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STATEMENT

by

Ambassador T.A.B. Shodipo

Director
Migration Legal and Treaties Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Abuja

To the
88th Session
of the
Council
Of the
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
FOR MIGRATION
(IOM)

Geneva 30 November - 3rd December, 2004

Statement of the Nigerian delegation to the 88th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration 30th November - 3rd December, 2004

Mr Chairman

The Nigerian delegation would like to thank the chair and other members of the Bureau for their successful election to the present Council. We also like to commend the outgoing chairman Amb. Karklings and his team for their commitment to the council in the past one year.

We welcome the membership of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, the Republic of Estonia, the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Republic of Turkey to the organization.

We would also like to welcome the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) for observership. The expanding membership of the organization is a testimony of the importance the world community accords the issues of migration and IOM's competence in addressing the various migration strands. Consequently, we would like to express our appreciation to the Director-General Mr Brenson MacKinley for the noble heights already attained by the organization. We would also like to thank Dr (Mrs) Ndioro Ndiaye for being a worthy companion in this process. Your diligence has resulted in the increased strength and diversity within the organization, which today embraces 109 member-states.

Mr Chairman

The advent of globalization and positive developments in communication and information technology has resulted in increased mobility of not just goods and services but also that of persons. The Nigerian delegation welcomes the concerted efforts by IOM in creating various fora for dialogue to bring about a better understanding of issues of migration among stakeholders. Definitely these had brought about a better appreciation of the contributions of migrants to their countries of origin through home remittances and the deployment of their acquired expertise towards development initiatives at home. The same could also be said of the destination countries, where migrants have served as ready substitutes for dwindling work force, especially in the developed countries adding value to those countries.

However, while appreciating the benefits of migration, we are also mindful of the growing problem of trafficking in persons and peoples smuggling. The Nigerian government views the problem with all seriousness. To this end, the Government of Nigeria has created the National Agency For the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) with the mandate to find and punish the perpetrators of this heinous crime. The Government is also developing resources to deal with the issue of poverty and ignorance which fuel irregular migration. It had also entered into bilateral arrangement with its neighbours and other countries to serve as early warning system and expedite the process of collaboration with them in confronting the criminals. Furthermore, Nigeria has been working with ECOWAS to develop a systemic action programme to deal with the situation, while being active in the African Union efforts to develop a strategic framework to address migration issues at continental level.

Mr Chairman

The Nigerian delegation shares the concept of orderly migration. It is our belief that a well structured, open and simple system will discourage irregular Migration and attract shared benefits for the migrants, the states of origin and the receiving states. The Nigerian delegation wishes to note with concern the current attempts by some countries to politicize the issue by making it an electioneering gimmick to manipulate the electorate for the purpose of winning vote. This along with inappropriate migration management in these countries could lead to conflict situation and make the migrants targets of xenophobic tendencies and other intolerant reactions. Indeed, current access to regular migration and related policies in many countries are discriminatory in nature as they are racially biased and regionally based. International understanding on a well structured transparent and fair arrangement would go a long way to encourage regular migration.

The delegation would also like to note that forceful repatriation of migrants is not the answer to Migration Management, rather there is need for consultative approach which will develop a common understanding on the issues and appropriate framework that will discourage irregular migration. Furthermore, it is repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience to see the concept of concentration camp styled asylum processing centres in third countries or on regional bases. This is contrary to the existing norms of asylum process. We continue to uphold the right to equitable treatment of people and the right to fair hearing. The idea of establishing the processing centres is reminiscence of the slave trade collection centres and therefore unacceptable.

Mr Chairman

On another note, my delegation would like to commend the current efforts of the Swiss Government in strengthening the process of dialogue with a view to creating better understanding of the issue and developing a structured and comprehensive approach to migration management through the Berne Initiative.

We welcome the very instructive international Dialogue on Migration which we had had on the opening day of the meeting and would like to thank the Migration Policy and Research Unit of the IOM for this initiative. Our particular appreciation goes to Mr Gervais Appave and his team for the continued efforts to give migration a human face. There is no doubt that the previous dialogues and workshops have contributed immensely to the better understanding of migration. The topic for the present Council, "Valuing Migration" and the workshop on the "Image of Migrants" are both testimonies of the illuminating influence of these dialogues in furthering better appreciation of the subject of migration.

Mr Chairman

The Nigerian delegation is aware of the difficulties faced by the organization as a result of the increasing level of arrears of contribution. We commend all efforts by the Administration to address the problem. On our part, necessary steps are being taken to ensure that our financial obligation to the organization is brought up to date.

We would like to commend the administration on its various capacity building programmes, especially with reference to the 1035

facility. However, it is our view that while reviewing the operations of the facility, thought should be given to the possibility of increasing the funding level. The present limit of US\$50,000 appear limited in scope and depending on the size of the benefitting state may not bring about the needed impact.

Mr Chairman,

Finally, Mr Chairman, while appreciating the unique nature of the organization, we believe that the growing diversity of the membership should equally be reflected in the staff disposition of the organization. We, therefore, wish to state our desire to see an increase in the number of staff from developing countries in the senior staff cadre of the administration.

I thank you.