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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The 103rd Session of the IOM Council

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General Debate

Geneva, November 26, 2013

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Jeong-gwan LEE
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Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by extending my sincere congratulations to Mr. Chairman His Excellency Luis Enrique CHAVEZ BASAGITIA on assuming the Chairmanship of the 103rd Session of the IOM Council. I am confident that this session will be successful under your able leadership. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Abdul Hannan, for his outstanding leadership and dedications. My tribute also goes to the Director General, His Excellency Ambassador William Lacy Swing, who outlined the current global migration situation impressively with the insightful and clear-cut concepts of 3Cs - Continuity, Coherence and Change. I believe that the IOM will further evolve and flourish under Ambassador Swing's continued leadership in his second term.

Mr. Chairman,

Migration is continuously growing in its volume and complexity as we can see in the recent situations in Syria and the Philippines. At the same time, the expectations of the international community for the IOM's role in the migration issue are getting higher, as well. Timely and effective assistance that the IOM has provided for affected population in Tacloban, the Philippines, in recent days is a good example that the organization has successfully lived up to such expectations. Taking this opportunity, I wish to express my deep appreciation to the tireless efforts that have been made by Director General and his staff to deal with complex and emergency situations.

Mr. Chairman,

This year, the IOM has made outstanding achievements in the global discussion on migration and development by actively participating in the preparations for the '2nd UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development,' which was held in New York last month. I hope that the IOM, as a leading international organization on the issue of migration, will continue to play a pivotal role in the follow-up process as well. Given the growing importance of migration as a topic on the global agenda including post-2015 development agenda and the IOM's mandate and its instrumental role on international migration, it is timely and relevant to revisit the issue of how the IOM can best position itself within the overall international governance on migration, especially within the context of the IOM-UN relations. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the decision to establish a Working Group on the IOM-UN relations and hopes that it will provide Member States with strategic vision of the partnership as well as more meticulous analysis of the pros and cons of each option.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of the Republic of Korea reaffirms its support for the IOM's ongoing reform initiatives led by the Director General. Regarding budget reforms, my delegation would like to note that the IOM has been trying to adhere to a Zero Nominal Growth budget despite possible risks incurred by the constraints on the core budget. In this context, the recent proposal of the Working Group on Budget Reform, which includes an increase in assessed contributions, is timely and important, and I hope that Member States can reach a consensus on this important issue during the current session. However, the Republic of Korea would like to emphasize that concerns and internal budget situations of some Member States should be taken into due consideration in the process of reaching the consensus.

Mr. Chairman,

As was aptly mentioned in Director General's report, the IOM and its Member States are now faced with both the "highs (opportunities)" and "lows (challenges)." Despite all the difficulties such as the rising anti-migrant sentiment and a series of complex humanitarian emergencies, the international community is tasked to attain its goal of achieving "dignified, orderly, safe, and humane mobility." I believe that the IOM's "guideposts" can play an instrumental role in such international collective efforts. The Republic of Korea cannot be an exception. Taking this opportunity, I am pleased to highlight recent progress we have made. As of July 1 2013, the Refugee Act and its Enforcement Decree entered into force. The government institutions have also improved with the creation of an independent division concerning refugee matters in the Ministry of Justice in June 2013. Furthermore, a Center for Refugee Assistance was completed in Incheon in September 2013. These are only a few of the much made progress by the ROK.

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Lastly my delegation wishes to reiterate the strong commitment of the Republic of Korea to continue to work closely in the future with the IOM in common endeavors to achieving "dignified, orderly, safe, and humane mobility." In 2009, the Korean government and the IOM jointly launched the IOM Migration Research and Training Center (IOM-MRTC) as an IOM's partner agency in Korea, and now, both are dedicated to the common goal of transforming the Center into a leading migration research and training center in the Asian region.

Let me conclude by thanking the IOM staff for their dedicated work to help and assist migrants all over the world.

Thank you. /End/