



General Debate

Madam Chair, at the outset, allow me to join others in congratulating IOM on its 70th anniversary. We celebrate IOM's evolution into the organisation it is today – the UN Migration Agency - and look forward to continuing our close and productive partnership for many years to come. The High Level Segment earlier this week was illustrative of IOM's thought leadership on issues of migration. We commend IOM for providing Member States with a platform to connect the dots, to share lessons on migration and mobility from this pandemic to inform our preparedness for the next. How to protect our populations from new variants - or the next pandemic - without placing a chilling effect on cross-border mobility is a challenge that will only be solved through effective international collaboration. We look forward to continuing this discussion in the lead-up to, and at, the International Migration Review Forum in May next year.

Australia has a proud history of migration. Today, nearly 30 per cent of Australians were born overseas, and almost every country in the world is represented in our population. Migration has been a catalyst for our economic prosperity, our diversity and our social vibrancy.

Australia prioritises the need for migration to be safe, orderly and regular. A carefully managed migration program will support Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19, while preserving our security and social cohesion. In contrast, irregular migration exposes vulnerable migrants to risk of exploitation and physical danger and undermines public confidence in government migration systems.

We recognise the positive impact of migration for host and origin countries alike. In our immediate region, Australia's labour mobility programs deliver tangible benefits to our Pacific neighbours, providing valuable remittances and supporting their economic development, while simultaneously addressing skills shortages in the Australian economy.

We share IOM's recognition that migration is often a regional phenomenon, and that effective responses to migration challenges need to be regional. Australia is proud to co-chair the Bali Process, which will mark its 20th anniversary next year. The Bali Process continues to provide a platform for regular dialogue and capacity building, with a view to ensuring migration in our region is safe, orderly and regular.

Australia commends IOM for staying and delivering in Afghanistan. We appreciate IOM bringing a regional migration lens to the UN's response and providing ongoing assessments of possible migratory impacts.

IOM finds itself at a crossroads with tension between its funding model and the asks of it - from Member States, from its membership of the UN family and from itself. Australia is committed to engaging constructively within the Working Group on Budget Reform to resolve this tension. We also emphasise the importance we place on the Internal Governance Framework in providing confidence to Member States that our financial contributions are being spent wisely and well.

Finally, Australia welcomes the appointment of IOM's two new Deputy Directors General. We are only just getting to know you, but we are confident that your diverse and complementary skills and experiences will enhance the already effective and efficient oversight of the organisation.