditor for the financial year 2010-11 for IOM, India pledges to fulfill its responsibilities for further improving the efficiency of IOM. India commits to continue to actively engage with IOM.

8. Mr. Chairperson, in the current back-drop of global challenges to migration, India reiterates the need for IOM to be member state-driven, both in terms of functioning and oversight, to ensure that the interests of migrants are best addressed. To this end, today's meeting of the Standing Committee is of importance, as it provides an opportunity not only to member-states to examine the efficacy of the implementation of the projects of IOM but also to discuss ways and means to improve its functioning as it adapts itself to the increasing global challenges of migration. For this purpose, it would be necessary to create an effective delivery mechanism without losing sight of

the need to maintain the primacy of the role of member-states, in both the decision making and monitoring aspects. As the world is becoming increasingly mobile, new challenges are being thrown up for migrants that need to be tackled. In all these spheres, India looks forward to contributing and cooperating with other member-states to ensure IOM's adaptability as a vibrant, dynamic and efficient organisation in discharging its responsibilities.

9. India, therefore, looks forward to the ensuing discussions for a constructive and dynamic outcome.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.
