

**THE GAMBIA STATEMENT IOM 115TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL, 26 -28
NOVEMBER 2024.**

ITEM 11– GENERAL DEBATE

Chairperson of the Council

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

The Gambia congratulates the Chair of the Council on his election as the new chairperson and members of the Bureau to steer the affairs of Council. We wish them success during their tenure of office and assure them of our full support and cooperation.

We also express appreciation to the IOM Secretariat for the excellent organization of this session and documentation provided.

We thank Director General Amy Pope for her insightful and comprehensive report to the Council, and reiterate our support for her innovative approach and solution to the migration management around the world.

Chairperson,

The Gambia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Sierra Leone on behalf of the Africa Group.

Migration plays a significant role in the socio economic development of The Gambia, with migrants in the diaspora contributing to over 20 percent of the country's GDP through remittances and investments in the economy.

The Gambia is signatory to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and has since 2022, been recognized as a GCM Champion Country for its efforts in the implementation of the set objectives during the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). As such, The Gambia has committed to implement and report on all 23 objectives of the GCM in subsequent reporting periods.

The Gambia is a origin, destination and transit point for migration. Despite efforts to address the issue through more effective border governance and management, over the past few years, a number of young Gambians and nationals of other west African countries have used The Gambia as a departure point to travel to Europe through irregular routes. These journeys have poses significant challenges to border control officials in both The Gambia and countries of destination, as well as exposed the migrants to several forms of abuse and exploitation from traffickers.

The Gambia recognizes the urgent need to find alternative solutions to migration management, beyond traditional border control measures. We reiterate our support for Regular Migration pathways as a viable alternative to the irregular migration challenge that the world continues to grapple with, in line with objective 5 of the Global Compact for Migration (to enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration).

To ensure effective implementation of the GCM, the Government of The Gambia established the National Coordinating Mechanism (NCM) on Migration and a Technical Working Group (TWG) on Migration and Development, which aims at harnessing the positive contribution of migration towards national development as envisaged in the Recovery Focused National Development Plan.

The Government has also prioritised the exploration and facilitation of legal pathways through bilateral labour migration cooperation arrangements to enable Gambian nationals seek employment opportunity abroad in a safe, structured and regulated manner.

Chairperson,

We note with concern the rise in hate speech and xenophobic attacks against migrants in some countries, which have the tendency of criminalising vulnerable persons on the move, in need of protection and security of their persons.

Therefore, The Gambia reiterates the importance of strengthening migrant protection and sustainable systems of dealing with displaced persons through an integrated approach. We also recognize the need for an inclusive approach to disaster and displacement issues through mitigation measures and early warning systems.

Accordingly, we welcome the prominent inclusion of migration protection and displacement in the IOM Strategic Plan (2024–2028) as one of four cross-cutting priorities alongside integrity, transparency and accountability; equality, diversity and inclusion; and environmental sustainability.

We call on IOM to continue to implement its Approach to Protection in line with its Protection Roadmap and by placing protection at the centre of its actions and decision-making.

Thank you.