

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election. I would also like to thank the Director General Ambassador Swing and the secretariat for preparing this important meeting. My delegation is confident and is without doubt that the leadership of this organization will sustain and advance the mission of the IOM, and that future generations will feel these positive changes when the 100th year anniversary draws near. This is indeed a momentous occasion and I am thankful for this opportunity to address the Council on a topic which is of great importance to Israel.

The contributions of the IOM to global society have been invaluable including recent assistance to 120,000 displaced Sudanese and to the over one million people relocated after natural disasters in Haiti, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. This organization has proven itself time and again to be a strong and dependable partner in the pursuit of individual and social wellbeing.

I was especially moved by the story of Elsabet Gizaw, an Ethiopian journalist who faced persecution and was resettled in Australia. She writes "*All of us refugees came from different places; each one of us had a different background, a different culture, a different lifestyle. Our cultural*

identity also differed from the new country where we were to be resettled. The orientation phase helped us prepare ourselves to begin a new life after all the confusion we have experienced. I shall never forget the assistance the IOM has given us."

Mr. Chairman,

In 2011 Israel contributed \$700,000 for a joint project, which coincides with the aims of IOM to continue supporting the tremendous work of this organization, and to guarantee its success, so that stories such as that of Elsabet remain the norm and not the exception.

Beyond financial contributions, Israel is advancing the mandate of the IOM by working closely with

other member states to facilitate those who wish to work in Israel. Bilateral agreements are in the process of being signed with Romania, the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, which will assist construction workers, farmers, and home care-givers to make a better living by working in Israel, according to international norms.

I would like to thank Director-General Swing for his central role in facilitating the recent agreement between Israel and the Kingdom of Thailand, along with our colleagues and good friends in the secretariat. Through the efforts of all parties involved, Israel will

be able to benefit from the expertise and experience of the migrant workers.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel understands the challenges associated with migration, both forced and voluntary. As a nation that welcomes thousands of new Jewish immigrants who make Aliya every year, we are aware of the difficult tasks of assimilation given cultural and language barriers. Through our membership in IOM we will continue to provide our input and assistance to all those who request it. Israel will continue working with our colleagues to advance the IOM mandate. As a founding member

of this Assembly it is not only our challenge, but
our joint responsibility.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.