

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

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AFRICAN UNION IN GENEVA**

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Thank you Mr Chair,

Mr Chair,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you and the bureau on your election. Your experience and knowledge assures us of your ability to steer the work of the Council in addressing the multifarious challenges and opportunities that migration engenders.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the newest Members and Observers admitted into the organisation, in particular those from Africa, Djibouti, Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Sudan and the RECs, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS and SADC, the building blocks of the African Union.

Mr Chair,

The African Union Commission (AUC) aligns itself to the statement delivered by Zambia on behalf of the African Group and would also like to contribute to the debate with a few brief remarks.

But first allow me to congratulate IOM on the commemoration of its 60th anniversary, coinciding with the 100th session of the Council. Within the current context of migration and globalisation, the role of IOM gains ever-increasing pertinence in particular as questions relating to the global governance of migration matters begin to arise. Additionally, in Africa, the need for strengthened coordination, cooperation and partnership in managing migration while realising the development agenda will grow in tandem with ever increasing migration, both across and within borders, thus requiring the expertise, experience and capacity building programmes of the IOM.

Mr Chair,

As reiterated by many speakers before me, Migration has been the enduring survival strategy of humanity. Yet we are only beginning to grasp the complexities of the challenges it brings, the opportunities it offers as well as its place within the nexus of socio-economic, political and environmental factors.

Its developmental potential and contribution to the achievement of the MDGs ensures its continued and heightened relevance. Nonetheless, the migration of skilled Africans and the resultant brain drain phenomena remains a handicap to sustainable development particularly when it affects priority sectors for development, such as health and education.

In this regards, the Africa- EU partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment aims to enhance cooperation to harness the socio-economic benefits of migration for both continents. The second action plan for 2011 to 2013 delineates a number of concrete actions, including enhancing the Nyerere Programme initiated by the AUC in 2005 to mitigate the effects of brain drain, as well as beginning the preparatory phase for the establishment of an African Institute for Remittances or AIR.

The AIR project, in cooperation with IOM and the African Development Bank involves consultations with a broad range of stakeholders from Africa and the Diaspora and is recognition of the power of remittances to reduce household poverty. In this regard, the aim of AIR is to monitor remittance flows and oversee policies to make them cheaper, safer and more productive.

Mr Chair,

In Africa, poverty, conflict, environmental conditions, limited employment opportunities, coupled with a burgeoning youth population, have seen our people move, both within the continent and across its shorelines, in search of economic opportunity, safety and security.

The most vulnerable of these, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees are often susceptible to exploitation and human trafficking. The AUC is thus committed to building public awareness on such exploitation and in this regard launched the AUC Initiative against Trafficking, known as the AU.COMMIT Campaign on June 16th 2009. June 16th being of special importance as it marks the Day of the African Child. Currently activities are being undertaken in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), international partners and civil society to operationalise the *Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking In Human Beings, Especially Women and Children* into a strategy.

Additionally, the AU Convention on the Protection and Assistance to IDPs in Africa, adopted at the Kampala Summit in 2009, remains the only legally binding instrument of its kind and is testimony to Africa's determination to address the continent's challenges, in partnership with the international community.

In conclusion,

Mr Chair, migration offers us all an opportunity to harness the power for positive change and development generated by human mobility, and create a future safe and secure for our children, wherever in the world they may choose to live and work.

I thank you Mr Chair.