Date: 24 June 2021

14 Tamuz 5781

To: Mr. Felipe González Morales, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

Subject: **The State of Israel's Submission to the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants' Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Human Rights of Migrants**

The State of Israel respectfully submits its contribution in relation to the above-mentioned questionnaire.

**Healthcare in Israel for Migrants**

Throughout the pandemic, healthcare for migrants was anchored in the relevant legislation and Ministry of Health guidelines. The following is the framework for healthcare for migrants in Israel in general, as a basis for the additional emergency provisions which protected migrants during the pandemic.

Pursuant to *Patients' Rights Law* 1996-5756, all persons are entitled to urgent medical care in a situation of medical emergency. Specifically, migrants, including minors, are offered the following health services (in addition to the aforesaid urgent medical treatments): preventive medicine for pregnant women, babies and infants including routine vaccinations and growth and developmental follow-up at *Tipat Halav* (family health centers); primary health care in the *Terem* clinic for persons without civil status in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, which conducts routine doctor's checks, lab services and scans (x-ray, ultrasound); and psycho-social and medicinal treatment in the *Ruth* clinic for mental health in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. In addition, minors without civil status in Israel are offered subsidized medical treatments, through the Meuhedet Health Fund (an HMO). Foreign workers and employed persons without civil status are entitled to health insurance sponsored by their employer, which is similar to the public health insurance.

In addition, there are several specialized clinics and services which offer treatments to migrants in Israel, facilitated by non-governmental organizations or hospitals.

**Healthcare for Migrants during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

In the middle of March 2020, hospital administrators and General Managers, as well as the General Manager of *Magen David Adom*, Israel's National Emergency Pre-Hospital Medical and Blood Services Organization, were instructed by the Ministry of Health to offer all relevant COVID-19 tests, treatments and hotlines to all migrants in Israel, including asylum seekers, persons who entered Israel illegally through the Egyptian border and persons with no legal status. COVID-19 testing locations were open to all free of charge. Hospitals offered full treatment, including complex intensive care ventilation, ECMO and rehabilitation, free of charge. Those who were required to be in isolation due to the health restrictions, but lacked effective conditions for isolation, were offered State-funded solutions.

Migrants were offered to vaccinate against COVID-19. Centers offering first and second doses of the vaccine were established throughout the country, including a specialized center in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Currently, the level of vaccination among migrants is high and comparable to that of the general Israeli population.

**Measures to Support Migrants**

Throughout the outbreak of COVID-19, the Ministry of Health conducted a variety of actions to support migrants. All Ministry of Health guidelines to the public regarding COVID-19 were translated into many languages, including *inter alia,* English, Arabic, Russian and Tigrinya. The guidelines and information notes were published on the internet and offered to relevant civil society forums and organizations, and targeted media campaigns about the pandemic and relevant health restrictions were implemented.

Specific support programs were established in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and several other central locations for asylum seekers and foreign workers. The Ministry of Health also conducted a special meeting with the civil society organizations representing these groups, regarding the effects of COVID-19. Additionally, due to the pandemic, visas were extended automatically for workers and asylum seekers whose visas were set to expire.