

Statement by  
His Excellency Mr. Rongvudhi Virabutr, Chargé d' affaires a.i.,  
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Thailand  
Agenda Item 12: General Debate at the 112<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOM Council  
30 November - 1 December 2021  
(3 minutes)

Chairperson,  
Director General,  
Distinguished delegates,

1. First, I wish to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and the members of the bureau for being elected for this session of the IOM Council.

2. IOM and Thailand have **a long history of partnership**, even before we became a Member of the organization. We are committed to **continue working closely** with the IOM to better respond to the evolving dynamics and challenges of migration.

3. We wish to highlight one pressing issue in international migration - an area our partnership with the IOM can be further enhanced. Currently, over 40 million or **1 in 8 migrants worldwide are children**. At all stages of the migration process, **migrant children are more vulnerable to violence, abuse, exploitation, trafficking and detention**, further **intensified** when they are **unaccompanied or separated from their migrant parents**. We need to address these children's needs with **specific care, protection and solution**, and strive to **promote their attainment of rights enshrined in the CRC**, particularly **access to education, health care and family unity**.

4. **In the context of Thailand, all migrant children born in the country are eligible to register for birth certificates**. They can have **access to affordable basic health services**, which costs only 11 US dollars per year. Our **“Education for All” policy** also grants access to 15 years of free education in the public school system to all children, regardless of immigration status. Nonetheless, **challenges** remain due to several reasons, such as **language barrier, parent's job insecurity**, as well as **lack of necessary equipment to facilitate access to online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic**. We will continue to **address the existing gaps to ensure inclusivity and promote their learning opportunities, health and well-being**, in line with our ongoing efforts to advance **SDG 3 and 4**.

5. Thailand has also geared up the implementation of our pledge on **alternatives to detention for migrant children**, and we **thank the IOM for the support** provided to line agencies.

6. In leading up to the **International Migration Review Forum (IMRF)**, Thailand has been working on a number of initiatives, including our participation in **Migration Governance Index (MGI)** process, the results of which can contribute to future migration management policies. As one of the GCM Champion Countries, Thailand also started a **series of consultations** with other Champions in the region to accelerate action to achieve GCM to discuss, among others, **the issue of the COVID – 19 pandemic and its adverse socioeconomic impacts** on migrants.

7. Thailand stands ready to share our experiences. We look forward to working closely with IOM and our friends on ensuring that IMRF contribute to a better change to migrants' lives and a better migration governance.

8. I thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*

(449 words)