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**IOM Council  
110<sup>th</sup> Session, 26-29 November 2019**

**General Debate**

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Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me congratulate you for your appointment of Chairperson of the Council, and through you, to all the Bureau members. Moreover, we would like to take this opportunity to also welcome the International Commission on Missing Persons as observers of the organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me start by commending the excellent work performed by IOM in carrying out its mandate worldwide.

I would like to thank the Director General for his report, where he presented the many challenges, but also opportunities, that migration poses to all of us, both at the national and the international level. Experience has taught us that the challenges and opportunities are often just two sides of the same coin. The particular story of Israel is an example of how the successful integration of large flows of immigrants actually boosts the society and the economy rather than sets them back. We are open to share these good practices.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have read attentively the Strategic Vision presented by the Director General. We agree with the Strategic goals, although we would like to highlight that this vision needs to be guided by the MiGoF (Migration Governance Framework).

We thank the Director General for reflecting on the impact of technologies. We agree that there are risks on the development of new technologies, especially concerning hate speech online, but they also present a potential that should not be ignored or discarded. Emerging threats should be addressed, and measures need to be taken to minimize their effects. But we should not forget that innovation is a driving force that can help to better achieve our goals. International cooperation could help harness the vast potential presented by digital transformations, and Israel as a knowledge based society stands ready to engage with partners on this.

Moreover, we agree that illicit actors involved in trafficking in persons may be resilient to new policies aiming at reducing irregular movement, but this should not discourage us to do our utmost to work in its prevention. On the contrary, this should highlight the need for international cooperation, and sharing of good practices. In his report, the DG explained that IOM has provided training and technical assistance to governments, civil society, private sector, local communities, to strengthen the protection of migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse, including trafficking. In this regard, Israel has a lot of experience on combatting trafficking in persons, a constantly evolving problem. We are ready to continue the cooperation with other states and organizations in promoting training and legislative development to improve this situation.

Finally, in relation to the Strategic Vision, the Director General points out that “IOM’s workplace culture should be inclusive at all levels”. We cannot agree more with that. However, we believe that this should not be limited to “positively recognizing differences of all types, including gender and sexual orientation, race, belief and disability”, but it also requires taking measures to ensure that this diversity and inclusion turns into a reality. In this regard, noting that gender mainstreaming is not integrated in the Director General’s strategic vision, we invite the Director General to consider including it in the future.

Mister Chairperson,

Regarding the Internal Governance Framework, we welcome the measures taken to improve the internal judicial system and the launch of the campaign “We are all in”. However, as others, we would like to emphasize the importance of a proper and swift investigation of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, regarding both staff and beneficiaries, both at headquarters and in the field. We would like to request to receive concrete information regarding those open investigations, stage of the proceedings, as well as a timeline regarding it until its completion. We would encourage the Director General to make sure that the “zero tolerance policy” is strongly enforced and any allegation properly investigated.

Mister Chairperson,

Considering that now IOM is part of the UN System, we would like to highlight that the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy has been recently launched by the UN Secretary-General. IOM has participated in the discussions that led to its development. Therefore, we would like to know how IOM is responding to this new Strategy and which are the steps it is planning to take in order to implement it, including issues such as promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities to its staff, accessibility to offices in Geneva and in the field, and in the consideration of person with disabilities’ needs when developing policies and programs.

I thank you.