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**SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT: 111TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

AGENDA ITEM 11

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

South Africa aligns itself with the statement of the African Group delivered by H.E. Ambassador Laouali Labo of the Republic of Niger. We congratulate you Chair on your election to lead our 111th Session of the Council. We also wish to welcome the new bureau and the member states that have been elected.

We further warmly welcome new member states that have joined the IOM family??

The 111th Session of the Council comes at an extra-ordinary juncture in the recent history of the world, at a time when all humanity is battling to tackle the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated that it is imperative that we work together as a global community to address and overcome its devastation. Our collective reaffirmation of the principle of multilateralism, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, is undoubtedly more needed than ever before in our lifetime. The UN Secretary-General has urged us to build back better and lamented that we have struggled to mobilize the resources needed to ensure a vaccine as a global public good, available and affordable to all, calling for multilateral institutions that can act decisively, based on global consent, for the global good. He also called for an immediate global ceasefire and to silence the guns by the end of 2020. All nations are busy developing recovery programmes which also place the most vulnerable at its centre, including gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These are all matters that are acutely relevant to the work programme of the IOM.

Many countries are simultaneously bearing the brunt of the impact of climate change and various other global environmental crises. In this regard we welcome the continued support of all member states as well as donors in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation with affected countries. South Africa wishes to commiserate with the Government and the people of Nicaragua following the devastation caused by hurricane Iota.

Mr Chair

South Africa wishes to commend IOM for its sustained Vision in delivering on its mandate and its preparedness to adapt its vision, budget and programmes in the face of the pandemic as required. We further note the IOM's efforts in developing a well-coordinated, comprehensive, equitable and timely response to halt further transmission of the disease, limit the humanitarian and socio-economic effects of the pandemic, and support affected communities to prepare for longer-term recovery.

We applaud the IOM's approach to preparing for and responding to disease outbreaks anchored in its Health, Border and Mobility Management framework. We welcome that IOM has focused on four strategic priorities at the community, national and regional levels namely; (1) effective coordination and partnerships as well as mobility tracking; (2) preparedness and response measures for reduced morbidity and mortality; (3) efforts to ensure that affected people have access to basic services, commodities and protection; and (4) to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

We wish to further commend the Director General and the entire IOM team for their tireless efforts and willingness to position the IOM firmly in the frontline in the fight against COVID-19 despite the enormous pressures bearing on them, including often times at a huge price for the organisation and staff. We wish to convey our condolences through you Mr Director General to those families who lost loved ones.

South Africa also welcomes the report of the Director General and notes the personal enthusiasm and energy the DG has brought to the office as well as his consultative approach in interaction with Member States.

Mr Director General, we welcome the various occasions that you have kept member states abreast on the work of IOM even under very trying times. As member states, we have indeed benefitted from these interactions.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation listened with keen interest to the second report of the Director General delivered to this Council and thanks the DG for covering a broad spectrum of issues and accounting on how the IOM is discharging its mandate as a primary body with the mandate to coordinate and manage

migration. In this regard, it is our assertion that the IOM is an invaluable asset to the UN system and should always bring its distinct expertise to the UN family.

We wish to restate that the importance of ensuring that IOM should at all times adhere to historic purpose and mission whilst maintaining its neutrality and avoid being caught up in regional disputes and geo-political contestations.

Mr. Chairman,

South Africa welcomes the launch of the IOM's Continental Strategy 2020-2024 on 19 October 2020. We further welcome that the Director General of IOM met with the African Group of Ambassadors and provided an outline of the strategy. We note and welcome the key underpinnings of the strategy most importantly its emphasis on amongst others and its intended outcome of:

- The role of Migration in the full implementation of the AFCTA;
- Support for the Protocol on free movement and
- Enhanced cooperation between the AU and the IOM.

It is South Africa's hope that the strategy will complement the continent's vision embodied in Agenda 2063 and contribute to its inclusive economic development, responsiveness to climate change, strengthening health systems, upholding human rights and promoting gender equality and fostering social inclusion. Furthermore, we note the envisaged areas of cooperation and that the strategy intends to contribute to Africa's economic and social integration; increase gender and youth participation in sensitive employment and livelihood opportunities, address irregular migration, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants and enhance engagement with migrants and the diaspora. We are encouraged by the foreseen areas of cooperation in the Strategy and commit to support IOM in its efforts to support partnerships between regions and with AU-related institutions and agencies; as well as with all relevant stakeholders in facilitating intercontinental dialogue on migration; and enhancing cooperation with regional development banks.

Mr Chairperson

In conclusion, South Africa in its capacity as the Chair of the African Union sincerely welcomes that the Pan-African strategy is intended to work symbiotic, in a structured way with the African Union based on its Agenda 2063; at the heart of which is our shared aspiration to end poverty and silence the guns. The UN Charter makes provision for closer cooperation between the UN and regional organisations and we welcome efforts at strengthening cooperation and coordination with regional arrangements such as the African Union, to ensure that our efforts are complimentary and mutually reinforcing.

South Africa remains committed to providing a better life for all as demonstrated by the Government efforts demonstrated in the fight against COVID-19. In this regard, no one was and is left behind in government efforts in dealing with the pandemic.

I thank you