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115th Session of IOM Council: Statement for General Debate

Dehumanizing narratives about migration and policy choices that continue to undermine our shared humanity require that we talk with migrants rather than talking about migrants. Drawing on dialogue with migrants with expertise in participation, there are many ways that meaningful migrant participation – processes that center migrants' own expertise and experience – can be enhanced.

These include measures that can be taken by Member States nationally such as consulting with migrants in policy developments affecting them, and in fora like this, for example by including migrants in delegations and consulting with migrant led organizations in the preparation of positions and statements.

Member States also have a role in supporting measures that IOM can take to enhance meaningful migrant participation. We welcome the reference to amplifying migrant voices in the Director General's report and look forward to working with you to build on this.

IOM take further measures at project, country, regional and institutional level, that draw on migrants' own expertise, platform their concerns, learn from migrant academics and analysts, and increase representation in the staff so that migrant engagement is an integrated part of the work and not a add-on.

A cross-cutting recommendation that we have heard from migrants engaged consultations, working groups and advisory boards is the importance of co-creation: working with migrants on the design, delivery and review of the engagement process, not preparing it alone and then inviting people into something that you think will work for them.

We urge all those here today to support and strengthen informal and formal, mechanisms for meaningful migrant participation. To be most effective we believe these mechanisms should be transformative, sustained, sustainable, and varied. This can help ensure that policies and practices that are shaped by the lived experiences and diverse realities of migrants themselves.

We encourage creation of spaces to share good best practice and challenges, including through the IDMs or the high level segment of this Council.

Formal and informal discussions can help enable collaboration among States and stakeholders as we prepare for the 2026 International Migration Review Forum which provides a critical opportunity to showcase and improve migrant participation and engagement.

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Delivered by Maria Kamenias , Human Rights & Refugees Representative