



**SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT: 110TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

AGENDA ITEM 13

26-29 NOVEMBER 2019, GENEVA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

South Africa aligns itself with the statement of the African Group by H.E. Ambassador Penda A. Naanda. We congratulate Chair on your election to lead our 110th session of the Council and indeed the members of the bureau. You can count on our support to the bureau.

From the outset, South Africa condemns in the strongest possible terms the killing of IOM field officers in some parts of the world. We call on Member States to guarantee the safety of field workers in accordance with Humanitarian Law and their obligations. The lives and well-being of field workers are critical for the IOM to make sure no one is left behind and that it reaches furthest far behind, first. Through you Director General, South Africa extends its deepest condolences.

South Africa also welcomes the report of the Director General and note the personal enthusiasm and energy the DG has brought to the office as well as his consultative approach in your interaction with Member States. South Africa welcomes this approach and remains available to cooperate fully with the IOM.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation listened with keen interest to the second report of the Director General delivered to this Council on 26 November 2019 and thanks the DG for covering a broad spectrum of issues and painting an impressive picture of how the IOM is discharging its mandate. As a primary body with the mandate to address migration. We note the DG's detailed feedback on ongoing reform of IOM and its role in broader UN family. In this regard, it is our assertion that the IOM is a good asset to the UN system and should always bring its expertise to the UN family without risking losing its historical character and edge. It is important that the IOM doesn't bend back and be everything to everybody. As the IOM settles to the UN family, there are things we value and cannot afford to lose.

In addition, my delegation would like to stress the importance of ensuring that IOM should at all times adhere to historic purpose and mission whilst maintaining its neutrality and being inadvertently caught up in regional disputes and geopolitical contestation by the powerful.

Never before had the world seen a large movement of people in search of the better life since World War II. This makes coordination and collaboration imperative. My country support and regards, the coordination role of the IOM as critical. In this context, it is important that the IOM does not stretch itself far too thin and become anything or everything. but rather draws existing mandate of topical issue. Here we propose that IOM draws on institutional capacity and expertise of other UN Agencies involved on topical areas such as climate change, as the UNFCCC is involved in climate change and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on environment as well as UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). This way it will be effective to integrate

issues pertinent to migration without using extra resources. Most pertinently, there are agreements that underpin the implementation of these topical issues and it is important that the implementation of those agreements is through multilateralism; and is not distorted.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2020, the IOM will be 69 and approaching its 70th landmark. We must begin as this Council to think how best to celebrate while looking ahead to challenges that still confronts us. We hope that an intergovernmental mechanism would be used to plan how best we commemorate that milestone.

South Africa welcomes IOM's development of regional and thematic strategies that come out of the five-year strategic Vision that are meant to align regional strategies by 2020-2024 whilst respecting peculiar regional contexts and specificities. We welcome in particular the Pan-African strategy which will offer a strategic perspective on the IOM's engagement in the continent and engagement with regional governance structures. We welcome this move of working with regional and continental structures to ensure alignment which will benefit effectiveness. With our continent this task will be easy because the AU work in a structured and methodological way on the bases of decisions taken by Heads of States. This year alone, the theme of the African Union (on 'refugees, returnees and internally displaced) touches on some of the work of the AU on migration. In addition, we are pleased with the development of this strategy and welcome that its structure would ensure alignment of efforts with our continent, in particular on Post Conflict, Reconstruction and Development where the IOM can play a role. All AU facilitated peace agreements, are always anchored with PCRD at the centre.

This Pan-African strategy works symbiotic, in a structured way with the African Union that take into accounts Agenda 2063; at the heart of which is poverty eradication and silencing the guns. In short, guaranteeing a better life for all citizens of the continent and stop them leaving in big numbers.

I am proud to convey that South Africa stands ready to work with IOM on the evolvement of the Pan African strategy.

Mr. Chairperson,

As of January 2020, South Africa will assume the chairpersonship of the African Union succeeding Egypt that has done a sterling job. Coincidentally, 2020 is the deadline for silencing the guns.

In conclusion, South Africa is grateful for the collaboration between the IOM.

I thank you