

**Statement by
Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi,
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Thailand
to the United Nations Office in Geneva
at the 98th Session of the IOM Council, 24 November 2009, Geneva**

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, along with all the new members of the Bureau of the IOM Council. Allow me, also, to thank the Director-General for his report to the Council and for his earnest engagement in the IOM's activities with member states. In particular, we are grateful for his active participation in the Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration, or RCPs, in Bangkok on 4-5 June 2009, and the Roundtable on Regional and Inter-regional Fora at the Third Global Forum on Migration and Development, or GFMD, held in Athens at the beginning of this month.

I also wish to extend a warm welcome and our congratulations to Deputy Director-General Laura Thompson on her appointment.

Mr. Chairman,

This year, the economic downturn has had evident impact on both regular and irregular migratory patterns worldwide, as also reported by the Director-General. As a country of origin, transit and destination, Thailand has exerted ever greater efforts this year on migration-related issues. Domestically, we have pursued a number of activities, such as sensitising our labour force against unscrupulous agents and middlemen; regularising undocumented migrant workers; implementing bilateral agreements on labour with neighbouring countries; and implementing information campaigns aimed at combating human smuggling and trafficking in persons.

In addition, we have enhanced our engagement in Regional Consultative Processes on migration, such as the Bali Process and relevant international migration dialogues. We believe that regional and inter-regional initiatives are an appropriate approach to 'coordinate' and 'facilitate' effective migration management through regular dialogues as well as to translate discussions into actions. Thailand, therefore, looks forward to steering the development of RCPs

with our partners in the most concrete manner possible, also with a view to strengthening linkages with other fora such as the GFMD.

Thailand believes that regular dialogues amongst countries concerned on policies, practices and migratory trends would help form mutual recognition for the rights and dignity of migrants. For the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, this issue of human rights and migration will receive added attention with the establishment of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), along with some mechanisms to follow up on the ASEAN Declaration on the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers.

Mr. Chairman,

As mentioned earlier, Thailand is ready to endorse the Director-General's proposals for adjusting the IOM organizational structure, to provide support during their implementation. We appreciate the IOM's engagement with the member states through consultations. Such engagement reflects the importance that the IOM attaches to transparency and ownership among the member states. It was also reassuring to hear from the Director-General yesterday that the consultations would continue throughout the process. Indeed, once again, we wish to echo the call for periodic evaluations of the structural adjustments.

We believe that the review should go hand-in-hand with the budget reforms. For this year, despite the tightening of our budget as a result of global economic difficulties, we still see the importance of supporting some increase of the IOM budget in order to allow effective functioning of the organization. We are therefore pleased to hear that a consensus was reached on an increase of the administrative part of the budget. In the long run, we hope that the budget reforms will be considered as an integral part of the overall structural adjustment.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to conclude by expressing our sincere appreciation to the IOM for its unwavering efforts to improve migration management in Thailand. The IOM's pragmatic and flexible approach invaluablely places the correct emphasis on our needs and on how the IOM could fill in the gaps where our resources and expertise are scarce, such as through the 1035 Facility. In return, you can count on our full cooperation and support in your endeavours.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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