STATEMENT

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AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

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Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the most recent UN General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the important contributions of migrants, including migrant women, to societies were widely recognized.

Constituting nearly half of the 232 million international migrants in the world today, women increasingly move on their own. They seek a life with security, opportunity, dignity and rights. Migration empowers women, and women empower society.

At the same time however, it cannot be ignored that migrant women also face specific vulnerabilities. While on the move, women are more exposed to the risk of exploitation and gender based violence than men. As a result, they face dual vulnerabilities as women and as migrants.

Mr. Chair, the reports of the Secretary General offer a valuable opportunity to take stock of progress made and to draw lessons for the future. In this regard, I would like to focus on two reports particularly: the report on Violence Against Women Migrant Workers and the report on the Improvement of the Situation of Women in Rural Areas.

1. Violence against women migrant workers (A/68/178)

First, we welcome the report on Violence Against Women Migrant Workers and appreciate its recognition of IOM’s efforts in enhancing the safety of female migrant workers at all stages of the migration process.

We are pleased to see an increase in the number of States parties to relevant international instruments, such as the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011, which entered into force last month. We do however stress that considerable efforts are still needed to ensure an effective rights-based approach to migration.

IOM would particularly like to echo two recommendations made in the report, which are at the heart of the key messages IOM carried to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.
We underline the need for improved collection and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data, research and analysis on migration and violence against migrant women workers. Relevant data and gender sensitive analysis are essential for national and regional policies to address the vulnerabilities of women migrant workers.

We also strongly support the call for greater coherence between migration, labour and anti-trafficking policies. By providing a space for consultation between researchers, practitioners and policy makers from countries of destination, transit and origin, IOM seeks to promote more effective policymaking processes in this regard.

It is important to remember that every migration experience is unique, and that the challenges and opportunities for women largely depend on their particular situation.

2. The Improvement of the Situation of Women in Rural Areas (A/68/179)

This brings me to the second report we want to highlight here today, on the Improvement of the Situation of Women in Rural Areas.

Rural women are not a homogeneous group. Their circumstances vary according to their income, social networks, education, and local gender dynamics. These circumstances can impact rural women’s migration decisions, and can increase the recourse to unregulated recruitment agencies or smugglers.

In addition, the migration of men has led to an increase in the number of women-headed households. This can contribute to women’s empowerment, but can also place an extra burden on rural women left behind.

In collaboration with many other actors, IOM strives to promote safe migration for women in rural areas, including the prevention of trafficking in human beings, as well as the facilitation of rural women’s access to reliable legal migration information, identity and travel documents, and migration services.

In conclusion Mr. Chair,

We can all play a role in the advancement of women, enabling them to use their potential in a way that benefits them and the whole of society.

Thank you.