

Egypt Statement - IOM Executive Council

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Congratulate the Chair for his election, and thank outgoing Chair.

Egypt aligns itself with the African Group statement. Allow me to welcome Russia to the membership of the organisation and Malaysia as an observer.

This past year has truly presented major and unique challenges. We are still in the throes of the global COVID 19 pandemic, which not only underscored how vulnerable we all are, it also shed light on the difficult circumstances that migrant workers may face. The worldwide economic lockdowns and border closures led to loss of livelihoods, including among migrants, and left countless persons stranded with no way to return home.

While the pandemic had very dire consequences for Egypt's economy, we remained steadfast in our commitment to respect the rights of all migrants and refugees present on Egypt's soil. Egypt's national response plan included migrants and refugees on an equal footing with Egyptian citizens. Migrants and refugees were guaranteed equal and non-discriminatory access to primary health care, including testing, treatment and personal protective equipment. Egypt also promptly took measures to guarantee access to education for migrant and refugee children.

The pandemic is also exacerbating another scourge, namely increasing levels of violence against women. In Egypt, the complaints mechanism for violence against women remained open to all migrant and refugee women, as well as shelters for women survivors of violence. These efforts led to Egypt receiving the first degree in the gender response UN tracker.

We would like to commend the IOM for its crucial response, contribution and assistance during this pandemic throughout its many operations around the world.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of migration is a top priority for Egypt as a country of origin, transit, destination and return. The latest IOM figures indicate that Egypt hosts 6.3 million refugees and migrants from 58 different nationalities, of which 600,000 are in a vulnerable situation.

Egypt is simultaneously a major country of origin for labour migrants contributing positively to the development of their countries of destination. We call on all concerned States to respect the rights of migrants, particularly during the pandemic, including to refrain from measures of collective expulsion, and to legislate against wage theft, racism and discrimination.

Egypt is keen to play its part to promote sound migration governance. Earlier this year, Egypt hosted the International Forum on Migration Statistics, highlighting our commitment to enhance data gathering for evidence-based migration policies.

At the national level, Egypt has included migration management as a pillar of our national development plan, Egypt's Vision 2030. In addition, Egypt has successfully eliminated trafficking and illegal smuggling of migrants from its Mediterranean coastline since 2016. The relevant legislation includes referral mechanisms and extensive protection for victims, and established the first shelter for victims in 2019.

Mr. Chairman,

Combatting irregular migration must be accompanied with a commitment by our partners to increase regular pathways. In this context, earlier this year, Egypt together with its partners in Germany and the EU launched the Egyptian component of the programme "Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa".

It is also essential to provide adequate support to addressing root causes in order to guarantee that migration is a matter of choice not compulsion. The international community must do more in this regard. We welcome recent efforts by the Migration Network and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund to implement the GCM, and call for a balanced approach that takes into account all GCM objectives equally.

Egypt recognises the increasing complexity of migration flows, and the constant expansion of IOM's role and responsibilities. We therefore welcome the decision to allow for the appointment of two Deputies to the Director General, and express our support for further internal reforms to guarantee a fit for purpose organisation.

Thank you