

IOM Council: UK statement

Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to begin by congratulating you on your new appointment, and thanking Morten Jespersen for his chairmanship of the Bureau over the past year.

2020 has been a particularly memorable year, and in many senses one that most of us will be glad to end. As the effects of COVID-19 were added to a global record humanitarian need, threats are posed to the lives, livelihoods and well-being of more people than ever. Responding to this has been a huge challenge. An effective, coordinated, capable, visible and accountable IOM is needed now more than ever and, whilst our first thoughts are with those who need IOM assistance, we express our gratitude to the whole team at the IOM for their continuing good work.

Given those challenges it is both remarkable and essential that the IOM is able to continue reforming. As the second largest donor, the United Kingdom stands ready to support the IOM on this journey. The UK would like to reiterate its support to the Director General, the Deputy Director General and IOM staff for continuing to reform the IOM as the organisation, and the importance of its work, continues to expand.

The UK welcomes the creation of the additional Deputy Director General position. This is the right step to recognise the growing size and importance of the organisation and the demands upon the leadership team. The UK is a strong supporter of the Internal Governance Framework, and we keenly welcome the work plan which we know will be treated as a priority and actioned as quickly and efficiently as possible.

We also welcome IOM's efforts to play a full role in a more joined-up international system. Since becoming a UN related organisation in 2016, the IOM's role has grown, and so too has its responsibility – to better coordinate its work with other UN agencies and partners and to take a more outward-facing approach.

Furthermore, although the UK notes the improvement in the staffing and capacity of the Office of the Inspector General, we remain concerned regarding the increased number of allegations the office is receiving and the office's ability to deal with such a growing workload. We appreciate the regular quarterly updates and request these continue. We expect senior management to maintain a clear and specific focus on the OIG – including on its ability to carry out its function in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. The UK was pleased to be a member of the Audit Oversight and Advisory Committee selection panel, underlining the importance we attach to these issues.

[The UK reaffirms its commitment to the Global Compact on Migration, and is pleased to recognise the UN's hard work since signature to translate GCM principles into action that helps migrants. We believe this work is beginning

to show promising results and we encourage IOM to continue and to strengthen its valuable work in this area. We welcome the progress establishing the Start Up Fund, to which the UK is pleased to contribute, and its first projects being approved. We also welcome the establishment of the UN Migration Network and its associated networks. This month's Review of implementation in Europe and North America was a valuable opportunity to reflect on our own progress and to hear from others. As the GCM begins to mature and the institutional architecture takes shape, we look forward to further progress and encourage IOM to maintain its ambition in this area.]

Finally, I would like to highlight one more key issue. On 2 September, the UK Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, announced a call to action to protect the world's poorest from the increasing threat of famine, and a new £119 million aid package to alleviate extreme hunger. The UK has appointed its first Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs to work in partnership with other donors, UN agencies, NGOs and foundations to help prevent catastrophic famine.

We look forward to working in partnership with the IOM on all of these issues. Thank you.