

**THE STATEMENT BY THE NIGERAN DELEGATION AT THE 94<sup>TH</sup>**  
**SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL**  
**ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION 27<sup>TH</sup> – 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2007**

Mr Chairman

The Nigerian delegation wishes to express its profound thanks to you and to the members of the executive for your successful election into the Executive Council of the Organization. We have no doubt that you will successfully pilot the activities of the Council towards achieving the objectives of the organization. We also wish to thank the outgoing executive for their unrelenting efforts towards moving the organization forward. My delegation would also like to thank the Director-General Sir Brunson McKinley and his deputy Dr (Mrs) Ndioro Ndiaye for their important efforts which have resulted in the phenomenal growth of the organization to the present level of 122 member States. Nigeria warmly welcomes Burundi and Vietnam as members of the organization and the two NGOs, namely; Africa Recruit, Refugee Education Trust (RET) and Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS) that joined the organization as observers.

Mr Chairman

Since the holding of the High Level Dialogue on International Migration by the United Nations in 2006 and the Global Forum on International Migration in Belgium in July 2007 which focused on harnessing the benefits of migration for global good, developments on International Migration have continued to receive world attention. The need to curtail the negative side of migration appears to be the main focus in many countries. Much emphasis is now being placed on stemming the flow of irregular migration, reducing the heinous activity of traffickers and migrant smugglers, tackling the problem of insecurity and the growing danger of terrorism. Nigeria shares in the desire to control the flow of irregular migrants especially taken cognisance of the danger that migrants expose themselves to, while trying to cross the desert, living behind the carcasses of many of them that died unsung under the braising heat of the desert and the television images of capsized boats overloaded with migrants attempting to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. There is also the movement down south through the Atlantic to Australia and far flung destinations. These developments have attracted the attention of the international community with calls on states to take steps to reduce the menace and save our youths from exposing themselves to the dangerous expedition. The exploitation of unsuspecting youths by traffickers and the abuse of children trafficked and sold into forced labour abroad have all remained sources of concern for both countries of origin and destination. Although much effort and resources appear to be directed towards controlling the source of supply, not much have been done to control those behind the business of trafficking and who actually are the beneficiaries in the destination countries who have continued to provide funding and support to the various chain in the trafficking ring.

Nigeria has over the years taken concrete steps to curtail the activities of traffickers through the establishment of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) The agency has been successful in arresting and prosecuting the agents of traffickers and has continued to collaborate with a number of governments in facilitating the repatriation of trafficked persons as well as providing them with re-integration programme to facilitate local integration. Government has encouraged appropriate government agencies to embark on Information campaign in order to educate the people, especially the youths, on the dangers of irregular migration and the need to seek second opinion from relevant Government agencies before accepting proposals for employment opportunities abroad. Furthermore, steps have been taken to erect border control plazas in the 127 identified border posts with neighbouring countries to be equipped with modern technologies for fake document identification and other mechanism for effective border control. Recently, the Nigerian government through the Nigerian Immigration Service has introduced the Biometric passport. The new passport which is forgery free is expected to drastically reduce the incidence of fake documents, which will in turn result in the reduction of irregular migration. The new passport is expected to be used along side the machine readable passport for a period of three years during which it is expected that every Nigerian must have acquired his or her on copy of the biometrics passport.

Along with the above steps, bilateral agreements have also been concluded with a number of countries on the repatriation of Nigerian irregular migrants. Unfortunately, some of the countries have not fully observed the provisions of such agreements. The increasing number of Nigerian migrants that died in questionable circumstances in the hands of security agents of some destination countries in the process of forceful deportation had resulted in public outcry in Nigeria and tended to negate the principle of such existing bilateral agreements which stipulates that repatriation should be through peaceful means and must be in dignity and safety, respecting the fundamental human rights of the victims.

Mr Chairman

Globalization emphasizes the coming together of the world community, reducing obstacles to free movement and turning the world into a global village. The advancements in Information and Communication Technology and the interplay of improved means of transportation have all combined to bring the world even closer thus improving the cultural, social and economic affinity of most member-states of the global community, thus engendering greater understanding of the world around us. This has resulted in greater mobility of goods and services including increased mobility of persons wishing to take advantage of better living standard in other parts of the globe. Unfortunately, the erection of various forms of barrier to stop the migration of persons, have tended to obliterate the supposed gains of globalisation .The on - going efforts by the EU to erect fortresses around their borders in order

to prevent irregular migrants from crossing their borders is at cross purposes with the tenets of the principles of the global village. Unfortunately no serious thought has been given to the level of distortion caused to the economies of developing countries by globalization. This phenomenon could be fingered as one of the push factors behind irregular migration. The Nigerian delegation believes that what is needed is not the erection of more barriers to curtail movement of persons but in taking steps to correct the imbalances created by globalization through collective responsibility and burden sharing. As long as the imbalances are allowed to persist, so long will the urge by people to migrate in search for better living. To many it is a survival battle which the erection of barriers can only prevent in the short run.

Mr Chairman

The world today is experiencing rapid climatic change as a result of global warming. The growing incidence of natural disasters such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami that devastated part of Asia in December, 2004, the devastating impact of cyclone Sidi in Bangladesh, the flash floods in Haiti and the Dominican Republic caused by Tropical storm Noel, floods in Niger, Togo, Tabasco and Chilapes in Mexico, the Wild Fire in California in the United States of America, desertification in sub-Saharan Africa and many other natural disasters all associated with climatic change, with incalculable loss to lives and properties including the displacement of many and the destruction to their source of livelihood, have become a burden to the world conscience. The impact has left many homeless resulting in a large population of internally displaced person. The impact of natural disaster in most cases takes long to rebuild. Some of the affected persons who could not cope with their new local environment often engage in irregular migration in search of better living. The solution once again does not lie on locking up borders from external migrants but calls for collaboration in helping affected persons rebuild their lives and collaboration in the rebuilding of infrastructures in the affected areas some of which are beyond the capacity of the affected countries or regions.

Mr Chairman

The Nigerian delegation will like to thank the International Organization for Migration for the various capacity building programme of the organization at both states and regional level which has contributed in unifying the language of migration as well as improving the capacity of agencies responsible for migration management. We also appreciate the provision by IOM of 50,000 US dollars seed money for the development of a Migration Policy in Nigeria. The draft policy is already submitted to Government and therefore in its final stages. We appreciate the various collaborations between the IOM country Office in Nigeria and various Government Agencies responsible for migration. We will like to appreciate the collaboration with the Swiss Government especially in the area of reintegration of repatriated migrants. A Swiss

Government delegation is currently in Nigeria to assess the progress of on going reintegration project being carried out in collaboration with the Nigerian Immigration Service .We also extend the same appreciation to the Government of Netherlands for its support to our Information Campaign on Irregular Migration. We acknowledge supports received from the United States of America through the local Office of the International organisation for Migration.

Mr Chairman

We are aware that the IOM wouldn't have achieved the entire feat attributed to it if it lacks requisite funding to support all its activities. The Nigerian delegation regrets the delay in paying up its outstanding contribution but wishes to assure the organisation that arrangements are in the final stages for the remittance of the outstanding contribution to the organization.

Thank You.