

Meeting 469
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Statement by the Delegation of Thailand
at the 90th Session of the IOM Council, 1 December 2005

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

On behalf of the Thai delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the Chairmanship of the 90th Session of the IOM Council. My delegation welcomes Republic of Cameroon, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Belarus and Togolese Republic as new members and Islamic Relief as new observer.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has some messages to convey in our statement today.

First, on *the international migration development*. The past year has seen a lot of movements and progress in international efforts to develop a common orientation to migration management. We have seen the products of international processes, namely International Agenda for Migration Management and the GCIM Report. We have seen many countries working together bilaterally as well as in their respective regional processes to address migration issues. These developments are the clear reflection of growing international awareness on the significance and implications of migration, and are indeed an encouraging sign in light of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in September next year. Thailand has actively participated in these efforts and will continue to engage itself constructively and pro-actively in the discussions and preparations leading up to the High-level Dialogue in the hope that we would add some values to its outcomes. We also wish to encourage the IOM to continue to play the leading role in working with other agencies and stakeholders to improve inter-agency information-sharing and coordination as well as to further build on other workable recommendations of the GCIM Report.

Secondly, on *the need to sustain the positive momentum in the regional migration development*. Some years ago, migration was perceived in Thailand as a threatening issue. At present, that perception is much less valid although we remain the focus of many complex migratory flows with over 2.2 million irregular migrants in the country. The main factor for this change of perception would be the compelling effects of globalization. We think this positive development is also the case in many other countries. However, to sustain this development, it is still necessary to put more efforts to ensure that migration is generally perceived as a positive phenomenon. In this connection, we applaud the IOM's supporting and facilitating role in several regional

processes aimed at promoting better understanding and building capacity of governments to manage migration more effectively and beneficially. We strongly hope that the IOM will continue to play this important role by offering its expertise to build on the work already in place and to make further initiatives, especially in working towards migration policy coherence.

The next message concerns *the migration developments in Thailand*.

Over the past year, there are some significant developments regarding migration management taking place in Thailand. I would like to cite few of them to the attention of this meeting. In June 2005, the government decided to extend the stay and work permit for several hundred thousand registered migrant workers from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR for another year. This decision has demonstrated the importance of migrant workers in our labour market. It is expected that this regularization program together with bilateral agreements on the employment of migrant workers already in place with the three neighbouring countries will eventually promote legal and regular channels for labour migration in Thailand. In July this year, Thailand and Lao PDR signed the MOU on Cooperation for Eliminating Human Trafficking in addition to the similar MOU we have with Cambodia. Two months ago, the Government established our national mechanism for asylum-seeker status determination or the so-called Provincial Admission Board. This mechanism in addition to a number of bilateral and sub-regional agreements with our neighbouring countries on migration-related issues would enhance our capacity to address the complexity of the migration and asylum nexus. .

My last point concerns *the cooperation between Thailand and the IOM*.

The IOM's support and active involvement in several humanitarian projects in Thailand, including resettlement of displaced persons, combating human trafficking, migration health and migrant rights awareness raising has been very well recognized by the Thai Government. We are especially grateful for the IOM's prompt response in the aftermath of Tsunami attack in late December last year as well as packages of humanitarian relief items to victims of Tsunami. We also applaud the IOM's constructive effort in preparing the Situation Report on International Migration in Thailand which was launched in August this year. Many recommendations proposed in the report are very valid for the Government to consider in developing policies and strategies related to migration management. In fact, some important policy initiatives and measures on migration management under way in Thailand have received a great deal of inputs from the IOM. Thailand has indeed enjoyed a very constructive and productive cooperation with the IOM which, we believe, has been fostered by way of working together and sharing experience.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.