

**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Thani Thongphakdi,  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand  
General Debate, 103<sup>rd</sup> Session of the IOM Council  
Tuesday, 26 November 2013, 1500-1800 hrs.  
Room 17, Palais des Nations**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Director-General Swing,

Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chairperson, upon your election. Please rest assured of our support and cooperation during your chairmanship. Permit me also to congratulate Director-General Swing once again for his re-election and to express confidence that under his leadership, IOM will continue to work with members to tackle increasing multi-dimensional migration challenges. IOM has developed itself into a unique agency that is not only flexible and pragmatic, but also highly relevant in its endeavours.

Mr. Chairperson,

Thailand is proud to have hosted in Bangkok this past May the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. From the perspective of the region, priorities include (1) ensuring respect for and protection of the rights of all migrants and promoting legal and orderly labour migration, (2) addressing the gender dimensions of international migration and their impact on women, children and families, (3) assessing the effects of international migration on sustainable development and identifying relevant priorities and (4) promoting regional cooperation, institutional coherence and partnership in addressing international migration. We are therefore pleased that this message from Bangkok is clearly reflected in the resulting Declaration of the High-level Dialogue.

At the same time, Thailand also agrees that respect for and protection of human rights are key priorities in managing orderly and safe migration and that international migration should be adequately reflected in the Post 2015 Development agenda.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the past few years, Thailand, like many other affected countries, has received substantially increasing number of Rohingya illegal immigrants arriving by boat. Here, the IOM has assisted us, especially in looking after the health condition of these individuals that are in our care. We are grateful for this valuable support that helps save human lives.

I also wish to reiterate the importance of all countries concerned dealing seriously with these irregular people's movements by adhering to the humanitarian principle, the spirit of cooperation, the basis of burden sharing and, most importantly, the need to address the problem at its root causes in a sustainable manner.

Mr. Chairperson,

The issue of migrant health is also high on the agenda of the Thai Government. This year, the Ministry of Public Health has been working closely with stakeholders and international organizations, including the IOM, in reformulating a new health insurance scheme that would work in parallel with the regularization and registration scheme for migrant workers. This new scheme aims to promote wider participation by migrants and will cover not only migrants but also their children. It is hoped that with this, there will be more migrants registered and eligible to have better access to health care and benefits in Thailand.

My delegation wishes to conclude by supporting the call for member countries to help facilitate the work of the IOM, including through increased funding and appropriate privileges and

immunities. We are currently working in preparation to increase our budget contribution for the core structure of the IOM next year and to accord additional privileges to the IOM Office in Thailand. In this connection, we wish to encourage other IOM members to consider doing the same.

Thank you.