



STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SOUTH AFRICA ON THE OCCASSION OF THE 106th SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNAITONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) : GENEVA, 24-27 NOVEMBER 2015

Chairperson,

Our delegation wish to express its appreciation to Amb Swing, for his report and commend the IOM for its sterling work, particularly in Southern Africa with its long history of inter-regional migration. We acknowledge the IOM's contribution in guiding Member States in our combined efforts to address international migration.

South Africa also associates itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group.

Chairperson,

Migration is a complex reality. Sadly not all migration flows are voluntary but as a result of forced displacement. It is important therefore to engage in policy and best practice discussions, from a perspective of it being rational, responsible and in the best interests of migrants and governments.

The migration flows into Europe has its mirror image in many developing countries, in particular on the African continent, as many African countries are dealing with national and regional socio-economic challenges, while opening its doors to offer safe havens to destitute migrants. Similarly, the situation faced by the EU with large mixed migration flows, in particular irregular migration movements, are equally faced by our countries.

South Africa is a receiving country and like many other countries, has had first-hand experience of the phenomenon of migration. We have opened our borders and welcomed high numbers of foreign nationals, the majority of who make a positive contribution in South Africa.

Through valuable experiences in the mining, farming and industrial sectors, South Africa has benefitted greatly from migrant labour and we have drawn lessons that well managed migration can yield significant benefits to the economy of the country. Likewise, a wide array of South African skilled labour is dispersed beyond our borders.

On the other hand, unregulated migration, exacerbated by unfair labour practices, human trafficking and smuggling, can have negative implications on the host country including creating tensions between migrant communities and citizens of the host country.

South Africa through various entities and initiatives proudly associates itself with the important work of the IOM to ensure that the rights and interests of migrants are protected and advanced.

Our Ministry of Home Affairs has engaged at high-level with the IOM in seeking best solutions in the field of development of migration policy, and government is actively engaged in seeking best solutions.

As a signatory to various international Conventions and Treaties and as a country that cherishes human rights with the aim to protect the basic rights of every human being within our borders, including foreign nationals, refugees and migrants, we support the IOM in seeking durable and humane solutions.

South Africa has a special mix of models of migration, including the creation of a SADC work-seekers Visa. Hence, we provide a wide range of visas for different categories of persons to work, live, and invest in South Africa.

At the regional level the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons recognizes our inter-dependence as a sub-region and the Protocol, together with those of the sub-regions of our Continent, will contribute to a continental migration management framework that incorporates migration issues and solutions unique to our region in a coordinated manner.

Chairperson,

Following the outcomes and adoption of the UN Agenda 2030, and the 2013 UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, we welcome the efforts of the Director-General to present Essential Elements that provides the basis on a future relationship and working solution with the United Nations. In this regard, we support the draft resolution before the Council, to formally approach the United Nations to convey to it the views of IOM Member States with it a view of improved coordination of the relationship, recognizing the IOM's leading role in the area of International Migration.

The international movement of persons is regulated and managed by nearly 200 sovereign states in partnership with the IOM. Countries vary widely with regard to being sending, receiving or transit territories or all three. The relationship between States, the IOM and the United Nations system will remain vital to ensure the effective movement of people.

Finally, we are convinced that we could take hands in this complex process as a collective, in ensuring the vision of the IOM to reach positive outcomes for migrants and gains for development, are achieved.

I thank you