

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY SWAZILAND DURING THE 106TH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL, 24 - 27 NOVEMBER, 2015, GENEVA

Chairperson,

Director – General of the IOM, H.E. Ambassador William SWING

Distinguished Delegates

1. Chair, let me join others in congratulating you and members of your bureau upon your election to chair our proceedings. I also congratulate Ghana for her election to the IOM External Audit office. Chair, Swaziland associates itself with the statement delivered by Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group. Allow me also to congratulate the Director-General Ambassador SWING for his excellent and insightful report focusing on the “three Cs”. Chair, 2015 has been a year of migrants, and the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Development agenda is a great achievement. Further, I wish to warmly welcome the **five** new Members and **nine** observers to our esteemed organization.

2. Chairperson, Swaziland is grateful to the IOM for funding the Border Management Project in Swaziland through the IOM Development Fund (1035 Facility). This project has strengthened the capacity of the country’s immigration services to manage the borders more efficiently, and to collect accurate migration data. We hope that the IOM will continue assisting Swaziland to develop and enhance capacities on migration management. Furthermore, Swaziland recently benefited from the IOM Voluntary Repatriation Programme which is a proof of the effectiveness of IOM.

3. Chairperson, Swaziland acknowledges and appreciates the contribution migrants make to the country’s economy in their capacities both as employees of private and public sector entities and as business people. As entrepreneurs, particularly in the informal and SME sector, their contribution includes job creation and skills transfer.

To effectively integrate migrants into the Swazi society, Government has put in place an aggressive policy which among other things seeks to respect the human rights of migrants, including and in particular the right to education and the right to health. For instance, all migrants have access to free primary health care and their children benefit from the universal free primary school education. More importantly, migrants have a right to apply for citizenship, and the eligibility criterion is only five (5) years of continuous residence in the country. As a result, a number of migrants have become Swazis through the naturalization process.

4. Chair, Swaziland is faced with the problem of the increasing and fast growing numbers of trafficked people and irregular migrants, some of whom come from as far afield as Asia. Swaziland is committed to combating human trafficking and preventing its territory from being used as a destination or transit point. As such, in 2010, Government enacted the Prevention of Human Trafficking and Persons Smuggling Act of 2010. To implement the Act, Government has established; (i) a National Coordinating Committee composed of all stakeholders including Government and Civil Society; and (ii) a Secretariat housed in the Prime Minister's Office, the highest office in Government. This Act has helped Swaziland to combat human trafficking and to rescue the unfortunate people who have been smuggled into the country either as a destination or transit point as well as the Swazis who have been trafficked to neighbouring countries and to the country's urban areas. Traffickers are prosecuted under the Act and a number of cases have already gone through the courts. However, lack of capacity limits the effective implementation of the Act and we hope that the IOM would assist us to build the necessary capacity to deal with human trafficking issues.

In conclusion Chairperson, Swaziland joins other delegations, in lamenting the unprecedented high numbers of displaced persons and the loss of lives while undertaking this process; especially the death of IOM staff members while on the line of duty. Chair, lastly, for some of our countries, the cost of repatriating smuggled persons to their countries of origin is high and unaffordable. In this respect, Swaziland appreciates the effort by the IOM in assisting these countries to

repatriate smuggled people and irregular migrants to either their countries of origin or preferred destinations.

I thank you