



## Statement by the Hon. Ian Borg, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Malta for the 114<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Item 11: High-level Segment: Climate impact on human mobility: A global call for solutions.

Geneva, 28th November 2023

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Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to extend my congratulations to the esteemed Ms. Amy Pope as she commences her term as Director General of the International Organisation for Migration. Malta and IOM enjoy long-standing and excellent relations and we look forward to strengthening our cooperation under your leadership.

I also thank IOM for choosing this year's theme of "Climate impact on human mobility: a call for global solutions". This is especially timely as we continue our work towards the upcoming COP28.

The international community is, indeed, at a turning point. We are already experiencing the most dangerous effects of climate change, ranging from more violent weather patterns and natural disasters leading to loss of life. In the medium term, desertification, the loss of viable conditions for agriculture, increased water scarcity, sea level rise, among others, can render populated regions uninhabitable and push people to leave their homes. Coupled with dire socio-economic circumstances, vulnerable countries, particularly in Global South, can be expected to become more fragile, thereby increasing the number of people moving away in search of better prospects. Inevitably, there is a strong chance that some of these will risk their lives on treacherous voyages.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to underline that where climate change is concerned, there are two phenomena at play. The first one is that we are experiencing the movement, or migration, of people who choose to leave because conditions of life have become unsustainable in their home country. On the other hand, we have the phenomenon of forced displacement, where entire populations have no choice but to leave because their country has become inundated by rising sea levels or rendered uninhabitable by the ravages of extreme weather events caused by climate change. This is the case for many Small Island Developing States in the Pacific and the Caribbean right now.



In the context of migration, we must ensure that we adequately address its root causes. We must invest in strengthening the resilience of communities in fragile countries and disaster risk reduction through anticipatory action. In all cases, we must be sure to implement a human rights-based approach. We must ensure that the rights bestowed through statehood upon citizens whose countries cease to exist due to climate change are not annulled in cases of climate change-induced forced displacement.

We note with appreciation the recognition that DG Amy Pope has given to this challenge by including it as one of her early stated priorities coming into office. This is further reflected in the inclusion of 'Migration, Environment, Climate Change, and Risk Reduction' in IOM's programme for 2024, as well as through IOM's messages to COP28.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

As a current elected member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), Malta has continued to advocate for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and raise awareness about the unique vulnerabilities of small states facing the challenges of climate change. Following the 'Island for Islands' initiative launched at COP26, Malta continues to strive for meaningful and effective partnerships to enhance the resilience of SIDS, through the sharing of information and best practices. In this regard, this Friday at COP28 in Dubai, Malta will be presenting an initiative being undertaken together with the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States and in collaboration with the University of Malta's Islands and Small States Institute, towards the development of a tailor-made, scalable tool of universal application to measure climate vulnerability and resilience. Your representatives at COP are most welcome to attend.

On 14 February this year, Malta organised a High-Level Open Debate on Sea-Level Rise at the UN Security Council. Sea-Level Rise, along with other ocean-related climate security risks, is a daily and constant reality for low-lying coastal states and SIDS worldwide, further impacting millions of people in the years to come. The human impacts of sea-level rise extend from the destruction of lives, livelihoods, and displacement, to the loss of territory, and threats to territorial integrity and associated rights. Sea-level rise has devastating impacts on freshwater resources, food security, ecosystems, health, and critical infrastructure. Coupled with the increased frequency of extreme weather events, the increasing frequency and intensity of coastal flooding also impacts maritime-based economies due to coastal erosion. In this regard, Malta is proud to be one of the Champions of the Coalition for Addressing Sea-Level Rise and its Existential Threats. We are resolved to be the voice of states and communities most vulnerable to this existential threat.

We thank the IOM for addressing the important issue of the climate impact on human mobility and joining the global call for solutions to this challenge. The organisation continues to be an invaluable partner and we look forward to continuing to strengthen our cooperation in this field.

Thank you.