

**Statement by the Delegation of Thailand**  
**H.E. Mr. Sek Wannamethee**  
**Ambassador and Permanent Representative**  
**Agenda Item 11: General Debate at the 111<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOM Council**  
**24 – 27 November 2020**  
*(5 minutes)*

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Mr. Chairperson,  
The Director General,  
Distinguished delegates,

1. At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Chairperson, upon assuming the chairmanship of the Council. We trust you, in your able leadership to steer the Council and we are ready to cooperate with you in any way we can. We would also like to thank the Director General and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the dedication to migrants and their well-being, particularly in the context of the COVID-19.
2. **COVID-19 has posed unprecedented challenges** impacting us all, including migrants. It has highlighted already existing gaps and vulnerabilities, and in many ways exacerbated them. But we must look at our current situation as an opportunity to close these gaps.
3. For our part, Thailand has put in place **several measures to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on migrants**. For instance, extension of stay and work permits have been introduced. Repatriation of migrant workers wishing to return home through the border checkpoints has been facilitated in a safe and orderly manner and arranged in close collaboration with the Myanmar Government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through our respective Embassies, also facilitated the return of Thai migrant workers from abroad. Our UHC covers all health services of Covid-19 for everyone in Thailand including migrants. The network of migrant health volunteers also plays a key role in reaching out to migrant community. In addition, the Ministry of Public Health, in close collaboration with partners, has established a COVID-19 Migrant Hotline as well as leaflets available in migrant workers' languages allowing them to access essential information on effective disease control.

Mr. Chairperson,

4. Migration is a complex issue that no single country can manage alone. Flows of irregular migration in many parts of the world continue to pose multifaceted challenges to countries and migrants themselves.

5. Allow me to share some of our most recent efforts in addressing migration opportunities and challenges.
6. **First**, Thailand has been working tirelessly on implementing a no-child-detention policy, in close cooperation with the UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM and several NGOs. Following the signing of the MOU on measures and approaches alternative to detention of children and its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), we have just recently **distributed guidelines on how to apply SOPs to the concerned officers throughout the country to ensure robust and coherent MOU implementation. A guideline to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 and protect migrant children and family** has also been developed in addition to the SOPs to ensure safety during the pandemic. As for next step, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) is planning to **organise a capacity training programme for immigration and child protection officers to better respond to children's needs.**
7. **Second**, Thailand has just **confirmed our willingness to join as a Champion Country** for Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). We will highlight GCM implementation in two primary areas; namely, (1) access to health care and services for migrant communities and (2) alternatives to detention in the Immigration Detention Centres for migrant children. We stand ready to share our insights on these areas and learn from others.
8. **Third**, only a few months ago, **Thailand contributed 25,000 US Dollars to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (Migration MPTF)**. We hope to see GCM objectives translated into tangible results through projects supported by financial contribution to the Fund. We, therefore, encourage other Member States in a position to do so, to consider contributing to the Fund.
9. **Fourth**, the National Working Group on GCR and GCM implementation in Thailand met this year and discussed how to take GCM implementation forward, including the drafting of a national **Inter-Agency GCM Implementation Plan 2020-2022.**

Mr. Chairperson,

10. Since the GCM was adopted almost two years ago, it is now high time that we all look back and take stock on what we have done thus far. We should take good note of what differences it has made, particularly in the lives of

migrants. **We look forward to participating in the upcoming Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the GCM in March 2021.**

11. Let me close by reaffirming Thailand's commitment to promoting safe, orderly and regular migration for all.

I thank you.

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