



STATEMENT

BY

HONOURABLE MOTLANTOA LETSOSA

MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS LESOTHO

AT THE

**111th Session of the International Organization for
Migration (IOM) Council**

November 2020

GENEVA

Chairperson

Director General, Mr. Antonio Vitorino,

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho and on my own behalf, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for being part of the 111th Session of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). We welcome the Report of the Director General and I also wish to take this opportunity congratulate him and his Bureau for the remarkable achievements they have undertaken, in pursuit of safeguarding human, orderly and dignified migration and in doing so, recognising that migration is about human beings.

Chairperson

The Kingdom of Lesotho, like all countries of the world, is faced with complex challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the human mobility and cross-border trade and commerce. Lesotho is a land-locked country and to her, migration is inevitable. The Government of Kingdom of Lesotho has realized that a new approach and an innovative way to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration during COVID-19 and beyond is critical.

Chairperson

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho has been implementing whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach in migration management over the decade, through the structure called National Consultative Committee on Migration (NCC). NCC is led by Ministry of Home Affairs, and members consist of various Ministries, institutes and non-government organizations and migrant's association and academia. My Government appreciates the IOM and African Union Commission (AUC) for their support in the development of Lesotho National Migration and Development Policy. The policy will provide a strategic framework through which Lesotho can maximize the developmental impact of migration while minimize the negative impact from migration.

Chairperson

The Kingdom of Lesotho has mainstreamed prioritized migration issues in the National Strategic Development Plan Phase II (NSDP II) 2017/18-2021/22 around five key areas in this policy document; these are,

- (a) labour migration, (b) diaspora engagement,
- (c) integrated border management / cross-border issues management,
- (d) counter trafficking and smuggling
- (e) internal migration management.

Over and above this, I am pleased to upraise this important meeting on the support accorded to the Government of Lesotho by IOM in strengthening migration management. These milestones include the following:

- a) the development of Lesotho National Labour Migration Policy,

b) the draft Lesotho National Diaspora Policy is ready for the presentation to the Cabinet.

Moreover, with the support of the IOM Development Fund (IDF), the national coordination mechanism was strengthened to effectively engage with diaspora members abroad, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations (MoFAIR) has established Diaspora Directorate. As such, during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown period, the diaspora members came together and made a significant contribution to support Lesotho's fight against COVID-19.

Chairperson

In addition to the support to the diaspora engagement, Lesotho is benefiting from the project to enhance migration data ecosystem. The project is supporting Bureau of Statistics (BOS) in establishing migration data working group, harmonising migration data tools and developing migration situation report based on the available data from Census and administrative data. This will contribute to evidence-based migration-related policy and program in Lesotho, and also contribute towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Furthermore, Government of Lesotho is making efforts to reintegrate returnees into the community of origin. At the same time, facing a human mobility challenge in the midst of COVID-19, Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa continue to work together to enhance their strong bilateral ties through the Joint Bilateral Commission of Cooperation (JBCC) which will be built on the

ongoing dialogue between the two countries towards strengthening and enhancing cross-border collaboration and integrated border management. These efforts will contribute to the promotion of safe, orderly and regular migration.

In conclusion, allow me to once again reiterate my Government's gratitude to the IOM for their financial and technical support. Lesotho remains committed to her obligations under all international instruments safeguarding the rights of migrants as well as to the IOM, which has proven to be a great intergovernmental organisation as far as the protection of migrants across the globe is concerned. Director General, we are confident in your abilities to convey the expected outcomes of this Session.

I thank you for your kind attention.