



**EMBASSY AND PERMANENT MISSION OF SIERRA LEONE  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**IOM Council 112<sup>th</sup> session  
29 November – 1 December 2021**

**General Debate**

**Thank you, Madam Chair,**

Sierra Leone aligns itself with the statement delivered by the African Group.

Since it is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you and my fellow members of the Bureau on our election to lead the 112th Session of the IOM Council. I would also like to thank the outgoing Chairperson H.E. Mr. Evan P. GARCIA, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Philippines, for his leadership of the 111th IOM Council as well as his brilliant and outstanding stewardship during the past very challenging. I thank Ambassador Garcia particularly for the deft handling of the internal reform processes that will undoubtedly strengthen the Organization's senior leadership structure and the composition of IOM Council Bureau. In this respect, let me congratulate Ms. Ugochi Daniels and Ms. Amy Pope on their appointment as DDG in charge of operations and DDG in charge of management and reform, respectively. I have said this before in other settings and must do so before the General Council: the process leading to the selection of the two DDGs was long and sometimes frustrating, but there can be no regret about the outcome. We are indeed grateful that it led to these two very highly accomplished and capable women.

In celebrating the 70th anniversary of IOM, let me take this opportunity to thank Mr. António Vitorino, the Director-General, for his vision and steady leadership, and to his team for their dedication and commitment. IOM has helped millions of migrants and displaced people by supporting countries to create the conditions for safe, orderly, and regular migration for seven decades.

Sierra Leone would like to commend the IOM on its response to the Covid 19 pandemic, ensuring that migrants are not left behind in COVID-19 relief plans. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Director-General and his staff



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for working tirelessly to ensure that the organization remains effective, operational and fit for purpose during these challenging times.

The launch of the IOM's Continental Strategy for Africa 2020-2024 and its effective implementation thus far has been a mark of true leadership and vision. The renewed and strengthened cooperation with the African Union and A.U. Member States on migration issues and the effort to foster inclusive and sustainable development in Africa will be critical, especially in the post-COVID 19 pandemic recovery.

Despite these gains, migrants are still often subjected to discrimination, xenophobia, abuse and exploitation. Global cooperation on migration is important now more than ever. The ongoing pandemic has impacted millions of migrant workers and economies in the world. Migrants are bearing the brunt of COVID-19 in terms of loss of jobs, limited access to employment opportunities, reduced earnings in remittances, and constraints in accessing healthcare services.

In this regard, we urge stakeholders to protect migrant workers and their families. All of us - countries of origin, transit and destination - must work to re-establish predictable and regular migration pathways. An informed management of migration requires political will and the vision to adopt viable and forward-looking solutions.

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

We must realize that irregular migration, human trafficking, and smuggling, cannot be addressed purely from the security perspective. We strongly believe that by addressing the root causes of displacement and by helping source countries to build stronger economies the world can reduce the urge towards irregular and dangerous migration. For instance, my government is working with relevant stakeholders, including the IOM, to support projects addressing key social, economic and environmental challenges that are root causes of displacement and irregular migration.

Furthermore, Sierra Leone emphasizes the need for constructive engagement in intergovernmental negotiations on the adoption of a global compact for



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safe, orderly and regular migration. Effective implementation and follow-up of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) continues to remain crucial in making migration work for all. In this context, we welcome the initiative launched by the United Nations Network on Migration to support national migration priorities towards meeting GCM's objectives.

My government believes that migration and development should be addressed comprehensively. Agenda 2030 cannot be achieved without due consideration of migrants and mobility. As a cross-cutting issue, migration is relevant to all the 17 SDGs. I am happy to recall that in Sierra Leone, the National UN Network on Migration was launched on 1 June 2021, and the government has been working with the network to integrate migration into the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), in alignment with and as part of the implementation of these two frameworks.

**Madam Chair,**

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

In closing, allow me to reiterate once again my country's firm commitment in continuing its cooperation with the IOM.

I thank you.