



**International Organization for Migration
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Australian Statement – General Debate**

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Mr Chair,

I would like, first of all, to welcome you as our new chairperson, and wish you all the best for the coming year in office. I also extend congratulations to Ambassador Getahun and Ambassador de Crombrugghe for their appointments as Vice Chairs. And I must add that I am delighted that Australia has been elected into the Council leadership team. I have every confidence that Ms O'Malley, with her extensive experience in migration policy and operations, will contribute substantially. We look forward to another year of challenging discussions toward decisions that will achieve outcomes for states and migrants across the globe.

In addition we welcome the new member states to the IOM family.

Mr Chair, 2013 has marked a number of significant stages in IOM's journey as an organisation.

Not least, there was the re-election of Ambassador Swing as our Director-General. Ambassador, your 'three-C's' of continuity, coherence and change, are exactly what we need and clearly capture the right leadership focus for IOM.

But you also need the right institutional framework and the budget to make it work.

Happily, at this meeting at last we have achieved the long awaited coming into force of the amendments to the IOM Constitution. We believe we now have the right structure for IOM's governance. With the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance reporting to Council, this model is clearer, more focused and more efficient. It also allows the flexibility of constituting Working Groups under the SCPF as necessary.

We look forward to seeing the implementation of these changes and their continued benefits.

We have also at this meeting achieved the consensus on reforms to the IOM budget. The budget reform conversation has been a long and detailed one, under the sustained efforts of our Vice Chair, Ambassador de Crombrugghe who has set a very high standard in his role as Rapporteur. We note the external auditor's report setting out measures to improve IOM's transparency and accountability and we are pleased that IOM will, under a strengthened budget, be able to implement much-needed risk mitigation processes that were also identified by my government as areas for improvement in our 2011 Multilateral assessment.

Yet 2013 has also been a substantial year for IOM's profile and the promotion of key policy issues.

We saw the evolution of the International Dialogue on Migration with the Diaspora Ministerial Conference, bringing together high-level representation and specific expertise on a topic of broad relevance to the membership. We saw an innovative partnership with Gallop in the production of the World Migration Report. We note with interest the Director-General's proposed theme for a 2015 ministerial conference on Migrants and Cities, aligning with the theme of the next World Migration Report. Australia is pleased to announce that it will again lend funding support for the International Dialogue on Migration and the World Migration Report in the coming year.

IOM held the chair of the Global Migration Group, importantly and appropriately during the period of the High Level Dialogue in New York. This chairmanship has served to enhance the profile of the GMG and of IOM. Australia looks for a GMG that works to improve inter-agency co-ordination and find more coherence in its engagement in international migration.

We were heartened by the level of support for IOM voiced by member states at the HLD, and we reiterate the importance Australia places on IOM as the inter-governmental organisation with a mandate across all facets of migration. With its global network of offices and extensive policy and practical expertise, there is no better organisation than IOM to assist States to optimise migration outcomes. Notwithstanding the enormous amount of work put into the HLD, by IOM and by states, civil society and other international organisations, we note that HLD was not an end point. The HLD provided us with an opportunity to reaffirm and reinvigorate our processes and partnerships.

Mr Chair, I would also so like to reflect briefly on another strong year of partnership between IOM and Australia. In a year when Australia resettled 12,000 refugees from around the globe, double the previous year, IOM quickly stepped up in supplying services to meet this goal, including medical examinations, cultural orientation and travel arrangements. These activities continue to help us achieve our aims of well-managed migration and settlement of migrants.

We continue to work with IOM in facing the challenges of migrant smuggling across the seas of South-East Asia – some 20,000 people arrived in Australia this year having taken that dangerous journey. We have seen enough lives lost at sea. Continued cooperation, including through support smuggled migrants en route and through information campaigns to address the very negative impacts of smuggling will be important to us, and we look to your ongoing support in this regard.

We've also paired up in the delivery of capacity building projects: among many things we do together, Australia is pleased to be supporting a biometrics passport project with the government of Sri Lanka; and to efforts in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka targeting reintegration of vulnerable internally displaced and returnees through skills development and training, shelter construction and community development.

We have also partnered with IOM in seconding an Associate Professional Officer to assist with project management and the IOM Development Fund. We encourage members states to consider funding such secondments as a means of strengthening IOM's institutional capacity.

In closing, Mr Chair, we would like to pay tribute to the IOM staff that deliver our agenda across the globe. They come with a reputation as hardworking, pragmatic and solution-focused. We know this to be true. But they are also working in places that are tough, where there is risk and hardship. The loss of a colleague in Afghanistan this year was a tragedy, and one that has undoubtedly impacted all of the IOM family. We offer both our sympathies and our gratitude for the commitment of all IOM staff to the task of supporting states and migrants alike.

Thank you.

