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Kyoto Protocol (CMP 6)

Statement of the International Organization for Migration

H.E. Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General
International Organization for Migration
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Distinguished Heads of Delegations, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure to be here today and to make brief remarks on behalf of the International Organization for Migration.¹ IOM is the world's leading international migration agency with 132 members and extensive field presence worldwide.

Our objective is to promote humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. We are here today to make sure migration is not forgotten as the world debates what to do about the impact of climate change.

I would like to make three key points:

First, the reality is that climate change and environmental degradation are already triggering migration and displacement.

IOM has carried out programmes in more than 40 countries around the world and assisted vulnerable communities affected by hurricanes, severe flooding and drought.

We are already feeling the growing demand for humanitarian assistance and disaster risk reduction. We are also witnessing the consequences of the gradual deterioration of the environment, such as coastal erosion and desertification. These generate less attention than extreme climatic events; yet they have a more profound impact in the long run. In these contexts, people often use migration strategically, to adapt to their changing environment.

Second, while there are still many knowledge gaps, what we do know provides a clear indication that there is urgent need for action.

We do know that there is likely to be an overall rise in the scale of migration and displacement, in particular within certain countries as a result of climate change. We also know that it is the poorest and most vulnerable who will bear the brunt of the

¹ More information on the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is available on www.iom.int. For the information on IOM's engagement in the area of climate change, environment and migration, please see www.iom/envmig

impact of climate change. We cannot afford to delay assistance to vulnerable groups and affected populations.

My third point is that migration needs to be part of adaptation plans.

Migration is not always a worst case scenario. Migration can and does contribute to development in countries of origin and destination.

The key is to be proactive, not to delay support to vulnerable communities until a tipping point is reached at which migration becomes a matter of sheer survival and spells a crisis situation.

This requires developing integrated solutions linking climate change adaptation with disaster risk reduction and development. Migration needs to be part of the equation, at global level within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Such cross-sectoral approaches are also needed at regional, national and local levels and supported by appropriate and innovative financing systems.

With respect to the UNFCCC framework, the implications of climate change for human mobility are still not considered in any of the existing agreements.

We are pleased, however, to note that migration and displacement are mentioned in the current version of the negotiating text. It is important that this reference remains and that the migratory consequences of climate change be given due recognition in the international discussions on climate change.

In sum: We all know that there is no single solution to the challenges of climate change. We need to use all the tools at our disposal, and migration is one of them.

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