STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR SOPHIE KALINDE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND REPRESENTATIVE OF AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, TO THE 88TH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL, 1st DECEMBER 2004

Your Excellencies,

Honourable Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed an honour and a real pleasure to have the opportunity to address this august gathering on behalf of H.E. Alpha Oumar Konare, who was unable to be present with us due to prior commitments. My appreciation also goes to the organizer of this Meeting for the invitation addressed to the African Union which gave in its strategic Plan a great importance to the problem of Migration in Africa and the World in general. This Meeting is taking place at a most opportune time when Africa and the International Community are reviewing the progress made in managing Migration and the constraints encountered in impeding the development process.

Over the last decades, deteriorating political, socio-economic and environmental conditions as well as bad governance and armed conflicts, insecurity, environmental degradation and poverty are significant root causes of mass migration and forced displacement in Africa. Consequently, 16 out of the 53 African countries are in crisis with its associated insecurity and forced migration. The African Union Commission estimates the number of refugees and IDPs to be around 5 million and 20 million respectively. Africa is also home to an estimated 20 million migrant workers and family members, working within and outside the continent.

Populations of many border regions live in inherently unstable situations, in part due to war, ethnic fighting and/or drought. They are also engaged in a perpetual cycle of migration due to cross-border economic activity and pastoralist traditions. Cross border migration in Africa also represents an important livelihood and coping strategy to ecological and economic downturns and is key to understanding as well as forecasting the onset and evolution of humanitarian

disasters. It is to be noted that free movement of persons when well managed facilitate the integration process in the Continent.

Your Excellencies!

The crisis in the health sector with the out migration of health care providers from Sub Saharan Africa has once again reopened the debate on "brain drain". Today, Africa is home to about 9% of migrants globally, compared to 6% percent for Southeast Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, 23 % for North America, and 11% for Western Europe. Within Africa, migrants are not distributed homogenously amongst the various regions. By 2000, 42 % of the migrants lived in the countries of West Africa; 28 percent in Eastern Africa; a further 12% percent in Northern Africa; and nine percent in Middle and Southern Africa. Against this backdrop, internal, regional and out-of-Africa migration is occurring on a scale larger than any other region.

The driving forces for migration are diverse in the various regions in Africa, and the dynamics and patterns are also different as a response to internal and external factors. The globalization process will also influence migration as it facilitates the movement of people across the various regions in Africa through regional integration and to other regions outside the continent, and the number of migrants is expected to increase. Although countries (sending, receiving) and migrants may benefit from migration, problems arise due to illegal and uncontrolled migration, jeopardising the relations between countries and also the integration of migrants in the receiving society. Undoubtedly, migration will be a major topic in the twenty-first century and will therefore pose certain social, economic and political challenges for policy makers in the future in the management of migration for the betterment of African societies.

In light of above, the general objective of the Migration Policy Framework is to encourage Member States to implement and integrate migration issues into their national and regional programmes by developing national migration polices as stated in the Lusaka Decision. This policy Framework is intended to be implemented by Member States and RECs in collaboration with and support of UN Agencies, International Organizations, NGOs, CSOs, and other Organizations

Recognising the Abuja Declaration (91), the Cairo Recommendation (95) and the actual challenges African countries are facing in regard to the flow of irregular migration, trafficking and migrant right as well as HIV/AIDS and related issues and the magnitude of the brain drain in the African continent, the AU Council of Ministers during its 74th Ordinary Session (Lusaka, Zambia, July 2001) adopted Decision CM/Dec 614 (LXXIV)

- **To develop a strategic framework for migration policy in Africa that could contribute to addressing the challenges posed by migration and to ensure the integration of migration and related issues into the national and regional agenda for security, stability, development and co-operation (5);**

- **To work towards free movement of people and to strengthen intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation in matters concerning migration on the basis of the established processes of migration at the regional and sub-regional levels; (6) and**

- **To create a conducive environment that allows for the participation of migrants, in particular those in the diaspora in the development of their own countries (7).**

Accordingly the Department of Social Affairs in collaboration with its partners elaborated a Policy Framework on Migration, which was discussed in an Experts

Meeting and presented to Labour and Social Affairs Commission for consideration. The document will be finally adopted after the output to be proposed by South Africa.

