Speech by William Lacy Swing, Director General, International Organization for Migration, on the occasion of the

2018 Annual Session of the WFP Executive Board

It is really a great and unique honour for me to be with you today. I am very humbled by the introduction I have received. I was not really sure who you were talking about, but I will try to at least make some remarks that I hope will provide reason more for the meeting today.

I am really grateful to the Executive Board of WFP, to its Executive Director, David Beasley, my friend and fellow Carolinian, and to His Excellency Zoltán Kálmán, the President of the Executive Board. Thank you so much for inviting me to this 2018 annual session.

I would like, as always, to make three points. The first is simply just to take a minute to talk about the World Food Programme and IOM, what I call the humanitarian partnership that we have. I have always felt that IOM is closer in its operational style and its business model to WFP than to any of the other United Nations agencies. We are all highly operational. We were comparing notes when David (Beasley) and I spoke earlier about how many people we have in the field. You have about 90 percent of your 14,000 people in the field, something like that. We have about 95 percent of our 11,000 people. We are in about 480 places around the world and highly delocalized in any given country. Even a small country like Haiti will have six sub-offices, 21 in Indonesia, 40 in Colombia.

When I am travelling and I speak to a head of state or a foreign minister, I fairly regularly say to them, "If you have one of your nationals caught up in a crisis somewhere, do not call 9-1-1, call IOM, and we will bring them home for you, as we did with UNHCR." During the fall of Gaddafi in February 2011, we took 250,000 migrants back to 54 countries. We have that capacity. It makes us very similar in operational style. Usually, you are much faster than we are. I got to Haiti and you all had already built the accommodation for us to sleep in. I have great admiration for the World Food Programme. I recently suggested to your Executive Director that the one thing we need to do is formalize our relationship; to have an annual, bilateral tabletop review of how we are doing, what you would like us to do that we are not doing, what you would like us to stop doing, and so forth. I think that would be a very good thing to do.

We have carried out projects everywhere in the world, from Ecuador's northern border to the displaced and vulnerable people in Darfur. We were together at the Haiyan typhoon in the Philippines, at the Haiti earthquake 12 January 2010. We are working very closely together with the 900,000 Rohingya in Cox's Bazaar, in Bangladesh. I think we could go on and on with examples. I think we need to work on formalizing the relationship by having closer contact between our two Headquarters. I look forward to that.

We have parallel histories and trajectories. We were both born after the Second World War; we in 1951, joined at the hip with UNHCR. We have grown exponentially since that time. We now both can boast of a global presence and the capacity to provide assistance to the most vulnerable. In fact, I think we can say that we are humanitarian partners, but I recognize our position as a junior partner. We are a very modest organization. You are the largest humanitarian organization in the world, and we have great respect for that. I want to draw on that -- you have gone from strength to strength and continue to improve.

I believe that, now in particular, you will improve even further under the dynamic leadership of my friend David (Beasley) who is, I think, arriving like a ball of fire. He has already been to 47 countries and I do not even know where he is heading this afternoon. He has taken a hold very quickly and

recognized, as I have early on, you cannot sit in beautiful Rome or beautiful Geneva and do your job when you are head of an organization that has 90 percent or more of their people in the field. When I get criticism on my absence, I'll say, "You keep the organization running while I travel because I have to get out there." What it does for the morale of our people, what it does for the local government's relationship, is enormous. We recognize this important partnership, your innovative spirit, and we certainly know that we have a lot more to learn from WFP, and we will continue to do so.

The second point that I wanted to make is about humanitarian work amidst a perfect storm. We are in very, very challenging times, the likes of which I have not known during my 55 years in this business. I will tell you what I am talking about. We live in a world on the move. We have 1 billion migrants, 250 million crossing borders, 750 million displaced in their own country. China alone has more domestic migrants than there are international migrants. Percentagewise, it is still about 3.5 percent in terms of international migrants. But the reason the numbers are greater is because the world's population quadrupled in the last century, something that never happened before.

