

**108th SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION, 28TH NOVEMBER – 1ST
DECEMBER, 2017**

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

Nigeria endorses the statement made by Ghana on behalf of the African Group. I congratulate madam chair and members of the bureau on their election to the Council. I join others to welcome the Republic of Cuba and Cooks Island as well as countries and Organisations that joined the IOM on observer status. In the same vein, I also wish to thank the Secretary General of IOM, Ambassador William Lacy Swing and his team for the insightful leadership of the IOM and efforts in ensuring the protection and fair treatment of people on the move. I congratulate IOM on its one year anniversary within the UN system.

2. The efforts of the IOM in facilitating voluntary repatriation and reintegration of hundreds of Nigerians from Libya under its assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme is commendable. IOM should also be commended for the approved project on research support towards a common African Position on Global Compact on Migration funded through the IOM Development Fund.

3. Migration is a multifaceted issue with enormous challenges. The Global Compact may not be binding but the IOM should ensure that continental, regional, sub-regional and national policies on Migration should address a number of issues related to fair treatment of migrants. This should include diaspora mobilisation, adequate border control,

financial inclusion of migrants and asylum seekers, all with a view to ensuring that migrants-related issues are well managed. It is important for the international community to robustly address the push and pull factors that drive international migration.

4. While individual States have rights to manage their borders, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which called for the protection, safety, dignity and human rights of migrants should be a guide to all member States in adopting national policies that will guaranty the security of all migrants without discrimination. In addition, creation of awareness on the dangers to potential migrants, capacity building and strengthening of border management especially in developing countries, would go a long way in ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration.

5. Nigeria's policy of free movement of goods and services within the sub-regional organisation, the ECOWAS, was intended to ensure that people's freedom to migrate at least within the region is guaranteed. In addition, Nigeria has bilateral agreements on migration with some countries. Under these arrangements, both sides cooperate in the professional and social reintegration of persons repatriated to Nigeria. These are in areas such as skills acquisition prior to departure, re-integration programmes and measures that promote voluntary return under the Assisted Voluntary Return and Re-integration. (AVRR).

6. Madam Chair, the persistent threat of Boko Haram and Climate change, most especially the drying up of the Lake Chad have exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and further pose protection risks for the

affected populations in the border regions. Nigeria and its neighbours have continued to reaffirm their commitments to the principles and standards of regional and international conventions governing specific aspects of refugee and migration problems in Africa, in particular the principle of no forceful return. In this regard, I wish to express my country's profound appreciation to the IOM and the donor community on the approved project on Assessing the Migration, Climate Change and Conflict Dimension in the Lake Chad Region, funded through the IOM Development Fund. Nigeria strongly believes that the research study of this project would inform policy directions towards positively impacting on the lives of people around the Lake Chad.

7. As a country, Nigeria will continue to support the IOM as well as collaborate with other countries to ensure that the rights and well-being of all migrants, no matter their status, are respected. We also believe that the Global Compact on Migration would bring to the fore, the profound contribution of migrants to economic and social development in their societies and global wealth creation as it anchors the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Madam Chairperson,

8. There is no doubt that the New York Declaration is ambitious, but this is not sufficient until aspirations result in realities on the ground. To this end, it is important to devise practical global and local solutions as well as undertake painful institutional and structural changes. It is

important to end on the note that, in all our endeavours, negotiations and migration governance agenda and dynamics, we must put people first.

I thank you