The 1st Ordinary session of the Executive Council held in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa mandated the AU to work with the African Diaspora and support their involvement in the programmes of the Union. During the Maputo Summit in July 2003, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government endorsed this decision and included a new clause in the AU Constitutive Act to *"invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora in the building of the African Union"*.

Your Excellencies!

As the AU socio-economic development process moves towards regional integration within the context of the African Economic Community, through its program NEPAD, migration is increasingly being recognised as an engine for regional co-operation and integration. Most importantly, under the leadership of H.E. Alpha Oumar Konare and the implementation of his vision, mission for Africa that calls for unification, a single economic space, a common African citizenship and a continental democracy, migration including the Strategic Policy Framework on Migration will occupy a prominent place on the AU agenda.

The African Union (AU) was mandated to work with the African Diaspora and supported their involvement in the programmes of the Union. Policies need to facilitate and promote the collaboration and reintegration of the professionals in the Diaspora in the development of their own countries /

regions. However, this will not only depend on migration policies but also on issues such as good governance, democracy, poverty and other root causes of migration. The collaboration between the AU and the Regional Economic

Communities is crucial in the process of integration and implementation of migration decisions and policies. If regional integration and the rights of migrants are to be achieved and protected it is of primordial importance that co-operation and dialogue, in the area of labour migration between countries affected by migration (both origin and destination) is promoted.

In this regard, it is fundamental that African States elaborate conjunctively objective migration policies to better deal with this phenomenon and prevent the negative effects associated with migration, such as the exodus of skilled labour the protection of illegal migrants in particular women and girls. Policies for socio-economic development need to be implemented but now in a broader context – regional and continental – and not only at national level, with the participation of all stakeholders (civil society, private sector, migrant associations, etc.).

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In recent decades, with increased access to and attainment of higher education and skills training, higher female labour participation rates and more employment opportunities for women, female migration has become a significant phenomenon involving both autonomous and associational migrants. Women now move around far more independently and no longer in relation to their family

position or under a man's authority. This reflects women's growing participation in all aspects of modern life. The **'feminisation of migration'** represents one of the most significant trends in recent international migration streams which influences

the shaping of roles and affects relationships between men and women in countries of origin as well as of destination.

Remittances are one of the developmental effects of migration; and such effects are felt most distinctly at the individual or household level but also at the community or national levels. As African migration is generally on the rise, remittances are bound to remain a substantial and important flow. In Africa like other regions, remittances constitute a major source of foreign exchange and impact significantly on the national balance of payments. They also make up a fair share of gross domestic product (GDP) in many countries and may outstrip other financial flows. Moreover, informal remittance flows form part of an income stream for receiving households, which contribute to improved standards of living, better health and education and human and financial asset formation. Member States should profit from these remittances for the development of countries of origin.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In Conclusion:

In order to facilitate implementation of migration related development strategies such as the IOM Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) Programme, it is important that the programme should be incorporated into the evolving immigration policies and strategies under consideration in the development planning in collaboration with the African Union and donor agencies. This calls for the adoption and elaboration of a new approach which is "more flexible," and which will be able to adapt with "versatility" to the new migration trends. This

new approach puts emphasis on the "mobility" of immigrants in order to encourage them "to maintain and strengthen the relations that they have with their countries of origin."

The partnership agreement between the ACP and the European Community, signed in Cotonou, Benin, on 23 June 2000, has already underlined the necessity of elaborating strategies and the implementation of programmes for national and regional cooperation. This should focus on the improvement of living and working conditions, the creation of jobs and the development of strategies to use the skills of migrants from the ACP countries in their countries of origin or in a Member State of the European Union.

Finally, there is the need to build a bridge between national development needs and the human and economic capital represented by their Diaspora is becoming more and more apparent as a means to contribute to growth and development of countries of origin. In order to build and retain critical human and financial capacities for Africa's development and to develop strategies for utilizing, mobilizing and retaining resources and know-how of Africans, the AU Strategic Plan and its NEPAD Programme recommends that efforts should focus on creating the necessary political, social and economic conditions in Africa that would serve as incentives to curb the brain drain and attract much-needed investment.

I thank you all for your kind attention and wish you successful deliberations.