

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY NIGERIA AT THE 111TH COUNCIL
SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR
MIGRATION (IOM) 24 – 27 NOVEMBER 2020**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns with the statement delivered by Niger on behalf of the African Group and makes the following remarks in our national capacity.

Nigeria wish to commend IOM for its continued collaboration with the Government of Nigeria in addressing the multifaceted challenges of forced displacements it has faced in recent times. The work of the IOM, particularly the field officials in ensuring that stranded migrants, victims of trafficking and migrant smuggling, return in safety and dignity during the period of Covid-19 outbreak is commendable. IOM has in this regard proven that rather than relent, the organisation is poised to deliver on its mandate even at very difficult circumstances.

Permit me to thank the Director General for his insightful report and for bringing his expertise to bear in strengthening the organisation at this challenging time. In a similar vein, I join other colleagues in thanking the outgoing Chairman, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark. We commend your outstanding leadership of the Working Group established by Council Resolution No. 1383 in ensuring a transparent, participatory and inclusive process. We congratulate you Mr. Chair and your team on your election and wish you a

successful tenure. We also welcome the Russian Federation as a member of IOM and Malaysia who joined on observer status.

Mr. Chairman, the outbreak of covid-19 brought additional challenges in all spheres of human life, at both individual and national levels and has heightened vulnerabilities. It has affected the livelihood of mostly low skilled labour migrants, widened inequality, created tension between migrant and host communities, but most importantly, it created ripple effects on the economy of nations. In the face of all these challenges, Nigeria made efforts through strong collaboration with IOM and other state partners to ensure that most stranded Nigerian migrants are repatriated in safety and reintegrated into the society.

Nigeria, with the support of IOM and its partners has at the federal and state levels continued to raise awareness of the dangers of traveling on irregular status as well as on the activities of human traffickers and migrant smugglers. Return and reintegration programmes organised for Nigeria migrants as well as trainings on border control are yielding fruitful results. However, my delegation notes that focusing only on return, reintegration and discouraging potential migrants from migrating may not be enough to address irregular migration in a sustainable manner. It is on this note that Nigeria has continued to support diaspora coordination with a view to addressing irregular migration, trafficking and migrant smuggling and as well fostering development at the domestic level through proper harnessing of remittances.

This becomes very critical especially at this time when Covid-19 outbreak has undermined remittances which play important role in strengthening national economies. In addition, for the fact that migration is not a phenomenon that can be turned on or off at will, there is need for synergy of efforts at national, regional and international levels to increase regular pathways especially for the low socio-economic class. We are optimistic that these and other measures set out in the IOM Continental Strategy for Africa would be capable of supporting development

and addressing the challenges of irregular migration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, Nigeria supports the measures taken to strengthen IOM's core structure. We align with efficient management and prioritising of issues in the Internal governance framework and business transformation in a manner that ensures that additional burden is not placed on already struggling economies. We reiterate the need to ensure geographical diversity and a gender balanced organisation for equitable representation not only at the top but at all levels, at headquarters or in the field.

I thank you.