If you were to take these international migrants and turn them into a country, they would be probably number six or seven. They would have a population slightly larger than Brazil's and slightly less than Indonesia's. They would have a GDP of about USD 600 billion, which is the annual remittance flow, not to speak of the other contributions they make. It is a considerable issue that we have here and a phenomenon called migration. We live in a world on the move. Most of this is happening regularly, orderly, safely and relatively smoothly.

However -- there is always a however -- the sad part is that there are more forcibly displaced people today than at any other time since the Second World War. They come in various categories, about 67 million right now. About 23 million of those are refugees and the others fall in different categories. We have 40 million people trapped in conditions of modern slavery. We have 25 million of these victims in forced labour conditions. About a quarter of all forced labourers are exploited outside their country of residence.

And 50 percent of victims are now suffering in conditions of debt bondage through illegal, criminal migrant recruitment agencies, largely in Southeast and South Asia, which we are trying to do something about now in terms of ethical recruitment. A young woman is told, "We have a good job for you as a domestic". She arrives, her passport is taken away, and she goes into a brothel. A young man goes -- "We have a good job for you" -- he gets there and he realizes his first or maybe even second year of salary goes back to the recruitment agency. We have to do something about that. Those are the conditions we face.

In terms of the perfect storm, there are a lot of elements to it. You have a dozen armed conflicts from West Africa to South Asia. I will not name them all for you now. I will probably miss one or two. But they are all there. Many of them have been going on for a long time, simultaneous, protracted and complex with no hope in the short to medium term to resolve any of these. Many of these conflicts could have been prevented. Libya should not be where it is today. We forgot that Gaddafi had killed all of the institutions in the country, including his own army, to stay in power and we walked out without helping to reform those institutions. South Sudan had the world at its feet at independence -- that is a real tragedy and should not have happened. It should not have been allowed to happen, but it did.

I think the prevention agenda of the new Secretary-General is exactly what we need, prevention in every area. I want to thank you, David (Beasley), and Amir (Abdulla), for the wonderful job you are doing in preventing the sexual exploitation of our beneficiaries. This is the single worst thing that

could happen. I almost lost the mission in the Congo because I had 18,000 troops on the ground and a couple thousand police, and 5,000 civilians -- and you cannot say 'boys will be boys.' You cannot say, "I cannot put all the soldiers to bed at night." No. You have to take responsibility. I am really grateful to you for the leadership role you are playing. You should be proud of your executive branch here for what they are doing. You have got all of that.

You have an ever-widening socioeconomic and demographic divide between global north and global south. You have a rapidly aging global north with a declining population and an expanding, largely unemployed and young global south. The median age in a country like Niger is about 14. In Germany, it is about 47. You do not have to be a genius to make the calculation that something has to be done to help countries to develop, to produce jobs, et cetera, through investments. All of that is there, part of this perfect storm I mentioned to you. We have a violation of international humanitarian law on all sides. We have a serious erosion of international moral authority, including in the Security Council. We have a crumbling of the political centre in many parts of the world, a growing loss of public confidence by people in the ability of their governments to manage human mobility. It is funny; we have rules for everything, free flow of capital goods and services. Well, those who make it happen are people. But we have no rules for the free flow of people. I am not talking about a borderless world.

We have widespread and growing anti-migrant and anti-refugee sentiment despite what we know. We just completed a study with McKinsey Global Institute. The 3.5 percent of the world's population who are migrants are producing 9 percent of global GDP. That is 4 percent more than they would have produced if they had stayed home. What is the problem with migrants and refugees? We had a boat offshore over the weekend with about 629 people. When people believe that there is not enough room, suddenly there is a crisis, a migrant crisis. One boat. Even the 1.5 million who came north in 2015 were less than 0.5 percent of European Union Member States' 550 million population. It is a question of managing migration rather than simply trying to pretend it is not there.

