

International Organization For Migration

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Statement delivered by HE. Minister of Labour of Qatar

Mr. Chair

Mr. Director General of the IOM

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Allow me at the outset to congratulate the IOM on the occasion of its 70th anniversary and for its service around the world to ensure that the most vulnerable are not left behind.

The Government of Qatar has the honour to contribute at this important event on “the impact of COVID-19 on borders, migration and mobility” and thanks the IOM for convening this event.

No country was spared from the pandemic or its related economic, social and health impacts. This extraordinary crisis required from governments extraordinary measures to address the challenges it posed.

Initial measures on human mobility, particularly, on cross-borders, followed by domestic restrictions on movement and “lockdowns” have been implemented in many countries as inevitable measures to curb the spread of the disease and to maintain health systems function properly.

Although these measures contributed to limiting the spread of the disease, unfortunately it added other challenges to the already existing challenges posed by the pandemic.

It is important to note that Qatar chose to maintain its borders open during the pandemic with some inevitable restrictions. And in order to ensure free movement of people, including workers, Qatar was among the first countries to lift travel restrictions as soon as the situation has improved

Immediately following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the State of Qatar has recognized the need for a coordinated response both at national and international level.

In this context Qatar has taken a full range of measures to respond to the emergent situation.

Since the beginning, and throughout the pandemic, Qatar helped, through its national airlines, over 3.1 million persons to return home, and provided a lifeline to persons in certain industries such

as seafarers, and repatriated over 150,000, and the transport of over than 250,000 tonnes of medical and aid supplies globally.

To live up to its human duty to help needy and hardly hit countries, the state of Qatar has continued to provide aid to urgently respond to the pandemic, with contributions exceeding \$140 million, that benefited 80 countries, and many local and international organizations including in particular the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI).

Believing that, the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis needs collaboration across governments humanitarian aid and development organizations, to provide a global and equitable access to the vaccines, Qatar ensured that access to the vaccine for all the population without any discrimination. *It is to note that more than 85% of the population in the State of Qatar have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 with two vaccine doses.*

I would like to reiterate Qatar is committed to support efforts that aims to ensure fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all

Thank you for your attention!