

Statement by
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Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand
to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
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Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first to join others in extending a warm welcome to Director-General Swing at his first IOM Council Meeting. At this important juncture in time when global discussions on international migration have risen to the fore of the international agenda, Director-General Swing is joining the IOM at an exciting time for the organization. The IOM is presently confronted with an environment of ever increasing challenges and opportunities, in so far as international migration issues are concerned. In that same spirit, might I also take this opportunity to cordially welcome the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and December 18 as new observers.

I would particularly like to thank Director-General Swing for his inaugural address. It is indeed reassuring to learn from the Director-General his concrete ideas on how to continue to build on the IOM's unique strengths in the field of migration. We cannot agree more with his three key priorities of promoting state ownership, partnerships and staff professionalism to help guide IOM for the future. On our part, Thailand pledges our full support to the Director-General in discharging his important functions over the coming months.

Mr. Chairman,

As we look ahead, it is clear that the current global economic crisis is going to be one of the emerging major challenges for migration management. To be sure, we agree with the Director-General that, irrespective of the global financial situation, the demographic trends remain unchanged and will continue to impact on migration. Still, we need to urgently focus on the impacts of the global economic crisis on migration. In this light, our discussions on *return migration* is therefore timely and highly relevant, especially if we anticipate that one of the impacts of the current global economic crisis is going to be migrants returning to their homes in

large numbers. Indeed, we need to prepare ourselves on how we are going to manage the likelihood of such a scenario.

In the meantime, we must ensure that, in this effort, we are not sidetracked from our main task of promoting regular channels of migration and tackling the root causes of irregular migration.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand has long confronted the challenge of international migration. With millions pouring into our borders from neighbouring countries, and hundreds of thousands of our own nationals travelling abroad for employment and other reasons, international migration has long become a reality that we had to come to grips with and manage in order to maximize the benefits and the negative impacts of migration. The IOM has been with us through the years to assist us in realizing these goals and we thank you for your expertise and your active engagement.

We have also continued to strengthen our engagement in various important regional consultative processes dealing with migration, such as the Bali Process and the Intergovernmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC). And we very much look forward to hosting the Meeting of Heads of RCPs next year to share experiences on migration across regions. Most recently, our participation in the steering group of the GFMD and our co-chairmanship of a roundtable session with Australia at the GFMD in Manila this past October attest to our strong commitment to keeping engaged in the important global dialogue on international migration.

Indeed, all of us realize now, more than ever, that policies and decisions regarding migration that are formulated in one country or region are inextricably linked and affect other countries or regions. Thailand is, therefore, pleased at the increased level of discussion occurring around the topic of international migration and the interest being shown to different countries' and regions' efforts in migration management. We need to continue these discussions and to continue to engage with one another, keeping in mind that both sending and receiving countries must manage migration flows together in the most positive manner possible, and taking into consideration the very legitimate concerns of all stakeholders involved.

Mr. Chairman,

On a final note, I would like to reaffirm Thailand's deep appreciation for the assistance kindly rendered by the IOM over the years, which has been of immense support to Thailand in meeting the wide range of challenges posed by migration. The success of our collaboration, which I am very happy to note is growing and intensifying, is the result of IOM's flexible and pragmatic approach

which places the correct emphasis on what *states* need and on how the IOM can involve itself in areas where our resources and expertise are limited. As IOM continues to grow in all aspects, be they membership, activities and relevance, Thailand feels strongly that IOM should be equipped with the necessary resources in order to strengthen its capabilities and efficiency both at Headquarters and in the field. It is our hope that all Member States of the IOM will redouble their efforts in reaching an agreement to increase IOM's administrative part of the budget for 2009. However, in the longer term, it may be useful for Member States and the IOM to work closely together on the IOM's budget structure to ensure reliable and predictable funding for all its operations.

I thank you for your kind attention.
