

(as delivered)

Philippine Statement delivered by Mr. Evan P. Garcia, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations

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Thank you Chair for the opportunity to address this body.

At the outset, I have the honor to congratulate our Director General, **António Vitorino**, and our new Chairman, Ambassador **Negash Kebret Batora**, and to thank them for sharing their visions of the way forward for our Organization. I likewise express my appreciation for the membership for selecting the other Members of our Bureau, myself included, as well as outgoing Chair, Permanent Representative of Chile Juan Eduardo Eguiguren. We also welcome Uzbekistan as the newest member of the organization.

As has been already observed by many previous speakers, the IOM stands at a strategic crossroads on the role it will be playing. It must continue to provide the capacity-building and other assistance to our Member States while at the same time preparing to face future challenges. These include the necessity of fulfilling its new responsibilities and secretariat and coordinator of the new UN Global Migration Network established by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) that is scheduled for adoption in Marrakech in less than a month's time.

For the Philippines, we feel that the negotiations for the GCM was a vital platform that facilitated the discussion on all aspects of migration and for governments to disclose their interests in all levels, be they national, regional or global interests. As we draw closer to the adoption of the agreement, with some reconsidering commitment, one may feel discouraged. The Philippines is not. We are optimistic that the GCM enjoys near universal support. We are also optimistic that those not ready to commit to the agreement nonetheless recognize the clear need to discuss migration, and to strengthen further these institutions and processes that are in place to support migration governance at the national, bilateral, regional and global level, within the framework of state sovereignty, and of the international dialogue and cooperation, for improved global migration governance.

The Philippines, as a country of origin for migrant workers where more than 10% of its population are migrants, is ready to work with all stakeholders, at any level. We believe that Filipinos overseas have contributed to the welfare and quality of life in their host countries while supporting the development and well-being of their families and communities in the Philippines. Should demographic trends on an ageing developed world, and rapid population growth in the developing world continue, we see the Philippines remaining at the fulcrum of migration, particularly in the health services sector, for decades to come.

The journey toward migration governance has many points of origin, many roads and pathways, all converging in our shared goal of development, with migration being an option, and management policies being set in place to ensure that in the course of mobility, migrants are protected, policies and activities related to migrants, including integration and return are mainstreamed, and that the development impact of migration, on the individual and to the society, is positive.

The Philippines has had a close working relationship for decades with the IOM. We have hosted the Manila Administrative Center (MAC) for many years and the IOM recently opened a dedicated country office in the Philippines. We stand ready, as always, to cooperate with the IOM as it moves forward. In this regard, we would be prepared to continue engagement and cooperate on designing, testing and piloting initiatives in areas of joint priority concern, in a spirit of solidarity.

In this regard, we appreciate the comments of the Director General on the importance and utility of cooperating with regional and inter-regional processes. We express appreciation for the support the IOM has shown for our endeavors with the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the Colombo Process among others. In the regional organization to which the Philippines belongs, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, we agreed last year under the ASEAN Chairmanship of the Philippines, on an ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. Cooperation between the IOM and ASEAN, therefore, may be timely and mutually beneficial.

In crafting policy and designing programs at all levels, the Philippines recognizes a singular truth about migration: that people on the move could easily become vulnerable. Migrants may be subject of exploitation, abusive working and living conditions, violence and sexual harassment, and human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Furthermore, our world seems to be fracturing across several fault lines. Hyper-nationalism, xenophobia, hostility to migrants and refugees, deepening economic uncertainty, and geopolitical rivalries are all contributing factors.

Accordingly, the Philippines believes that it is the shared responsibility of the international community, through the IOM, through GCM implementation, and through relevant bilateral, regional, interregional and multilateral arrangements, not only to preserve and protect the human rights of migrants as individual rights-bearers, but to also balance the excessively negative narrative to which migration has recently been subjected.

In conclusion, the Philippines expects that the IOM will continue to build on its core strengths of providing capacity building and governance assistance to its Members, in furthering the discourse between human rights and international migration law, in supporting policy dialogue through research and data, in enhancing regional and international cooperation, in expanding migration health cooperation, and in more fully integrating the gender dimension, in building broader partnership with the private sector and in engaging the diaspora, and in implementing the GCM. The work continues and the Philippines looks forward to being an active part of this process.

Thank you Chair.