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Australian Statement

International Organization for Migration 114th Council – General Debate

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Madam Chair

Thank you for giving me the floor. And as instructed, I will dispense with the courtesies and jump straight in to focus on one area in which Australia and IOM share a deep strategic alignment.

We are excited to see IOM stepping up to support member states make their skills based labour migration programmes more inclusive of people with international protection needs.

Working closely with UNHCR, the World Bank and others, we encourage IOM to dream big, look at major migratory routes, determine what needs to be done to make those routes more accessible for people with international protection needs, and work with the States along those routes to design a project to make it a reality.

IOM should support destination states to review their skills based migration programmes to ensure they are accessible for displaced talent.

IOM should similarly encourage countries of origin to create permissive environments for displaced talent to emigrate through labour pathways. This might include the provision of travel documents, the grant of exit permits and the provision of the right of return. This might also include ensuring education

and vocational training opportunities are available to equip people to join the global labour market.

IOM should also support the individual – who is displaced from their home but with skills and talents to offer - to migrate, through the promotion of skills based pathways, safeguards for fair and ethical recruitment and protections against migrant worker exploitation.

Growing such pathways to scale has the potential to be truly transformative as a solution for people in situations of displacement – additional to vulnerability based pathways.

It would be a win for destination states, who gain the talent they need to meet their labour market needs.

It would be a win for countries of origin, who assist individuals to find a durable solution, alleviating the burden of hosting and generating remittances to support those left behind.

It would be a win for the individuals who can take advantage of a lawful pathway to get on with their lives.

We have focused our intervention on this one issue not to diminish the wealth of important work IOM does in support of member states and migrants but rather to highlight one area in which we think IOM should be looking to do more.

If we get this right, displaced individuals will not have to choose between their vulnerability and their talent – but rather, they will be given greater agency to create their own futures.