

**Statement by Thailand**

**H.E. Mr. Chaisiri Anamarn, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs,**  
General Debate, 106<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOM Council  
25 November 2015

Chair,

At the outset, I wish to join other delegations in congratulating you and, through you, the new members of the bureau on their elections. My appreciation also goes to Ambassador Sammie Eddico for his excellent work over the past year. Please rest assured of my delegation's continued support and cooperation.

This year, migration, or more precisely the migration crisis, has been widely mentioned in different international fora and world media. Facing the increasing challenges of forced displacement and massive influx of migrants, as well as strengthened security measures and border control, it is important to underscore once again that migrants have tremendous potential to contribute to the socio-economic development in both origin and host countries, through flows of trade, investment, culture and knowledge.

At the same time, irregular migration which creates dire humanitarian risks around the world with the latest conundrum in Europe, need to be addressed, through better migration management—one that promotes safe and legal channel for migrants to work and contribute economically and socially.

In the Asia Pacific, a similar crisis occurred earlier this year in the Indian Ocean. While the humanitarian situation in the Indian Ocean has simmered down in the recent months, we are aware of the possible resumption of irregular movements at sea after the monsoon season.

As a follow-up step to the special meeting that Thailand hosted in May this year, and as a proactive step to plan ahead and to deal with future crises that might occur, Thailand will organize the International Conference on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean on 4 December 2015 in Bangkok. The conference will provide the opportunity to foster cooperation amongst related parties, based on the principle of international burden-sharing, with a view to agree upon a concrete regional plan of action to address the issue in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Talking about regional cooperation, Thailand also appreciates IOM's constructive and supportive role in a number of Regional Consultative Processes on migration. We have been working closely together in the Bali Process, the Colombo Process, and Abu Dhabi Dialogue, among others. In February next year, Thailand will host the Ad Hoc Group SOM of the Bali Process in order to prepare for the upcoming Ministerial Conference, and looks forward to an active contribution of IOM in this regard.

Chair,

Another important aspect of the protection of migrants is to ensure and facilitate the safe return of migrants to their home countries when they wish to do so. Thailand is greatly inspired by IOM's Assisted Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Programme (AVRR) which have successfully facilitated safe and sustainable return of over a million individuals around the world over the past 40 years.

In our case, we have hosted around 100,000 displaced persons from Myanmar over the past 30 years and believe that safe and voluntary return is indeed one of the durable solutions for these people. We also appreciate IOM's vital role in providing healthcare and other humanitarian assistance to migrants under our care since 2013.

Thailand is pleased that, after the 88<sup>th</sup> session of the Council more than ten years ago, the Council will have the opportunity to discuss and review the status of the migration and health agenda, as well as IOM's role and expertise in national, regional, global and multi-sectoral response activities concerning migration health.

Migrants' health has long been a priority area for Thailand and has been streamlined into our migration policy. In August this year, Thailand, in collaboration with the IOM, organised the Regional Workshop on Migrants' Health to raise the awareness of this issue in the international sphere. The Workshop issued recommendations and pointed to the way forward to provide migrants with access to quality health services, as well as ways to seek and manage financial resources to do so.

For Thailand, we have established a labour migration scheme and value the importance of the provision of health services to all migrants. We believe that access to health services is a basic right for all, and migrants' healthy well-being ensures healthy contribution to our national development.

My delegation therefore appreciates that the high-level panel discussion on migration and health will be organized tomorrow, and we will be honoured to share our practices and experiences during the discussion.

As a way forward, we also support the establishment of a flexible, structured consultation and partnership mechanism in support of the migration health work that can enhance the mobilization of resources and experience of the Organization and its membership, as reflected in the document submitted to the Council.

Thank you.

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