

**DELEGATION PERMANENTE DE
L'UNION AFRICAINE A GENEVE**

Téléphone : (41-22) 716 06 40
Téléfax : (41-22) 731 68 18

AU-Geneva@africa-union-gvao.org



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE
AFRICAN UNION IN GENEVA**

36, rue des Pâquis
C.P. 127 – 1211 Genève 21
Suisse (Switzerland)

mission-observer.au@africanunion.ch

**Statement by H.E. Mme Khadija R. Masri
Permanent Representative
of the African Union in Geneva**

**98th Session of the IOM Council
23 to 26 November 2009
Geneva, (Switzerland)**

Thank you Mr Chairman,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of our Permanent Representative, who unfortunately is unable to be here and sends her apologies.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you and the bureau on your election and wishing you well over the coming year.

We also wish to thank the DG, Amb Swing again for his consistent engagement with the African Group and the African Union Commission (AUC) over the last year and would like to assure him of our commitment to continue strengthening our partnership with IOM.

May I also take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to Amb. Laura Thompson on her election to the post of Deputy Director General.

Her vast experience and knowledge in the area of migration, assures us of her ability to address, in a positive and proactive manner, the multifarious challenges and opportunities that migration engenders.

Mr Chairman

The African Union Commission aligns itself to the statement made by the Republic of Sudan on behalf of the African Group and would also like to contribute to the debate with a few brief remarks on this pertinent issue of migration.

Mr Chairman,

As mentioned by many before me, we are living in unprecedented times, characterised by increasing interdependence among markets and economies worldwide. The current global economic crisis has made us acutely aware of this and has also clearly illustrated the vulnerabilities inherent in a global economy based on inequality.

While the crisis appears to be abating in the developed world, its effect on Africa is expected to continue, especially in the areas of employment, aid flows, remittances and exports, thus serving to exacerbate already existing challenges in alleviating poverty and achieving progress towards the MDGs.

The link between migration and development is the key element of AU instruments and Decisions such as the Common Position on Migration and Development, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment. However the negative impact of the crisis on employment opportunities for migrants and the consequent decrease in remittance flows, combined with the emigration of skilled Africans, hamper efforts in harnessing the development benefits of migration.

Moreover, the crisis has served to highlight the vulnerability of migrants to exploitation. The human rights of migrants, IDPs and refugees as well as their susceptibility to human trafficking and smuggling continues to be of increasing concern to African leaders. In this regard, the African Union adopted the AU Convention on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa at the Kampala Summit held in October this year. As has been mentioned by the DG earlier in the general debate, this instrument is the first of its kind and is testimony to Africa's determination to find sustainable African solutions to the continent's challenges, in partnership with the international community. The AUC is also active in advocacy and building public awareness on the exploitation of migrants and in this regard launched, on June 16th this year, the AUC Initiative against Trafficking, known as the AU.COMMIT Campaign. June 16th being of special importance as it marks the Day of the African Child.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group represents Africa's voice in the multilateral system, ensuring that African concerns remain high on the agenda of the IOM and UN agencies. Within this context the AU organized a workshop to help build the capacity of the African Group on migration activities at the continental and sub-regional level and to strengthen dialogue, with partners, on the many dimensions of migration. In this regard we would like to express appreciation to both the DG and DDG, for their participation in the workshop and look forward to following up on the recommendations that arose out of its conclusion.

I thank you Chair