



**STATEMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF NIGERIA AT THE 92ND SESSION OF
THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION, (IOM)**

BY

**J. C. EJINAKA
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT
TO THE PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA
ON MIGRATION AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS**

ON

30TH NOVEMBER 2006

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election. We are particularly pleased to see you, a distinguished African Lady as the Chair of the Council. We would also like to commend the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Masood Khan, Permanent Representative of Pakistan and members of the out-going Bureau for their brilliant work in the past year. We align ourselves with the statement read by Morocco on behalf of the African Group but would like to contribute to the debate from a national perspective.

Nigeria appreciates the leadership role of the IOM Director-General, Mr. Brunson Mckinley and Deputy Director-General, Mrs. Ndioro Ndiaye in promoting awareness of the beneficial effect of international migration on countries of origin, transit and destination. We commend the IOM for the various activities planned during the year to assist countries prepare for the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development as well as proposed activities to sustain the momentum built at the meeting. My country found these activities very useful to our preparations and we wish to indicate our support to the follow up initiatives proposed by IOM.

Madam Chairperson,

At the High Level Dialogue in New York from 14 to 15 September 2006 States affirmed that international migration was a growing phenomenon, intrinsic to human nature and a key component in both developing and developed countries. In this regard, since migration proffers opportunities and challenges to all countries, all stakeholders, whether they are countries of origin, transit or destination, partnerships between governments and the private sector, employers and trade unions, civil society and local governments, have critical roles in addressing migration and development issues. Partnerships are needed to address capacity building in both countries of origin and destination to formulate coherent migration policies on the need to combat brain drain, enhance the protection of the rights of migrants, promote integration

of migrants into host society, mobilize the Diaspora to support national development, integrate migration into development agenda of countries of origin and destination, fight against human trafficking and people smuggling, stem irregular migration and deal with the root causes of international migration. Indeed, the role of remittances by migrants in reducing poverty and developing their countries of origin cannot be ignored. Statistics from the Central Bank of Nigeria indicates that in 2005, private remittances sent through formal structures of Western Union and MoneyGram amounted to \$15.95 million. Figures are not available for monies sent through informal channels but are estimated to be more than triple the amount sent formally.

We are concerned that many developing countries particularly in Africa would be unable to maximize the benefits from international migration unless urgent steps are taken to address the capacity needs of these countries. The lack of capacity to collect better migration data, understanding of the dynamics between migration and development, formulation and implementation of policies as well as development of institutional frameworks for the management of migration require urgent, practical and collaborative responses by the international community. We therefore welcome the proposals to create observatories at the LDC meeting in Benin as well as the ACP meeting in Belgium. We also urge the IOM and the Global Migration Group (GMG) to develop innovative capacity building programmes to address these gaps. We welcome the proposals on this issue in the IOM's IMDI initiative and would also urge for the establishment of a capacity building center in Africa by the IOM.

While appreciating the role that migrants' resources and skills could play in the economies of countries of origin and destination, it is important to recognize the need to enhance the protection of their rights particularly in view of growing intolerance and xenophobia in many countries. We consider that the protection of rights of all migrants is critical in realizing the potential of international migration to contribute to economic and social development of countries. In this connection, our collective actions through the reporting and other mechanisms available both within and outside the Human

Rights Council is needed to reinforce the rule of law and combat xenophobia, racism, discrimination and acts of hostility against migrants and to promote policies for their integration into host communities.

Nigeria acknowledges that irregular migration poses one of the main challenges to orderly migration but notes that unilateral and inappropriate migration policies are not the solution to the problem. Both dialogue and collaborative action between States and other stakeholders are needed to provide effective responses. In the process, there will also be the need to explore the link between the creation of an environment to attain the Millennium Development Goals and restoration of the competitiveness of developing countries' economies in order to promote the option to stay at home. Through partnerships between States, international organizations and other relevant bodies, projects that target job creation for youths as well as labour migration arrangements could be developed.

At this juncture, we wish to express our appreciation to the government of Switzerland and the IOM for their financial and technical support in conducting an information campaign to reduce irregular migration. Through this effort, radio jingles are currently being broadcast in three states within the nation that have been identified as having the highest numbers of irregular migrants. On the 11th of December, we shall embark on a tour of these states where public meetings would be held with the youth, persons vulnerable to the lure of foreign travel, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders as well as the general public. It is our belief that by so doing, Nigerians would be sensitized about the risks and dangers inherent in irregular migration; they would receive information about legal organized jobs abroad, as well as various employment and business opportunities available in Nigeria.

We are encouraged by the outcome of our efforts to develop partnerships with friendly countries to address international migration challenges including trafficking in women and children. I am pleased to inform that the results have been satisfactory as more culprits are being arrested and more victims assisted. We appreciate the support

that we have received from the IOM, States and international organizations in this regard. It is pertinent to inform distinguished delegates about the Ministerial Conference of ECOWAS and ECCAS states which took place in Abuja in July 2006. At its conclusion, a Joint Plan of Action against Human Trafficking was implemented. To date, about 19 out of 28 States have appended their signatures to the Protocol of which Nigeria is one. We commend the ILO and UNICEF for co-sponsoring the meetings in conjunction with ECOWAS and the government of Nigeria. The Government intends to sign more agreements on trafficking in women and children with other countries sharing borders with Nigeria and those outside the continent.

In an effort to strengthen collaboration on migration management, Nigeria hosted a meeting of Heads of Immigration Services in West Africa from the 26th – 27th of October where a number of decisions were taken. In the Communiqué, recommendations were made for the enhanced exchange of information, data collection, and the establishment of a common website for all immigration services in the sub region. Members were called upon to establish a coherent structure on migration management in each State, and the establishment of a regional immigration training center was recommended in order to build capacity and increase the knowledge of immigration officers. In addition to other conclusions, it was decided that States should continue to be fully committed to the implementation of ECOWAS treaties and protocols. We thank the IOM for its technical support to the meeting.

In furtherance of its efforts to streamline the management of migration, the Federal Government of Nigeria has accepted the recommendation to establish a focal agency that would be charged with the responsibility for the management of migration. To this end, a team has been directed to examine the most effective means of bringing together all stakeholders in migration matters in a coherent structure. Once established, the agency would take the partnership with the private sector and civil society to a higher and more productive level and would help to stem the flow of irregular migration. The International Organization for Migration was very

instrumental in supporting our efforts to develop the National Policy on Migration through financial and technical support. We are presently reviewing the first draft of the policy before its submission to the President-in-Council. It is the first attempt by Nigeria to design a comprehensive approach to the management of migration and we look forward to its successful completion.

Nigeria considers the IOM a key and important player in the promotion of international dialogue, research, capacity building and other activities which provide a link between migration and development. To remain relevant in addressing the challenges of international migration today, the perspectives and activities of the organization should focus more on the role of international migration in the development agenda. In this regard, we welcome progress made in the discussions on the IOM Strategy Paper. We consider continued international dialogue and research essential in promoting a better understanding of the dynamics of migration and therefore urge the IOM to develop innovative measures to enhance coordination and partnerships between the organization and stakeholders on international migration matters.

I thank you