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STATEMENT BY THE **INTERNATIONAL** —
ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)



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

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**STATEMENT
BY
MS MICHELE KLEIN SOLOMON
PERMANENT OBSERVER
AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III)
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Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With over 50% of the global population now residing in cities, urbanization is *without doubt one of the most significant issues currently on the international agenda.*

It is of particular interest to IOM because of its close, and in many ways inseparable relationship with migration.

In the context of cities, we most commonly discuss migration in terms of rural to urban migration being a *key driver of the urbanization process.* However, there are many other links that we should consider.

First, migrants from overseas typically also settle in urban centers. This raises questions about how to deliver essential services to increasingly diverse societies, and how to maintain social cohesion and stability in cities while protecting the rights of minorities, including migrants.

Second, newcomers to fast growing cities – whether they are from overseas or otherwise – often have to settle in hazard-prone, poorly planned areas where they have limited access to basic services. When disasters strike, they are among the worst affected.

Third, when included in urban development policies and disaster risk reduction strategies, migration can be both an important preventative and a response measure to disaster situations.

It can make communities more prepared, expedite recovery after disasters, reduce the human and economic costs of displacement and make populations at risk safer.

Migration and urbanization are therefore linked in a multitude of ways: migration is a driver of urbanization; there are important interplays between the development outcomes of migrants in cities, and to the maintenance of social cohesion; and migration can be an important means to save lives, enhance resilience and reduce disaster risk.

I raise these issues now to create a place marker in our discussions moving forward. Integrating these issues in the urbanization discourse is a priority for IOM, and it will be important to also consider how these issues might be reflected in the ongoing post-2015 discussions on urbanization, a link which so far has been lacking.

IOM looks forward to continuing this dialogue in the context of the post-2015 agenda, and beyond that to Habitat III.

Thank you.