

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PENDA NAANDA ON BEHALF OF HON. FRANS KAPOFI, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IMMIGRATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE AT THE 111TH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL FROM THE 24TH TO THE 27TH OF NOVEMBER 2020

The Chairperson of the Council,
The Director General Mr Antonio Vitorino,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to congratulate you Chairperson and Members of the Bureau for your election to lead the Council to the next session in 2021 and to assure you of Namibia's support and cooperation as you carry out your mandate.

Let me also join other delegations in welcoming the Russian Federation as a member of the Organization, and Malaysia as an Observer. Both delegations can count on Namibia's support.

At the outset, I wish to indicate that Namibia aligns itself with the statement delivered the Ambassador of Niger, on behalf of the African Group.

I would also like to thank the Director General for his report and also assure him and his team of Namibia's continued support in the execution of their duties. We wholeheartedly appreciate their tireless efforts in ensuring that the work of the IOM continued under extremely trying circumstances.

Mr. Chairperson,

2020 has been a year like no other. As many others we have noted, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented disruption to all spheres of life. We have noted with concern the various reports from the IOM throughout the year, detailing the particularly heavy impact that migrants and displaced persons have felt as a result of the various lockdowns imposed the world over in order to mitigate the spread of the virus and the socioeconomic devastation they have left behind.

I would also like to thank the Director General for his report and welcome commendable achievements such as the launch of the IOM Continental Strategy for Africa 2020-2024 achieved in the past year. We wholeheartedly appreciate their tireless efforts of the Director General and his team as stated above, to ensure that the work of the IOM has continued under extremely trying circumstances,

particularly on the African continent, where various situations in all Regions have exacerbated old and new waves of displacement.

At the National level, I have the distinct pleasure of thanking IOM for rendering assistance with the following:

- Support in the drafting of the National Migration Policy for Namibia, which is approved by Cabinet. The Policy will be launched in December 2020.
- Funding of the Border Resident Card project for Namibians in the Zambezi Region.
- Continued support in capacity building to Namibian law enforcement officials in the area of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to express concern at the aggression of Morocco towards the Saharawi people, and caution that these actions may increase the movement of migrants in the region.

I thank you.