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Statement by the Delegation of Thailand  
at the 92<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOM Council, 28 November 2006

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

On behalf of the Thai delegation, I wish to welcome Republic of Montenegro and Nepal as new members and Qatar Charity as new observer.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand is moved by the outcomes of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, especially the overwhelming agreement to continue an open and constructive dialogue on migration and development at the global level. Thailand is committed to international efforts to address migration issues and will actively participate in the First Global Forum on Migration and Development to be held in Belgium next year.

We are also encouraged by the close cooperation and coordination under the Global Migration Group. Thailand supports the IOM's leading role in working with other agencies and stakeholders to assist governments and migrants deal with challenges of the international migration. We also wish to commend the IOM for the participatory approach in formulating the IOM strategy through series of informal consultations and hopes that this strategy would lead to the IOM remaining the primary reference point for expertise and information on migration in all its forms.

Mr. Chairman,

The migratory flows in the Asia-Pacific region has grown substantially. There is a need for many countries in the region to strengthen legal migratory channels and enhance avenues for the identification of migrants who enter countries outside of legal options. The IOM's supporting and facilitating role in regional processes in the Asia-Pacific region is very crucial for enhancing better understanding and capacity of governments to manage migration more effectively and beneficially. As a part of this effort, Thailand in cooperation with the IOM Regional Office in Bangkok will host a regional workshop on irregular migrant registration next year in order to share experiences and best practices among countries in the Asia – Pacific region on how to address the complexity of the asylum and migration nexus as well as to promote the harmonization of practices in the area.

In Thailand, the Government decided in July this year to extend the stay and work permit for several hundred thousand registered migrant workers from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR for another year. It is expected that the continuation of this regularization program together with bilateral agreements on the employment of migrant workers already in place with the three neighbouring countries will eventually promote legal and regular channels for labour migration in the country.

In a parallel effort to address irregular migration, the Thai Government has also been in the process of issuing identity cards to Myanmar displaced persons who have sought protection in Thailand for over 2 decades. A lot of about seventy thousand cards will be ready for distribution by the end of March 2007. In addition to this, the Thai Government had recently organized a tri-partite seminar of representatives from local business sectors, NGOs and government agencies to explore public opinion and consider appropriate measures regarding the provision of employment opportunity outside the camps for Myanmar displaced persons.

The resettlement programme for thousands of Myanmar displaced persons has been running smoothly. Thanks to the good cooperation of the IOM, the UNHCR and the resettlement countries, especially the United States. The Thai Government is also in close consultations with these important humanitarian partners to set up a processing center to facilitate resettlement of up to 15,000 displaced persons per year. We hope that this center will be in operation soon.

The Thai Government agencies have also worked closely with international organizations and NGOs to enhance protection for migrants. Last week, the first of seven legal assistance centers was opened at a temporary shelter area for Myanmar displaced persons in north-western Thailand with the aim of building the capacity of the displaced persons' traditional justice mechanisms to handle cases in a manner consistent with basic human rights principles. It is also expected that these legal assistance centers will help bridge the gap between the displaced persons' traditional way of justice and Thai law as well as promote better understanding of the displaced persons of their duty and obligations to the host community.

Lastly, I wish to note that mutual understanding among state agencies, international organizations and NGOs is crucial for a successful cooperation to better manage migration flows in Thailand and would add on some important policy initiatives and measures on migration management under way in the country.

I thank you.

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