

IOM Council General Debate - Australia's Statement

Thank you Chair.

Australia recognises that we come together for the 111th IOM Council Meeting experiencing, individually and collectively, the unprecedented and unfolding COVID-19 pandemic.

Australia believes that this, perhaps more than ever, is the time to find common ground, to work together in a spirit of collaboration to mitigate the suffering caused by the pandemic. Together we can achieve much.

Australia appreciates IOM's responsiveness to the complex challenges of COVID 19.

Australia welcomes IOM's global leadership in driving the international collaboration essential to minimise, as far as possible, the adverse impact of the pandemic on global resettlement and migration.

Australia affirms its role as an active contributor and member of IOM and we remain committed to being a strong and enduring partner.

Much of IOM's success, as a significant partner in the UN system, is due to its capacity to recalibrate its efforts in consultation with members and stakeholders, to deliver practical solutions.

We appreciate IOM's capacity to operate flexibly and we encourage IOM to retain its pragmatic outlook.

We witnessed the value of this approach when, following careful and inclusive member negotiations, a consensus based IOM leadership change proposal was finalised. The proposal itself and the process employed to effect it, evidence IOM's capacity to responsively adapt to the rapid expansion of its functions and activities, to better achieve its mandate.

IOM's delivery of migration management, capacity building, and humanitarian assistance, both globally and within the Asia Pacific region, forms a key part of Australia's approach to managed migration.

This approach has allowed Australia to ensure the efficient management of our borders and our migration programme, which strengthens the level of public confidence in migration.

Australia looks forward to working with IOM as we work to establish the preconditions to deliver our 2020-21 migration and humanitarian programs to benefit our already richly culturally diverse society, drive our economic prosperity and answer our commitment to play our part in answering global migration challenges.

In particular, Australia also values its ongoing humanitarian response cooperation with IOM, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, and acknowledge IOM's important work in response to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh.

Australia will continue to collaborate effectively with IOM on matters of migration, consistently with international and humanitarian obligations and standards.

Our relationship is now more important than ever, as we face the unprecedented global challenges arising from COVID 19.

Australia recognises that reopening to international travel is essential to support global migration and humanitarian settlement. To do so we need a comprehensive framework designed to mitigate and minimise public health risks.

We acknowledge the new technical recommendations for targeted reopening strategies that IOM has developed for the use of Member States.

We encourage IOM to consider the role it can play in the development of international government and industry standards to support bio-secure borders and information exchange about traveller movement records.

This will enable individualised risk assessments, while also balancing inherent and legitimate privacy concerns, in order to limit the burden on travellers and industry.

Australia urges a coordinated effort globally to design effective and appropriate solutions to complex pandemic related issues. A coordinated global effort is key.

Australia recognises that the destabilisation of tried systems and processes resulting from the pandemic may also provide Member States with a rare opportunity to boldly innovate; to collaborate in undertakings to “bounce back better.” Let us take up this opportunity.

In closing, we extend our sincere thanks to the outgoing Chair His Excellency Mr. Morten Jespersen, for his tireless efforts in driving IOM’s mandate. It has been a year of unprecedented challenges.

Australia warmly welcomes the incoming Chair, His Excellency Mr. Evan Garcia, to the Chairmanship and looks forward to contributing to the important work of IOM in coming year.

Thank you Chair