

**Statement by**  
**H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow,**  
**Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Thailand**  
**at the 99<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOM Council,**  
**Geneva, 29 November 2010**

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

I would like to begin my remarks by extending my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the Chairmanship of the 99<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOM Council. I would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my delegation, to cordially welcome the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as the newest members to the IOM family. The expansion of the IOM membership to cover more countries in Asia and Africa reflects the growing recognition of migration as a significant global issue in which the IOM, as an institution, has done an exemplary job in assisting member countries to deal with the challenges of migration.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his report to the Council and to express my delegation's appreciation for the keynote address by Her Excellency Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, which provided perceptive insights on the global migratory phenomenon. Together with the presentation on the 2010 World Migration Report, they serve as an important basis for our discussion over the next three days, especially with regard to possible directions to address migration challenges.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Demographic factors and the worldwide economic downturn have continued to exert a strong influence on global migration patterns. Coupled with environmental factors, such as natural disasters and climate change, human mobility is growing and the impacts of such mobility have expanded beyond just the mere discourse of push and pull migration.

Certainly, people do still migrate to the North in search of economic opportunities and a better life in the developed countries. However, we have

also seen growing trends of South-South and intra-regional migration. Indeed, in view of the present economic and demographic dynamism in the South, we believe that this is where efforts in migration management and building capacities need to focus. Countries like Thailand, which have become simultaneously a country of origin, transit and destination, are working to find appropriate strategies in which migration could be effectively managed within the framework of maximizing the development benefits and minimizing its negative aspects. The challenge is even greater when people increasingly resort to travel by irregular means, and in mixed flows.

No doubt, there is increasing awareness among States of the need for more effective migration management, whether at the national, regional or international levels. This is due to the fact that migration is a global phenomenon whose impacts are not limited to any one country in particular. With this reality in mind, Thailand supports all efforts to develop and enhance international dialogue which would lead to concrete and pragmatic cooperation at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Bilaterally, Thailand has just held a very productive workshop with Switzerland on this issue. Regionally, we greatly value the IOM's contributions to the work of the Bali Process. The reinvigoration of the Bali Process Ad Hoc Group and a series of technical workshops have benefited from the continued engagement and support of the IOM. Globally, Thailand has also participated actively in the recent 4<sup>th</sup> Global Forum on Migration and Development in Puerto Vallarta, particularly on the issue of migration and health in which IOM has also played a strong role. Thailand has therefore been working hard at all levels on improving migration management and enhancing dialogue on migration.

Of course, the key to success of any regional approach is for the countries concerned to work together on the basis of shared responsibility. In this regard, we look forward to working closely with the IOM to see how we can strengthen regional approaches to migration issues. We also value and appreciate the commitment of the IOM in assisting States to find a space where information, perspectives and good practices on migration could be shared. This helps to enhance better understanding through regional and global dialogues, and mitigates any unnecessary tensions between States through regional cooperation.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As reflected in the Director General's report and the IOM strategy, we appreciate the IOM's efforts in actively engaging with Member States at both

policy and implementation level. We encourage the IOM to pursue an action-oriented approach to finding sustained solutions to migration problems. The diversity of the migration phenomenon makes it essential that the IOM become even more versatile and responsive in adapting work programmes and projects to fit various regional contexts and problems.

Having said that, Thailand considers that the IOM is moving in the right direction, particularly the 12-Point Strategy that the IOM has put forward. We believe that the 12-Point Strategy would serve as a useful framework in which the working direction of the IOM could be holistic and comprehensive enough to cover the whole picture of human mobility. At the same time, we welcome that the Strategy does not neglect those cross-cutting issues that require attention.

Above all, we note the importance given to the linkages between human rights and migration. Indeed, the issue of human rights and migration is a complex one. For States confronted by irregular migration, it is undeniable that there is a need to tackle the dilemma between national security, on the one hand, and human rights and humanitarian considerations, on the other.

Faced with over 2 million migrant workers, most of whom are irregular, Thailand realizes the complexity of the issue, and we continue endeavouring to find a way in which our policies and practices on migration management are in line with international standards and norms. We are committed to ensuring that migrants' rights are protected and that all migrants, whether inbound or outbound, are treated in a dignified manner. In this regard, we have provided access to healthcare and education, and have set up a system for registering illegal migrant workers in order to legalize their status and avoid the risk of exploitation. In many of these areas, Thailand enjoys close and mutually beneficial cooperation with the IOM. We are keen to continue working closely with the IOM and other partners on the protection of the rights and dignity of migrants, and improving our migration management system to support the full realization of human potential.

Meanwhile, migration will continue to be a major challenge for Thailand as for other countries. We have to redouble our efforts to maximize the benefits of migration for all. More than ever, the IOM, as the key international organisation with a mandate on migration, has to be responsive through policy initiatives and action-oriented programmes, including on return migration. We are fully confident that the IOM is up to the challenge.

**Mr. Chairman,**

I would like to conclude my remarks with an expression of Thailand's sincere appreciation to the IOM for its unfailing cooperation in the evolution of migration management in Thailand. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the IOM in the years to come.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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