



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

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Mr. William Lacy Swing

at the Sixth Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance

10 May 2010

Geneva

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

INTRODUCTION

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is an honour and a pleasure to meet with the distinguished delegations of IOM Member States at this Sixth Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance.

2. I would like to begin by expressing, on behalf of my colleagues, our sincere appreciation to our Chairperson, Ambassador Kitajima (Japan), for his efficient leadership of the Council and this Standing Committee, together with his First Vice-Chairperson, Ambassador Jazaïry (Algeria), Second Vice-Chairperson, Ambassador Strohal (Austria), and Rapporteur, Ms. Mendoza (Colombia), who constitute the Bureau of the IOM governing bodies. The Administration looks forward to working closely with the Bureau. Ambassador Kitajima has recently undertaken the first ever visit of an IOM Council Chairperson to the Organization's project sites. He visited ongoing projects in South Africa and Zimbabwe, and I understand that this was useful and informative. He will share with you some of his experiences and impressions immediately after my statement.

CONTEXT

3. As you will notice when we discuss the details of the various agenda items, there continues to be an increase in both the level and scope of the Organization's activities consistent with the pattern over the last couple of years.

4. The Administration has highlighted the challenges this growth presents in the areas of administration, oversight and policy development. We in the Administration are sensitive to the mounting pressure on governments to reduce costs and achieve savings in the present global economic context. IOM must continue to rely on the financial and political support of its Member States, however, to address migration concerns for the common good of all. In this context, I trust your deliberations, particularly on the ongoing budget reform process, will give serious consideration to the various options available to ensure that the core structure of the Organization is adequately funded.

AGENDA ITEMS

5. I would now like to introduce the key topics on the agenda. A more detailed background will be presented under each item, at which time my colleagues and I will respond to your specific questions and comments.

Item 4: Outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget

6. Outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget are an important, ongoing issue that we have regularly brought to your attention at various levels. Total outstanding contributions as of 31 March 2010 for 2009 and prior years amount to CHF 5.4 million. Nineteen Member States are subject to Article 4 of the Constitution. Since taking office, I have dedicated a considerable amount of time to following up on this issue, which remains a priority for me. While concerned Member States show a willingness to settle outstanding amounts, this has not translated into concrete actions. I take the opportunity once again to urge all Member States to enter into and honour the Administration's very flexible repayment plans.

Item 5: Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2009

7. In turning now to the Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2009, the combined total expenditure for the administrative and operational programmes totals USD 1.027 billion, which is slightly higher than the 2008 level. This continued growth and expansion of IOM activities underline the need to strengthen core structures in support of these activities. In line with the decision of Member States, USD 1 million of additional Discretionary Income (DI) from 2009 has been placed in the DI reserve, which now stands at USD 1.1 million including the balance from 2008.

8. The External Auditors have given their opinion that the Financial Report and the related notes give a true and fair view of the Organization's resources, expenditures and financial position. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation on behalf of the Administration for the dedicated work of the External Auditors and thank the Norwegian Government for having made the audit team available over the last nine years. Words cannot express our gratitude for the invaluable services and advice that the Norwegian External Auditors have provided, as well as the guidance given in the monumental task of changing our entire financial system. In wishing you, Mr. Jøranli, and your colleagues the very best for the future, I seize this moment to welcome the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, who take over from you. We look forward to a fruitful partnership and collaboration.

9. At this stage, allow me to share with you information on two important initiatives of the Administration. These relate to: (1) the terms of reference for an Audit Advisory Committee to be established in IOM; and (2) the IOM Internal Audit Charter. These two initiatives are intended to further enhance the IOM internal control and audit processes and environment; and to align IOM with the international standards and practices in this important area. Appropriate documents on these two subjects will be shared with all Member States for information purposes when ready.

Item 6: Statement by a representative of the Staff Association

10. Regarding the statement by a representative of the Staff Association Committee (SAC), I wish to reiterate my personal commitment to the work of the Committee. The Administration has worked with SAC on a number of initiatives designed to offer better conditions of service to staff. The Administration's relationship with SAC is one of cooperation and, although there are some areas where we might have differing perspectives, I believe we have been able to find solutions together that benefit staff most of the time. I will continue to work closely with the Committee to address staff concerns and to provide all appropriate support to ensure the best possible conditions for IOM staff.

Item 7: Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2010

11. I turn now to the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2010. The Administrative Part of the Budget remains unchanged at CHF 39,388,000. Mindful that the proposal presented under this part of the budget was not fully approved, the Administration has identified reductions of CHF 406,000 in order to align planned expenditures with the approved budget. The Operational Part of the Budget, of which the original approved amount was USD 650.6 million, has been increased in the revision by USD 245.8 million to USD 896.4 million because of expanded ongoing activities and the addition of new projects. The increase in the level of the Operational Part of the Budget will help reach the DI target of USD 41 million.

Item 8: Assessment scale for 2011

12. The IOM assessment scale for 2011 is fully equated to that of the United Nations. Since the United Nations has adopted a new scale, there are consequent changes in the assessment rates of IOM Member States. I would ask the Standing Committee to recommend that the Executive Committee adopts the assessment scale for 2011, which forms an integral part of the preparation of the 2011 Programme and Budget.

Item 9: Support for developing Member States and Member States with economy in transition – 1035 Facility

13. The agenda item on Support for developing Member States and Member States with economy in transition – 1035 Facility is a status report for 2009 and the period from January to 31 March 2010. The 1035 Facility continues to provide an important funding mechanism to implement migration-related capacity-building projects. I appreciate the interest of all delegations in the administration of the Facility and I welcome all the voluntary contributions made to the Facility and wish to thank all the governments that contributed.

Item 10: Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership

14. The next item on the agenda is an exchange of views on subjects that you, Member States Representatives, proposed in preparation for this meeting. The three topics selected will be introduced by some of my colleagues, and I expect an interesting discussion to follow. The first topic is the management of human resources, which I consider the greatest asset of the Organization. In this context, the revision of the staff regulations is a crucial undertaking in which I have taken a personal interest with the objective of improving the working conditions of staff. This exercise, which is near completion, has been extensively coordinated with SAC. The second topic is project development in IOM, which I think of as the heartbeat of the Organization. The third topic is stranded migrants, who are one of the primary beneficiaries of IOM services.

Item 11: IOM budget reform

15. As indicated in my earlier remarks, the growth in the Organization and its scope of work is at the centre of the ongoing budget reform discussions. This agenda point gives us the opportunity to review objectively, together, the needs of IOM. Our aim is to find a practical and sustainable solution to the long-standing structural underfunding in the Organization.

Item 13: Update on the structure reform implementation

16. As an update on the IOM structure reform and implementation, I can report that this exercise is progressing as planned. The terms of reference for the new Headquarters structure are now complete. The next phase is to undertake a similar exercise for the Field Offices and to begin the implementation of the Headquarters structure.

CONCLUSION

17. Distinguished delegates, this brings me to the end of my statement, and I look forward to a productive discussion on all these items. We will continue to seek active consultation with you in all areas of the Organization's work. Thank you all for your kind attention.