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**International Organization for Migration**  
**111th Session, 24-27 September 2020**

**General Debate**

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Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me congratulate you for your appointment as Chairperson of the Council, and through you, to all the Bureau members. Moreover, let me express our gratitude to the outgoing Chairperson for all his efforts to lead this Council in these exceptional times and through very complex discussions.

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 the Organization has faced, increased by the pandemic. However, he also highlighted how the IOM has tried to adapt to the current situation and the many efforts made to ensure people receive the help they require.

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the Director General for reflecting on the impact of technologies and innovation. It is clear that the Covid-19 pandemic has challenged all of us to adjust how we work and interact with others. In this context, the use of technologies has proven an essential tool enabling all of us to continue to function. This conclusion is even more relevant when considering that IOM is an organization with a strong presence in the field. Of course, 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. As the Director General mentioned, social media can play a key role on countering negative narratives and hate speech. 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.

Furthermore, we would like to express our support to the Director General, on his listing of those longstanding conflicts and crisis that has been the majority of IOM's work, naming the situation on Syria first among them.

Mr. Chairperson,

As mentioned before, we paid attention to the Director General's report, and we understand the focus he gave to actions and challenges in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nonetheless, we would have appreciated receiving information regarding other important issues we have raised at the SCPF.

On the one hand, we would appreciate receiving information regarding allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation involving IOM staff, and in particular, regarding the allegations of crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are aware of the information provided during the last SCPF, and we appreciate the swift response taken by the Administration. However, as an issue of concern to the membership, we would like to request to be kept updated on the stage of the investigation and whether the organization has taken further measures to prevent these crimes from happening in the future. We acknowledge the commitment to a “zero tolerance” policy regarding sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and thus, we would like to know the measures taken to ensure it.

On the other, we would appreciate information regarding the implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. Earlier in this session we have approved a resolution regarding the new IOM Headquarters building. Before this session, Israel engaged in a dialogue with the administration to include a reference to it in the text. However, the UNDIS is a broader instrument that includes more elements to consider and a set of indicators to evaluate the progress. As we have mentioned before, we believe that IOM has an opportunity to lead in its implementation and adjust its policies and programs accordingly, as to make the motto of “leaving no one behind”, a reality. Israel stands ready to support any effort in this regard.

I thank you.