



Statement given by the State of Israel

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, please allow me to welcome the new members and observers to the organization. I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. Director-General, as well as the IOM's devoted staff, for an intense and fruitful year, in which, under your vision and leadership, the IOM was further cemented as the central pillar for addressing the global challenges of migration.

I would like to give thanks to the Director-General for the informative report presented to us outlining the achievements and challenges the IOM faces in light of the growing mass movement of people who leave their countries in search of a safer, better, and happier life.

I would like to give further recognition to the UN high-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which played a crucial role in flagging the issue globally, and helped in bringing the International Community together to discuss these in a thorough and extensive manner. The role of the IOM in preparing this event was of momentous importance.

We would also like to give note to the successful Diaspora Ministerial Conference held earlier this year, and encourage IOM to continue exploring this issue.

Through the years, Israel has cooperated with the IOM on various projects, and benefited immensely from its professionalism and vast knowledge. We look forward to continuing our work in partnership on issues of common interest.

Mr. Chairman,

One cannot ignore the effects of the global economic crisis, which has made the situation in some countries more difficult at the highest, and untenable at the lowest end of the spectrum. This unfortunate reality, coupled with the rapidly increasing numbers of immigrants and the acute needs derived from migration, means we must all find improved paths towards efficiency and resourcefulness. Israel supports the efforts of the working group on Budget Reform, including any measures taken to improve the efficiency of IOM and its operations.

Israel also supports the IOM's efforts in building cooperation with other relevant bodies, its role in different forums dealing with issues related to migration, and its work toward developing relations with the private sector.

Within the wide spectrum of issues related to global migration, we would like to draw particular importance to the combating of human trafficking. This horrific phenomenon can only be defeated through tight cooperation, information-sharing, and zero-tolerance. In recent years, the Government of Israel has allocated tremendous resources to addressing this challenge, and achieved substantial results.

Mr. Chairman,

The contribution of migrants to the development of their destination countries was emphasized in many ways throughout this year, and the State of Israel is a salient example of that. In the three years following its declaration of independence, the State of Israel absorbed more than 650,000 immigrants from the Middle East, North Africa, as well as Holocaust survivors from Europe.

In fact, the population of Israel has doubled several times over the past sixty years, in large part as a result of migration. Today, our country has 7.1 million inhabitants, and since its creation, more than 3 million immigrants have been registered, making the State of Israel one of the countries with the highest percentage of immigration in proportion to the size of its population worldwide.

Upon reflection, it is incredible to see how we were able to turn a barren, desert land, into the flourishing nation that today stands at the forefront of the global economy and technological innovation. This remarkable transformation could not have been achieved without the many immigrants who helped found, build, and contribute to our State.

I thank you.