

*Mission Permanente
du Royaume du Maroc
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البعثة الدائمة
للمملكة المغربية
جنيف

Statement by H.E Mr.Mohammed LOULICHKI

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of the Kingdom of Morocco**

On behalf of the African Group

92nd session of IOM Council

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Ms Chairperson

Let me at the outset, congratulate you warmly on your election as the Chairperson of the 92nd session of IOM Council. The African Group is particularly proud to see one of our dear sisters chairing this important gathering and we are confident that under your able guidance, our work will achieve meaningful progress.

Allow me also to congratulate the other members of the bureau and to convey my sincere thanks to IOM Administration for its noteworthy efforts. Under the able guidance of Mr Brunson McKinley, Director General, and Ms. Ndioro N'diaye, Deputy Director General, IOM continues to be a leading global organization focusing on migration management.

Congratulations also to the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) team, that allowed us to have some very relevant discussions, during the last two days, around the subject “Partnerships in Migration: Engaging Business and Civil Society”.

Ms Chairperson

2006 will certainly be remembered as the year of migration. Since the release of the GCIM report, in October 2005, a series of meetings, took place at the sub-regional, regional and international levels, crowned by the first-ever plenary session of the UN General Assembly on migration issues.

The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development demonstrated the strong commitment of United Nations Member States, UN entities, observers, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to examining the relationship and synergies between international migration and development. There was general consensus that the High-level Dialogue presented a unique opportunity to identify ways and means to maximize the developmental benefits of international migration and to reduce its negative impacts.

Although there was no negotiated outcome of the HLD, participants generally agreed that international migration could be a positive force for development in both countries of origin and countries of destination, provided that it was supported by the right set of policies. Several key messages were included in the Chairman Summary and match with the priorities of the African nations, among which are the following:

- Addressing the root causes of international migration is essential to ensure that people migrate out of choice rather than necessity.
- Respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all migrants is essential for reaping the full benefits of international migration.
- International migrants' integration in receiving countries requires mutual adaptation and acceptance by both the host society and the migrants themselves.
- Remittances' development potential could be enhanced by appropriate measures, as they are the most tangible benefit of international migration for countries of origin.
- Migrant communities have significant potential to contribute to the development of their countries of origin, notably, through transferring know-how, skills, technology and expertise.
- Highly skilled workers' outflow, from the health and education sectors, is of particular concern to developing countries, since it compromises the delivery of services.
- Labour migration is crucial for the world economy.
- Adoption of policies that address the particular circumstances and experiences of female migrants and reduce their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse is important, as half of all international migrants are female.
- Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, especially women and children, should be combatted with urgency at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels.

- National strategies to address the impact of international migration on development should be complemented by strengthened bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation.

At the regional level, migration has also been making its way steadily towards the top of the multilateral agenda. Thus, the Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries on Enhancing the Development Impact of Remittances was held in February 9-10, 2006 in Cotonou, Benin. Moreover, after being prepared by an Experts' Meeting held in Algiers, from April 3-5 2006, the AU Common Position on Migration and Development was adopted at the Banjul Summit in July 2006 and presented, as a contribution, to the United Nations High Level Dialogue. Another contribution was submitted by the Ministerial Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development held in Rabat, on the 10th and 11th of July 2006. Furthermore, the EU-Africa Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development was held last week in Tripoli, Libya.

Ms Chairperson

In all these meetings, IOM participated actively and is expected to play a key role during the implementation phase. This is a clear recognition of the relevance of the International Organization for Migration and an indication of the increasing expectations of its membership.

African priorities, within IOM, were thoroughly presented in our statement before the ExCom. Let me summarize here some of the key ideas:

- Further IOM support in the area of reliable data collection is most welcome, as even though there is a growing recognition that migration impact analyses should figure in development project planning, inadequate research and patchy data inhibit movement from theory to action. The lack of reliable data is certainly one of the major issues preventing many African states from developing coherent Migration Policies. IOM can contribute, inter alia, to the creation of the ACP Virtual Observatory for Migration and the International Migrant Remittances Observatory for LDCs. We also appreciate IOM willingness to assist Governments in mainstreaming migration into the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), as well as the national development plans.
- IOM has been quite successfully assisting many States in drafting new legislation, reviewing and upgrading their national policies, legal frameworks and migration management structures, improving border management systems and travel documents, and training specialized staff, especially law enforcement officials, on the topics of human rights, assistance and protection for victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants, and detection and interception of traffickers and smugglers. As the needs of the African Member States in this regard are huge and steadily increasing, while welcoming the devolution of some TCM responsibilities to specialists in Dakar & Pretoria MRFs, the African Group reiterates its call upon IOM to consider opening capacity building centers in Africa. We look forward to a concrete proposal, in this regard, in the programme and budget 2008.
- In respect to migration and development, IOM experience in the area of reduction of the cost of remittances and enhancing their development impact through incentives is much needed in Africa. So are initiatives aiming at circumscribing the disastrous effects of the brain drain, notably through encouraging qualified migrants to return to their countries of origin on a voluntary basis – either temporarily, permanently or virtually – to transfer knowledge, skills and technology. It is so awful that IOM flagship program in the area, MIDA, is seriously hampered by the lack of funding, whilst several proposals for projects are still pending. Last, but not least, addressing the root causes of migration is fundamental in any comprehensive approach to migration management. Although not a substitute for more comprehensive development efforts, targeted economic and community development programmes, in areas of high migration pressure, have tangible value-added and present concrete opportunities to link development and migration management goals. The African Group encourages IOM to pursue the implementation of such programmes in African countries.

Ms Chairperson,

Since the beginning of this year, but in particular since the last Ex-Com, the African Group has conducted an intensive process of reflexion and consultation aiming at valorizing Africa's share of IOM operational budget and more generally the african presence in the Organization.

This process notably included several meetings, at the expert level, between the African Group and IOM Administration on budget issues, fund raising procedures and service areas of high priority for the African Group, notably, Migration and Development, Migration and Health, Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building. The process was crowned by the holding of a donor briefing on pending african projects, on 6 november 2006.

The whole participants agreed that the briefing was a success and should prelude to a more regular process of consultation, opening the road to the resolution of all pending issues. A similar meeting may well be organized, next february, on the occasion of the launching of "migration initiatives 2007", giving, thus, a needed regional specificity to IOM fund raising procedures.

In addition, the African Group notes with satisfaction the announcement made by the Deputy Director General, concerning the entry into force of the action plan aiming at favoring the access of unrepresented and under-represented Member States to IOM vacant postings. We hope that such measure will finally address the under-representation of Africa in the Organization's Human Resources, that is contrary to article 20 of the Constitution.

The issue of outstanding contributions was also seriously considered by the Group which recognizes that every Member State has a duty to pay its assessed contributions. However, untimely payments are not evidence of bad faith. The Group expresses its concern about calls for not providing financial support in countries subject to Article 4 provisions, as this will penalize twice countries already suffering from severe difficulties. The Group would like to reiterate its commitment to work actively on the careful monitoring of this issue in close collaboration with the Administration and welcomes the possibilities offered for countries with arrears to negotiate flexible terms on repayment plans and, where possible, to pay in local currencies.

In Conclusion, Ms Chairperson, the African Group wishes to convey its greatest appreciation of IOM leadership's efforts to adapt the Organization to the specific needs of its growing developping membership. Our Group will not fail to take part actively in the started reflexion processes on IOM strategy for the next five years and its relation with the United Nations System.

I Thank you