



International Organization for Migration

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Australian Statement – General Debate

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Thank you Mr Chair.

As this is the first time Australia has taken the floor under your leadership, I congratulate you on your election and say how pleased we are to see you in this role. You will of course have our full support.

Mr Chair, Australia is pleased to report on another strong year of partnership with IOM. This runs the gamut from support to the delivery of our own global migration programs including the resettlement of refugees from around the world; to capacity building in migration management with our near neighbours in the Pacific; through to supporting sustainable voluntary returns of migrants to countries of origin, and disaster risk reduction and community stabilisation in our region. In all these areas, we work together with IOM in a practical, useful, and hands-on way. The organisation's responsiveness, pragmatism and experience make it an important partner for my government and I would like to acknowledge that today.

But Mr Chair IOM is not just helping us to do things. Through the International Dialogues on Migration, and their active participation in supporting other processes including the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the High Level Dialogue preparations, they are supporting thinking on key global policy priorities in migration. We commend the insightful IDMs this year on migrants in crisis and the initiative taken to develop the crisis framework – aimed at strengthening

the organisation's own capacity to respond to these increasing scenarios.

Mr Chair, over the coming year in the lead up to the High Level Dialogue on Migration, there are going to be many more conversations about the complex world of migration, how it works, how to optimise its outcomes for individuals and countries, and effective frameworks for cooperation. IOM has a lot to offer these conversations and we encourage their engagement along the way. Council's resolution on HLD this week clearly frames IOM's role in this regard. We thank the outgoing Chair for his initiative in establishing the friends group to discuss HLD preparations and welcome the continuation of these gatherings under you as our new Chair. IOM took the IDM across the Atlantic this year and has a program of activity to raise the awareness of migration issues in New York. This is a good initiative. Australia is pleased that we'll be able to lend financial support to both the flagship IOM publication, the World Migration Report and the IDM in what will be an important year for migration and development policy.

Mr Chair, it has been a year of significant progress for our engagement in regional migration processes. IOM has for a long time now had a role in supporting Regional Cooperation Processes, including in our region of the Asia-Pacific. This year, IOM's support to the Bali Process has moved to a new level in the establishment of the Regional Support Office in Bangkok. IOM has been closely involved in the establishment of the Office and will continue to play a key role in delivering on its ambitious agenda under the co-chairs Indonesia and Australia, and in cooperation with all Bali Process members.

But Mr Chair, none of this activity can be sustained without a strong organisational core structure and we have concerns about the potential degradation of capacity to manage important core functions under the current budget arrangements. Member states have worked hard with the administration in the Working Group on Budget Reform and found some good solutions this year but there is more work to do and Australia is ready to lend support. We've been looking at how we can enhance capacity in other ways and are pleased that Australia's first professional officer placement to IOM will commence shortly. This placement will assist with the delivery of the IOM's International Development Fund.

In closing Mr Chair I would like to commend the excellent leadership of the Director-General, Ambassador Swing. He has grown our organisation and steered it well. He understands the diversity of experiences of states when it comes to migration and brings a solution-focused approach to his engagement which is always welcome.

I thank you.