



General Debate

Mr Chair, thank you for giving me the floor.

For those amongst us who have been paying close attention, you will recall that Australia's views have been shared with this Council twice already this week – first through the Asia Pacific Group statement on Wednesday, and secondly as a party to the statement delivered by Ukraine yesterday.

In addition, the Minister for Home Affairs has provided a written statement as a contribution to the High Level Segment on the intersection between climate change, food security, migration and displacement, and I commend that statement to you.

As such, I will limit myself to two substantive issues under this agenda item.

First is the importance Australia places on safe, orderly and regular migration.

Migration is central to the Australian story. Today, more than 50 per cent of Australians were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas, and almost every country in the world is represented in our population. As the Australian Foreign Minister said when addressing the UN General Assembly in September:

When Australians look out to the world, we see ourselves reflected in it. Equally, the world can see itself reflected in Australia.

Successive waves of migration have shaped and influenced the development of a rich multicultural society, and the blending of histories and cultures has resulted in a unique Australian identity. In short, migration has been a catalyst for our economic prosperity, our diversity and our social vibrancy.

But managing migration is not a 'set and forget' endeavour – which is why (as the Director-General noted in his report on Wednesday) the Australian Government is currently reviewing the purpose, structure and objectives of Australia's migration system.

When we look at Australia's future, we see some big challenges confronting us: we are transitioning to a climate neutral economy; we need to increase our productivity; we need to recruit a caring workforce to look after an ageing population; and we need to build our sovereign capability across a range of sectors.

As the Australian Minister for Home Affairs often says:

The migration system is not the full answer to any of these challenges, but it is part answer to all of them.

The Review is intended to deliver a migration system that will drive economic growth and resilience, while maintaining public confidence in the integrity of the system.

Secondly, 2022 represents the 20th anniversary of the Bali Process.

Irregular migration exposes vulnerable people to risk of exploitation and physical danger and undermines public confidence in government migration systems.

For the last 20 years, the Bali Process, co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia, has been bringing together 45 Member States, alongside valued international organisation partners, including IOM, to raise awareness in our region of the consequences of people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime.

This is in recognition that migration is often a regional phenomenon, and that effective responses to migration challenges need to be regional. 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.

Mr Chair, Director-General

Australia values its partnership with IOM across both these priorities and more broadly:

- in your support to delivery of Australia's migration program and delivery of capacity building assistance to critical partners such as Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste, as those delegations referenced in their statement earlier in the week;
- in your active participation in the work of the Bali Process, both at the strategic and operational levels; and
- in your thought leadership on issues of migration – as demonstrated once again by the High Level Segment earlier this week.

Australia looks forward to continuing our close and productive partnership for many years to come.

Thank you.