

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION ON MIGRATION - 106TH IOM COUNCIL -
24TH - 27TH NOVEMBER, 2015**

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 106TH IOM COUNCIL

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GHANA DELIVERED BY MR
EBENEZER APPREKU, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA
AND LEADER OF THE GHANAIAN DELEGATION TO THE 106TH COUNCIL
SESSION, ON THURSDAY 26TH NOVEMBER, 2015**

I thank you Mr. Chairperson for giving me the floor.

Your Bureau can count on the unflinching support of Ghana.

The Delegation of Ghana aligns itself with the statement delivered by Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group and wish to share the following national perspectives on some of the items on the agenda of the current Session of the IOM Council.

The government and people of Ghana are indeed grateful for the honour accorded Ghana in the person of H.E. Ambassador Sammie Eddico, to chair the 105th Session of this Council. The delegation of Ghana appreciates the various kind compliments expressed for the progress made by IOM during the 105th session under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Eddico (Ghana).

Mr Chairperson,

Ghana joins other speakers in commending the Director General for his diligent stewardship of the IOM in the pursuit of its mandate to serve the needs of migrants and other persons of concern to our organization. The Director General can count on the continued support of Ghana in our collective effort with other Member States to address the challenges and issues raised in the comprehensive and thought-provoking report he submitted to this Council.

Ghana's commitment to the mandate and work of the IOM is driven by a humanitarian principle which speaks to the imperative need to ensure that when it comes to the protection of the rights of migrants, all countries must do for foreign migrants what they want other countries to do for their own citizens abroad, in the diaspora regardless of their legal status..

Ghana shares the view well-articulated by the Director-General of the IOM that migration is not a problem to be solved but a natural human phenomenon to be managed to harness its potential benefits and positive impact on society. Truly and historically we are all migrants.

Mr Chairperson,

In the wake of the recent tragic terrorist attacks in Paris, which Ghana unreservedly condemn, we must not fail to acknowledge with disappointment and sadness, the reported role of some migrants, one of whom entered Europe as a fake refugee, which undermines the concerted effort to enhance the respect for migrants.

Nonetheless, we support the appeal by the IOM Director General, to all countries to endeavour to resist the temptation to play up the challenges posed by the current migration cum refugee crises because any negative stereotyping against migrants as parasites and the cause of economic crises facing some countries, or even as potential terrorist, in national political or electoral discourse, tends to fuel incitement of hatred towards all foreigners regardless of their status.

Mr Chairperson, it is a foreign policy priority of the Government of Ghana to urge Ghanaians in the diaspora to be law abiding and to travel abroad through legal means. In this regard, the delegation of Ghana wishes to express our deepest gratitude to the IOM Administration in supporting Ghana to establish the Diaspora Affairs Bureau within the Foreign Ministry which is spearheading the outreach and sensitisation programmes to encourage Ghanaians to become not only law abiding but also to become more productive and impact more positively in their host countries.

Ghana will continue to work with the IOM to explore initiatives to reduce the transactional costs of remittances sent by migrants in the diaspora to their families and dependents at home. The Government of Ghana looks forward to collaborating with the IOM in the implementation of the new national migration policy which among other things, envisages the establishment of a National Migration Commission with a view to enhancing our national capacity to gather relevant data on internal and external migration trends, facilitating the mainstreaming of the diaspora in national development, as well promoting coherence and coordination at the national level.

Mr Chairperson,

As a country that offered its capital city, Accra, as the base for the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), Ghana welcomes the importance IOM attaches to advancing the unfinished agenda of migrant health for the benefit of all in collaboration with other partners including the World Health Organization. In this context, Ghana wishes to endorse the joint statement delivered by the Ambassador of Philippines on behalf of a group of States including Ghana which expressed support for the IOM 's critical role in promoting a global migration agenda through services aimed at meeting the urgent health needs of migrants and populations on the move as well as support for government policy. The lessons learned from the Ebola epidemic should be a wakeup call to deal with the health risk associated with migration across borders, including the need to strengthen health systems to cater to the health needs of all including migrants.

Mr Chair,

In conclusion, Ghana wishes to reiterate its support for the resolution adopted during this session authorising the Director General to formally approach the United Nations to discuss ways to strengthen the relationship between the UN and the IOM, with the goal of streamlining the institutional and programmatic cooperation and coordination between the two organisations. We should be pragmatic and realistic about the approach to the UN, given that the issue of the relationship between the UN and IOM was first discussed by this Council in 2002. In the course of these discussions over the past almost 15 years, the thinking of IOM Member States have variously evolved from the 2003 position of virtually ruling out the idea of a specialised agency status to the 2007 position of considering the specialised agency status as the only viable option. We should also bear in mind that in its earlier responses to a formal approach by the IOM in the past decade or so, two Secretaries General of the UN, contended that the nature of the relationship similar to the one envisaged in the resolution we have adopted during this Session could not be legally pursued outside a specialised agency status. The UN estimated also then that any formal negotiations would take about two years to complete. We hope that the underlying considerations in the earlier documents and reports adopted by the IOM and the current resolution, including the familiar aspects, may merit re-examination by the UN in a new light and in the context of today's changing realities.

In this regard, the delegation of Ghana wishes to emphasis the renewed urgency to have this matter resolved one way or the other to enable the IOM to better position itself to play a more active role in the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030. The IOM made significant technical inputs to the SDG process and influenced the adoption of the SDG targets relating to migration which remain important guiding elements in planning the organizations' strategic direction of the IOM in the next 15 years.

Ghana shares the view that the essential qualities and value of the IOM to migrants and Member States including its efficiency, independence, flexibility, operational effectiveness and responsiveness, must be preserved in any future arrangements.

I thank you Mr. Chair.