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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
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Statement by H.E. Ji-ah PAIK
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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to join other delegations in welcoming the new Chair of the Council, H.E. Ambassador Morten Jespersen (of Denmark), and extend our thanks to the outgoing Chair, H.E. Ambassador Zenbe Kebede Korcho (of Ethiopia), for his contribution. Let me also welcome the new member of IOM, the Lebanese Republic.

We are witnessing an unprecedented scale of forced displacement under the humanitarian context, and people are on the move on a broader basis. Evidently, migration is now a fact of life for all of us and an issue that can be addressed only through global cooperation, solidarity, and engagement. Addressing migration is an essential task in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and especially the target 10.7 which aims to “facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people.”

Therefore, the role of IOM as the leading player in this field cannot be emphasized enough. In this regard, I would like to briefly discuss three points: opportunities, challenges, and the way forward.

(Opportunities: Adoption of the GCM and the increasing role of IOM)

First, last year’s adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) became a key momentum for the global community to pave the way for a more effective and enhanced management of migratory flows. Despite the agreement being legally non-binding, its main objectives such as collecting and using accurate data to develop evidence-based migration policy are being widely shared by the overwhelming majority of countries across the world.

In this context, the international society has been expecting greater responsibility from IOM in terms of policymaking and agenda-setting. In addition to its recent role as the secretariat for the United Nations Network on Migration, we also expect IOM to play a significant role in the upcoming UN High-level Panel on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The ever-growing need for coordination among UN agencies, in accordance with the UN Development System (UNDS) Reform, is now a new normal for IOM, on both the policy-level in New York and Geneva and on the field-level in UN Country Teams.

The Republic of Korea believes that IOM will be successful in assuming such an expanded responsibility, while preserving its own virtue as an agile, effective, and responsive organization with a strong field focus. It is against this backdrop that we strongly welcome and support the Director General's new Strategic Vision. It is timely for the IOM leadership to develop a stronger strategic direction and prioritization at all levels of work.

(Challenges: The lack of core functions and the weak funding structure for the core)

While it is important to set the goals for IOM, it is equally and perhaps even more important to identify its challenges ahead. In this vein, the reform process on the Internal Governance Framework (IGF), currently led by Madam Deputy Director-General, is of great significance. By identifying the gaps between the goals and the reality, a successful reform will be the backbone of the Organization. It will lead to the strengthening of major functions such as internal justice, information management, procurement, and knowledge management.

The biggest challenge in this aspect is the weakness in IOM's current funding model, which has significantly insufficient and unpredictable support for the Core structure. The current ratio between the Core and Operation budgets, 3 to 97, and the resulting heavy reliance of the Administrative and Core functions on the Operational Support Income (OSI), which is projected to be 70% in 2020, is not sustainable.

The Republic of Korea shares the view of many member states that the Working Group on Budget Reform established in 2010 is the best mechanism to foster these discussions. We take note of the progress made to date, however, we wish to encourage IOM to embark on more in-depth consultations with member states on this issue.

(The way forward)

Mr. Chair,

All these opportunities and challenges are the reasons why IOM needs to more actively engage with member states. I would like to remind ourselves of the significance of the Council Bureau, which is the formal channel through which member states interact with the IOM leadership. The recent, rigorous discussions initiated by the Director General to strengthen the top management was very helpful, not only in discovering the need for a stronger senior leadership but also in identifying the need to have more interactive communication between IOM and member states.

Last but not least, partnership with multiple stakeholders should be one of the key areas of focus for IOM. We commend IOM's partnership with other UN agencies like UNHCR, WHO, ILO, and UNESCO to tackle the cross-cutting nature of migration issues. Furthermore, we also want to highlight the need for stronger partnerships with the private sector, which will create enormous potential to enhance IOM's capacity and funding sources. The Republic of Korea will be closely engaging with IOM to further the cause.

Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea has been a long-standing strategic partner of IOM. Aside from its assessed contributions, the Government of the Republic of Korea has been providing continuous and increasing volumes of voluntary contributions to IOM's humanitarian efforts in regions of major emergency such as Syria, Yemen, Bangladesh, and Iraq. We will continue to openly and constructively engage with IOM and its leadership for the challenges ahead.

Let me conclude by reiterating the Republic of Korea's steadfast commitment to the work of IOM and expressing our heartfelt appreciation to the entire IOM staff for their dedicated efforts to reach the most vulnerable people.

I thank you. /End/