

Intervention at the Opening of the Hague Process Global Hearing

on 5 June 2012

by Mr. Peter Schatzer, Chief of Staff, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

I have been asked to convey to you the greetings of IOM's Director General, William Lacy Swing. He very much values the Hague Process and would have wished to be present at this important Global Hearing today. His participation has however become impossible due to environmental disaster – incidentally an increasing factor in forced migration. The floods in Thailand last December have in fact forced us to postpone an important IOM conference in Bangkok to this week.

Would he have been here Mr. Swing would have told us about the high esteem he has for the Hague Process and also about his long-standing association with it.

Since the Process has been created ten years ago, much progress has been registered in international migration dialogue, first and foremost at the Global Forum on Migration and Development. The United Nations is moving forward towards holding its second High Level Dialogue on the same subject in 2013. Regional processes on migration flourish in most areas of the planet. All of these however have mainly governments talking to each other. True, the Global Forum has civil society days and an interface between governments and NGOs, IOM holds regular international dialogues on migration open to a wide array of participants, but only the Hague Process provides such a unique venue where all participate as equals.

In the migration debate and in migration policy making we need to follow a rational approach. We must not deny problems but deal with them in an informed way, based not on emotions or simplistic proposals for unworkable solutions. True: migration is complex, not least because it is a composite subject: migration and development, migration and rights, migration and protection, migration and security, migration and health, migration and jobs, migration and ageing – all of these valid topics require expertise from many different sources. The brain power, the soft power united in The Hague today and tomorrow can contribute to sharing ideas and developing new approaches.

In a world of inequality, rights abuses and demographic pressures but also of growing information flows and personal aspirations, migration is inevitable. Managing some key aspects requires cooperation. While organizations like IOM can play a leading role we cannot do it alone. Indeed, one of the cornerstones of Mr. Swing's approach is partnership.

Thus sincere thanks to the Hague Process and to the persons behind it for developing this unique forum.