

96TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF KENYA

ON THE REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IOM
AND THE OVERALL MIGRATION REPORT 2008 PRESENTED
DURING
THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT
2ND DECEMBER 2008.

MR GEOFFREY A. OMONDI
PRINCIPAL COUNSELLOR – LABOUR

Chairperson,

KENYA

Let me first of all take this opportunity Sir to congratulate you on your election to preside over the work of this 96th Session of the IOM Council.

I must hasten to mention that Kenya fully supports the views that were expressed by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

In addition and on behalf of my delegation, I would also like to extend Kenya's warm welcome to the new Director General, Ambassador William Lacy Swing whom we look forward to continue working with very closely and his entire office as has been the case in the past

With regard to the Director's statement and the overall Migration report for 2008 that were delivered yesterday at this forum on Migration and Development, my delegation would like to sketch out some key elements and make a couple of comments:

First, we welcome the Director Generals report which we consider to be the roadmap for the IOM and in particular his focus on the following:

The pledge and action so far taken to have audience with member states, staff and other international organizations. We would like to encourage continuation of the same which should lead to more policy coherence and ensuring that IOM is responsive to its constituents needs. My delegation would like to see more collaboration and communication within nation states, headquarters and regional offices. We believe some more improvements can ~~be~~ still be made in this area.

With regard to collaborative partnerships, we hail the office for its focus on the importance of Global dialogue and in particular the regional consultative processes which are already underway in all regions.

This approach is essential in the effective handling of new Migration challenges and a good example is the current rise in a wave of piracy on ships in the Gulf of Aden. Concerted action amongst states and international community is vital if the current problem is to be solved. Chapter one of the Migration report for 2008 focuses partly on the mobility of capital, goods and services across national frontiers as an important aspect of migration. The current challenges of increased piracy in the region are already impacting negatively on the security in the region, the health and safety of workers on deck, trade and overall development. The inclusion of other agencies in the work of IOM especially the admission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Qatar and the Intergovernmental Authority on

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Development (IGAD) is timely and the office should be commended for this decision

The other aspect my delegation would like to comment on is on Remittances. The current global financial and economic crisis has already begun impacting on migration. During the 3003rd Governing Body of the ILO which was held between 6th and 21st November 2008, member states held long debates on the current financial crunch and its impacts especially the likely decline in investments, flow of direct foreign investments, and massive loss of employment with migrant workers being the most vulnerable to exploitation, victimization and abuse. Although sufficient evidence is yet to be established, it would be appreciated if IOM together with ILO monitor developments in this area and consider protection of the vulnerable groups - migrants and their families especially women migrants and young workers.

These categories of workers usually lack social protection and hence can hardly figure out any portability. Loss of employment in this category will expose them to more hardships, discrimination and possible human trafficking since most do not have proper papers. IOM should work closely with ILO in exploring possibilities of accessing sustainable financial services for employment and income protection. The focus may have to be on scaling up potentials for microfinance institutions to facilitate access of financial services to young and women migrants to achieve productive and decent work.

Chairperson,

Our third point is to welcome the move by the office to ensure staff professionalism in the organization. Staff surveys and appraisals of strengths and weaknesses are crucial. Once these are undertaken and technical competencies are realized, the morale or motivation is raised which are essential for efficient service delivery. The office should therefore ensure this is done in all its structures and career development assured as well as job security of staff. Fairness, transparency and involvement of staff in decision making on issues that affect them should be encouraged as an important aspect of modern Human resource management.

Our delegation supports the need for further research, information collection and sharing of best practices with member countries. Information about the link between migration and development especially transfer of knowledge, skills, investments and remittances and lowering of transfer costs, protection of remittances and minimizing depletion of skills in sending nations and necessary partnerships between countries of origin and host are essential.

From a labour perspective we will continue advocating for minimum ILO human and labour rights proper integration and extension of basic social benefits and services for migrants who have no access to these. Usually they spend their meager earnings on these. Proper management of migration will reduce the negative aspects associated with migration such as criminality, terrorism and human trafficking.

We would like to see IOM assist Kenya in data and information collection on various aspects of migration especially in new areas such as the health of migrants and even climate change and its relationship to migration.

In conclusion, Kenya continues to appreciate IOM's programmes and activities in progress in the country and especially the project that will under the 1035 Facility assist in establishment of a Labour Migration Unit at the Ministry of Labour and creation of Tools for the Assessment of Dynamics of Labour Migration in Kenya and of the Kenya Diaspora. The same goes for the work of the regional office in Nairobi and it is expected that IOM will continue offering assistance in terms of advocacy, awareness raising, training, advisory services on policy development, technical cooperation and development of institutions.

I THANK YOU