



111th Session of the IOM Council

Statement

by

H.E Ambassador Zenebe Kebede Korcho,

Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the UN at

Geneva

November 2020

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Antonio Vitorino, Director General of the IOM

Ambassadors,

Distinguished Representatives,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Ethiopia fully aligns itself with the statement made by Niger on behalf of the Africa Group.

Let me begin by congratulating the Chairperson of the Council and Bureau members on their election and assure them our full support in discharging their function.

Mr. Chairperson - This year's Council meeting takes place in a time where the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is taking a massive toll. It is taking countless lives and crippling economies across the world. The Covid-19 pandemic is particularly severely affecting migrants worsening their vulnerability due to lack of access to health service access, termination of employment and unorganized return operations. Ethiopia believes the IOM needs to deepen the reform process taking the implementation of the global Compact as its foremost responsibility.

Mr. Chairperson

At the national level, Ethiopia is undertaking various steps towards building better migration management and migration governance frameworks to ensure that migration remains safe, regular and orderly. As a pilot country for the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, Ethiopia is committed to develop ambitious but achievable national responses. In this connection, Ethiopia has made regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national level in collaboration with the IOM.

Ethiopia has also ratified a new proclamation on Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons and established a National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) Secretariat in close coordination with IOM-led UN

Network on Migration in Ethiopia. In addition, Ethiopia has commenced developing Migration Governance indicators. Furthermore, based on the GCM principles and objectives that Ethiopia accords priority, we have embarked on developing a national migration policy. With the support of IOM, my country has also established a dedicated migration data unit under Central Statistics Agency responsible for the collection, analysis, dissemination and governance of migration related data. Ethiopia also established an inter-ministerial committee to facilitate and coordinate nationwide data management efforts relevant to migration management.

Mr. Chairperson

On the other hand, in a bid to ensure safe and regular labor migration, Ethiopia has signed bilateral labor agreements with UAE, Qatar, Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. We are also enforcing mandatory skills training, pre-departure orientation and stringent due diligence procedure of recruitment in ensuring protection of the rights of migrant workers. However, irregular migration and human trafficking remain a challenge risking the lives of many Ethiopians. Our migrant's status as irregular migrants have also exposed them to wide range of abuses and exploitations.

As a result, Ethiopia repatriated around 219,179 migrants from Europe, Africa and the Middle East from 2019-2020 and among those 204,928 are from the Middle East. The returns of these migrants posed immense challenge to Ethiopia's efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19 within its limited resources. The sheer number of returnees stretched the Government's capacity of isolation and testing while at the same time posing significant public health risk of new infections. We therefore call upon host states to put a moratorium on the return of migrants until such time that the threat posed by covid-19 is over. Ethiopia also calls upon the IOM to step up its support to stranded migrants in the Middle East. In addition, the absence of robust funding for return and reintegration of the irregular migrants remains the biggest challenge in migration management. Hence, we would like to make an impassioned call upon the IOM and our partners to support Ethiopia in its effort of reintegrating the returnees with their families and the community.

Mr. Chairperson

Finally, I would like to inform this august body that the current engagement of the Federal Government in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, in as much it relates to refugees, is a short time interna law enforcement operation to bring the fugitive criminal junta members of the Tigray People`s Liberation Front (TPLF) to justice. The TPLF, as a culmination of its successive violations of the Federal Constitution and in defiance of the decisions by the constitutionally mandated federal institutions and masterminding violence in the last two years and half, regrettably and unprovokedly perpetrated a brutal and surprise attacks on the Ethiopian National Defense Force stationed in Tigray Region, by the Special Forces it has organized, on the early hours of 04 November 2020, with the intention to rob artillery and military equipment, among other things. By so doing, the TPLF crossed the last red line of patience and that of extreme restraint exercised by the Federal Government, in which case the Federal Government was left without option than and compelled to give order to the National Defense Forces to maintain law and order, under the direction of a Command Post, to save the country and the region from plunging into instability.

In this connection, the Government is taking the utmost precautions in protecting the refugees and civilians in the region. In addition, my Government is making the necessary arrangements to repatriate its citizens who fled to the Sudan due for fear of insecurity. My Government has established a National Committee to repatriate the displaced people and render the necessary support to the needy people in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders.

In conclusion, Ethiopia wishes to thank the IOM and reiterate its commitment to enhance its partnership with the IOM to make migration safe, regular and orderly.

Thank You!