

**IOM 110th Council
Geneva, 26- 29 November 2019**

Statement of Greece under Agenda Item 13: "General Debate"

Thank you Chair,
Since this is the first time to take the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your election and wish you every success.

Mr Director General,

Madam Deputy Director General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Greece aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of its Member States and wishes to make the following remarks from a national point of view.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Director General for his report, which vividly demonstrates the heavy burden of the IOM and the multiple challenges faced by the Organization, in an ever changing international environment.

Let me, also, express our sincere appreciation to the Director General, as well as to his staff in Geneva and in the IOM Office in Athens, for the ongoing support and assistance provided to my country in dealing with the aftermath of the 2015 migratory crisis and the dramatic increase of new arrivals throughout the current year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Given the increasing numbers of migrants worldwide, it is evident that now, more than ever, IOM has a crucial role in addressing the challenges of international migration. The 2016 New York Declaration, the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the creation of the UN Migration Network, are all testament of the importance the international community attributes to this issue.

As far as Europe is concerned, although numbers have steadily decreased on the central Mediterranean route, the eastern and western routes are still

facing disproportionate flows. This is a common European challenge that requires common European measures and solutions. No one country alone is able to deal with such a large influx in a sustainable manner.

The fact that new arrivals consist of mixed migration flows makes the need to safely distinguish between people in need of international protection and irregular migrants more urgent than ever before. In that context, Greece recently adopted a comprehensive "Law on International Protection and other Provisions", in an effort to facilitate addressing the different needs of people on the move. Protection of the human rights of all migrants remains, however, at the core of our policies. Nevertheless, return to the country of origin is envisaged for those not entitled to international protection.

Excellencies,

Solidarity towards frontline States and wider international cooperation is essential in dealing with the multiple facets of migration. Hence, countries of origin, transit and destination alike should increase communication with the aim to jointly find solutions for third country nationals. As stated in the Global Compact, "the international community commits to create conducive political, economic, social and environmental conditions for people to lead peaceful, productive and sustainable lives in their own country and to fulfill their personal aspirations, while ensuring that desperation and deteriorating environments do not compel them to seek a livelihood elsewhere through irregular migration".

All this will not be feasible without successfully combating human trafficking and smuggling, which result in modern forms of slavery. All countries should unite against such phenomena, by fighting impunity and breaking the lucrative criminal networks.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate my country's strong commitment in continuing the collaboration with IOM on the ground. In that vein, we are looking forward, Mr Director General, to your upcoming visit to Greece.

Thank you for your attention.