

Statement by the representative of the Government of Zimbabwe at the 101st session of the IOM Council 27-30 November 2012

Mr Chairman, allow me on behalf of the government of Zimbabwe, to congratulate you on your election as President of the 101st Council session. Allow me to also congratulate other elected officers and to express Zimbabwe's profound gratitude for its election into the Bureau as Second Vice Chairperson.

Mr Chairman, before I focus on substantive issues, I wish to submit that my delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria on behalf of the Africa group.

Africa, is indeed grateful for IOM's continued support ranging from the humanitarian assistance in the wake of the Arab spring to material support to the displaced and vulnerable communities in Central Africa, the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa as well as policy and programme support to several initiatives in a variety of sub disciplines of migration being undertaken in West Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa and elsewhere.

In this vein, Mr. Chairman, Zimbabwe welcomes the decision to upgrade the Nairobi Office into a regional office. One hopes that the office will be adequately funded to ensure its effectiveness.

Mr Chairman, my delegation further welcomes the Organisation's Migration Crisis Operational Framework. Crisis situations more often than not are reacted to and that can lead to unintended consequences but if responded to from a systematic and well-informed stand point, the objectives of such interventions become predictable. It is this predictability which makes the framework a user friendly tool.

My delegation would therefore request the Director-General to ensure that the Framework is disseminated as widely as possible not only to IOM staff but also to policy makers in different government arms and senior bureaucrats who interface with IOM staff in the field.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation is also pleased to note IOM continues to work closely with member states collectively and individually in Africa. The Migration Dialogue for Africa (MIDA) and the Migration Dialogue in Southern Africa (MIDSA) are examples of IOM led initiatives which have enriched our understanding of the complexities of migration.

Such interactions have helped many member states to approach challenges and dilemmas brought about by migration from well informed positions and that has also led to the development of consensus on some of the migration issues

Mr. Chairman, at the national level, my government appreciates the existing collaborative arrangement with IOM. Through the support of IOM and its donor partners in Zimbabwe, the government has managed to receive in dignity over 60 000 persons deported in the last 12 months

from South Africa and Botswana at the Beitbridge and Plumtree and reception and support centres respectively.

Recently, courtesy of IOM and its donor partners, Zimbabwe opened a temporary reception centre for asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region at Nyamapanda border post.

Within a year, more than 5 000 asylum seekers have been assisted with temporary shelter and transport to the refugee camp which is located some 300km away from the border post in question.

Mr Chairman, my delegation urges the IOM to continue supporting us in extending humanitarian assistance to returnees from South Africa and Botswana as well as the asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa and elsewhere through its regular budget when direct donor support to the humanitarian programmes in Zimbabwe is dwindling.

Zimbabwe is also grateful for the support it receives from IOM in other areas such as, border management, Migration and Health, support to vulnerable and mobile populations, Counter-trafficking programmes, voluntary return, mainstreaming migration into the development planning and Labour Migration.

Mr Chairman, in the case of Labour Migration, my government is in the process of finalising a labour migration policy framework. IOM working with ILO technically backstopped the process.

Beyond the labour migration policy framework, the Government is looking forward for the assistance from IOM to operationalise the Beitbridge Labour Migration Centre - a facility to facilitate the demand driven, safe and legal labour migration on the part of Zimbabweans who wish to work in South Africa.

In essence this will reduce the incidences of deportation of undocumented Zimbabweans by South African authorities. It is in this respect that the government working with the IOM Harare office is finalising a proposal to be submitted to IOM for support under the Development Fund (formerly 1035 facility).

Mr Chairman, last but not least, my delegation wishes to inform the Council that Zimbabwe will shortly notify the Director General of its acceptance of the amendments to the constitution. It is true that we need to strengthen our organisation and that can only be done through the constitutional amendments.

I THANK YOU.