

Statement by
H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuanketkeow
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand
to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 100th Session of the IOM Council
7 December 2011

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the Chairmanship of the 100th Session of the IOM Council. On behalf of the Thai delegation, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest members and observers to the IOM family. The growing number of IOM Member States reflects the importance of the IOM in addressing global migration trends even as the expansion of the IOM's role and services responds to the increasing needs of states in meeting the challenges and complexities of international migration.

The IOM's 60th anniversary marks an important milestone for the organization. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on how over the years the IOM has adapted and will need to continue to adapt to the changing trends of people movement. As the World Migration Report 2011 makes clear, migration as we now see it is not solely due to economic factors or movement from poor to rich economies, but also due to our growing cultural interactions as well as more negative factors such as natural or man-made catastrophes. Even within the developing world, improved communications connectivity has also played its part in facilitating the flows of people. Regardless of the cause, migration has become a crucial issue for governments to ponder over.

In light of this, Mr. Chairman, we fully agree with the Director-General's observations on the need to strengthen strategic partnerships at the regional and global level to address the issue of migration management in a more comprehensive manner. We also believe that there is a need to strike a balance between the importance of national sovereignty on the one hand and the need to uphold human rights of individuals on the other.

Mr. Chairman,

If we look at the global migration debate as a whole, one can state with confidence that it has already advanced significantly over the last decade. Crucially, the IOM has been central to this debate by stimulating research and

activities at the national, regional, and international levels. Without a doubt, the efforts of the IOM have been instrumental in bringing governments together to find better and more effective ways of managing global migration.

At the international level, the IOM has played a pivotal role in supporting the dialogue on current and emerging migration issues. In particular, since the first United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD), the IOM has not only been a strong advocate for follow-up activities, but has also supported constructive dialogues through the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). Indeed, while these efforts only reflect a part of the IOM's role in the global debate on migration, they underscore the IOM's commitment to support and work with States to explore effective strategies and best practices that would truly be applicable in different contexts.

At the regional level, we have again seen strong efforts by the IOM to engage with stakeholders to elaborate concrete approaches and strategies to address and manage migration. Thailand, like other States, has also benefited from working closely with the IOM and values its contribution to various regional consultative processes on migration, in particular the Bali and Colombo Processes. At the same time, the IOM has been an important part of Thailand's efforts to improve migration management and establish cooperative frameworks with various partners on labour and migration issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand has enjoyed long-standing cooperation with the IOM at the national level. We have found the IOM to be an effective partner in terms of technical support and capacity building on a wide range of migration-related issues, be they labour migration management, border management, resettlement, smuggling in persons or human trafficking. In turn, Thailand has been privileged to host one of the IOM's key regional offices for the Asia-Pacific, which is continuing to expand its scope. I am pleased to say that the collaboration of a wide spectrum of Thai agencies with the IOM office in Bangkok has never been closer.

Meanwhile, the IOM has shown itself to be a valuable resource and partner in assisting Thai nationals overseas. Over the past year, the IOM has provided valuable services to stranded Thai workers in North Africa and elsewhere, victims of human trafficking as well as others in need. At the same time, Thailand has also tried its best to assist the IOM in its humanitarian work elsewhere through various contributions. In this regard, we wish to take this opportunity to commend and congratulate the IOM for the establishment of a Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism, through a draft resolution which was adopted yesterday. We believe that this mechanism would be instrumental to enable timely mobilization of resources to address cases of migration emergency.

The IOM has also been a friend in need. When Thailand was beset by widespread flooding since October this year, the IOM worked closely with the Ministry of Interior to assess the needs and provide assistance. Working closely with other partners, in particular the United States, much needed humanitarian supplies and equipment was delivered to those affected. Our thanks go to all our friends and partners in this humanitarian effort.

Mr. Chairman,

What is clear is that the IOM's work has become vital for global migration management as a whole. The IOM should continue to do what it does best – and that is to help governments maintain a good balance between the opportunities and challenges of migration, and to do so in a lean and flexible manner. I am persuaded that the IOM's close engagement with governments throughout the years has enabled IOM to form a good understanding of the particular needs of its Member States and make assessments on how it can help them address the problems efficiently and effectively.

Furthermore, within the larger framework, the IOM should continue to enhance the intellectual and logistical support for the different multi-party or multilateral initiatives as States continue to enhance dialogues and partnerships on migration. It is Thailand's hope that the IOM would continue to build on its multi-faceted role, for the benefit of all Member States and for the benefit for all migrants.

I thank you for your kind attention.
