

PHILIPPINES

Statement of H.E. Evan P. Garcia  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines

General Debate (5 mins.)  
99<sup>th</sup> IOM Council  
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Mr. Chair,  
Director-General William Lacy Swing,  
Excellencies, Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

*First of all, I wish to congratulate the Chair, the vice-chairs and the rapporteur for their election as officers of this Council for 2011.*

I also wish to thank Director-General Swing for his comprehensive and informative report to the IOM Council. As we usher in 2011, the 60th anniversary of the IOM, my delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate and thank the IOM – our collective Organization – for the important work it has done throughout the years as the central international organization dealing with migration, and for making a real difference in the lives of migrants in need of greater protection and recognition the world over. Now more than ever, we see the IOM playing a key role in the international arena.

As a country vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change, we especially commend the IOM's valuable assistance and support to displaced persons after the large-scale tragedies this year in Haiti and Pakistan. We also appreciate IOM's work on the effects of the financial crisis on migration and migrants, and its continued participation in the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Migration is one of the issues at the top of the global agenda in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Director-General mentioned current demographic and labour market trends which only reinforce the reality that our increasingly interconnected societies shall need to further tap the positive aspects of migration in order to grow and prosper together.

This morning, we would like to share our thoughts on some of the issues and IOM activities cited in the DG's report:

1. We take good note of the IOM's World Migration Report 2010 *and we congratulate IOM for deciding to make this an annual issuance.* The Philippines shares the IOM's concerns over

rising anti-immigrant sentiments and restrictive immigration policies. We believe a lot of work needs to be done to change misperceptions and negative stereotypes of migrants and migration, and to develop a “new narrative” of the positive contribution of migration to our societies, sending and receiving countries alike. We have to include in this new narrative the importance of securing the basic fundamental and universal human rights of all migrants.

2. We note with interest the data on remittances. They have remained steady despite the global economic downturn, way above levels of official development assistance and foreign direct investment. In this regard, we wish to highlight the need for IOM to explore reducing the costs of remittances, and also on channeling remittances into sustainable development projects to maximize social benefits, spur fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals and reduce poverty in developing countries. We appreciate the work of the IOM in the Philippines to promote financial literacy for migrants in this connection.
3. We fully support IOM’s work in the field to build capacities of states and other stakeholders, including migrants themselves, to effectively manage the challenges and opportunities of migration.
4. IOM’s continued engagement and support to regional consultative processes such as the Colombo Process is integral to addressing migration in a holistic manner while taking into account regional specificities and priorities.
5. We are impressed with the Organization’s measures to strengthen staff professionalism, which shall enhance the IOM’s efficiency and delivery of key services. We are glad that the IOM Administrative Center in Manila shall continue to play a role in this regard.
6. Lastly, the strategic objectives of the Organization reflect a clear vision and steadfast commitment to making migration work and be a win-win experience for all stakeholders. For this, Mr. Director-General, we congratulate you and the IOM again. Rest assured that the Philippines shall continue to support your work and work with you constructively.

I thank you, Mr. *Chair*.