We have a toxic atmosphere now that is not only endangering the lives of migrants but also denies to us their contribution. We have registered 50,000 migrant deaths along migratory routes since the year 2000. We had 3,400 last year, 5,000 in 2016 and we are already at 1,000 this year – those are the ones we know about. I do not know how many bodies are buried in the sands of the Sahara or at the bottom of the Mediterranean -- we cannot count those. We do not know where they are. This is probably a gross underestimate. But my point is that our policies clearly are not working if so many people are dying. That is not possible. And then we have very unclear power relationships. We have proxy wars. We have the general dearth of leadership and political courage on some of these issues. I do not want to be too negative, but I do think we are in the middle of a perfect storm because we are trying to do all this work against strong odds.

My final point would be to ask: how do we weather this storm? If you are in the middle of a storm, you have to take a high road. Well, a high road seems to be, first of all, about partnership and cooperation. We have to do it together. You cannot do it alone. That is why I am so proud of our relationship with WFP and proud of the entire organization. I can think of nothing more important than providing food aid, which you are so good at doing. We have to close the gap between needs and resources. But every one of these situations is in competition.

When I left the Central African Republic during my last visit, I said to the President -- and I served two years in the CAR way back in the 1970s, 1974 to 1976, I seemed to serve under all of the people at the time, like Jean Bédel Bokassa, Samuel Kayando and others. Anyway, I said to the President, "Your biggest problem may not be the one you think." He said, "What is that?" I said, "Your biggest problem is keeping the CAR in the headlines when you have all these other conflicts that are deeply

rooted in people's minds, like Syria and Afghanistan and other places. We are all competing for scarce resources."

I can understand that governments grow a bit weary, but we can have others step-up to the cause. The gap between needs and resources is growing. We had 70 million people in need in 2014, 93 million in 2017 and today, 105 million people identified in need of aid. We have an increase of protracted crises. Nineteen out of twenty-one crises in 2017 have been ongoing for more than five years. Three crises have had plans or appeals for 18 consecutive years. Gaps exist despite the increased generosity of all of you. We had a 10 billion gap in 2014, 12 billion in 2017 and a record high of 13 billion in 2016.

The High Commissioner of Refugees and I did an appeal conference in Geneva in March. We asked audaciously for USD 950 million for the Rohingya, only to get us through December. This must be ongoing. I do not mean to make you come away from here with a negative view. I am just trying to dramatize for you the issue that we face, the challenge we face, and how we need to move forward on this together. And yet, all of that aid shrinks and pales in comparison to arms sales and other things.

We have got the humanitarian-development-peace nexus that we will work closely with WFP on. I think, in conclusion, I see three or four major challenges. One: how do we change the public narrative? We need to treat the media as our friend here, I think. Changing the public narrative so that we do not put people in danger, so that there is a perspective there that 1.5 million people in the population of 550 million has to be compared to the 1.5 million Syrians in Lebanon, which has 4.5 million population. We need to have a policy and we need to have a plan. We know what migrants can do. We know that 50 percent of the Forbes 500 CEOs are either migrants or children of migrants. We need to help change this misperception by putting out evidence that will provide a basis for dealing with people's understandable fears.

Two: How do we learn to manage, and ultimately to embrace, diversity? I think, at IOM, we are convinced that almost all countries are going to become inexorably much more multicultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multireligious than they are today. But if we do not run government programmes of public education and public information, the result may be harmful. We must learn to manage and embrace diversity as something good. How do we handle the demographic challenge that I mentioned earlier? I think all of this today is very important in terms of perspective. Also, we must remember that south-south migration is about as significant as the south-north migration.

Let me conclude simply by saying that migration and combatting hunger are as old as humankind. They are not phenomena that started in the last couple of decades. They can be considered as both causes and consequences of the other. We have an obligation to try to transform these realities into opportunities. Migration or human mobility is not an invasion. It is not an intrusion. It is a human reality as old as humankind that we as responsible leaders have to learn to manage. Let me end with that and apologize for taking so much of your time.