

## STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

### NINETY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL

Thank you Mr. President. It is an honour and pleasure to address the Ninety-eighth Session of the Council today, on behalf of my brothers and sisters of Africa, the African Group. Allow me, Mr. President, at the outset, to express the Group's special appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson for his diligent efforts and the work he did last year in transparent and efficient manner. On the other hand, congratulations to the new Chairperson and his bureau on their election. We are confident that under their wise leadership and guidance, our work will achieve the expected progress. Mr. President, I want to say something, mainly with our Deputy Director, the new lady, Laura Thompson. Her presence is a good sign in our gender equity, at the top level of IOM. I seize this opportunity also to express the African Group's appreciation of the leadership and administration of IOM for convening this important meeting. Let me also say we are very much pleased that the issues on Africa will be taken on board.

Mr. President, international migration continues to grow and expand; it has come to occupy an important place on the international agenda. Migration is affected or caused by factors such as climate change, armed conflict, poverty and economic constraints that continue to exist and persist. The result is a remarkable increase of migratory flows all over the world. Africa accounts for more than 50 million of an estimated over 200 million migrants worldwide. The continent's root causes for migration are numerous and complex, migratory patterns are characterized by internal and cross border movements mainly due to internal conflicts and natural disasters. In this context, migration issues represent one of the continent's priorities at the national, regional and international levels.

Mr. President, in response to migration, the existing and the new emerging challenges, African States had adopted a common position on migration and development, and migration policy framework in Banjol in 2006. This instrument identified areas of common concerns, enumerated certain policies and recommendations and highlighted the socio-economic ramifications of migration, including its development aspects. The Ouagadougou plan of action was issued the same year, and the African campaign from 2009 to 2012 is considered as an advanced initiative to combat trafficking of human beings in the continent.

Recognizing the increase of migratory flows towards Europe and Asia, the African States felt the need to strengthen the dialogue and partnership with Europe in many areas of migration management. This has been demonstrated since 2000 via the first African-EU Summit in Cairo, the declaration of migration and development of the Tripoli Ministerial Conference in 2006, followed by a number of mechanisms and recently crowned by the adoption of the Lisbon Declaration and the Joint Africa-EU strategy and Action Plan in 2007. Mr. President, this identifies the areas of partnership and outlines a road map of cooperation between Africa and Europe in different areas of migration management.

Migration and development are two sides of a coin, national development and migratory flows are interlinked. History has shown that the African migratory flows had played a key role in the development of western countries. The African Group expresses its keenness to establish a constructive dialogue and a strong partnership between developing

and developed countries with an objective of making migration an essential and integral tool for development in countries of origin and destination. In the same context, the Group supports the principles and objectives of the GFMD as a global platform for governments to discuss migration and development related issues. Bearing in mind that migration is a cross-cutting issue which involves such things as social and humanitarian economic developments. Furthermore, we value the IOM partnership with other related international organizations and its active role in the global migration group.

Mr. President, the recent financial economic crisis is a serious matter. The Group remains concerned about the negative impact of economic crisis on migration, mainly in areas such as reduced exports, job losses, decreased remittances and an increased brain drain. We express our readiness to work closely with IOM and its partners to decrease the consequences of the crisis on the developing countries and in Africa in particular. And also encourage other organizations and countries to adopt adequate mechanisms to address the crisis.

Mr. President, we acknowledge the excellent work undertaken by IOM, that it had continued to do in managing migration from an integral and holistic vision. We register our support to the IOM Strategy which has been approved in 2007, and we are looking forward for its implementation. In this connection, we remind that several key elements included in the IOM Strategy match the African priorities, which can be summarized as follows:

- Respect and protection of human rights and freedom of all migrants to enable their social integration and their adequate participation in the process of development in countries of origin, transit and destination.
- Address the root causes of international migration to ensure that people migrate out of their countries out of their own choice and not a necessity.
- Undertake programmes which facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of refugees, IDPs and migrants, in coordination with relevant stakeholders, national authorities, while taking into account the need and concerns of local and national communities.
- Assistance in the area of labour migration.
- Facilitate the flow of remittances to the countries of origin through the establishment of appropriate instruments and mechanisms.
- Provide technical advice and operational assistance to the Member States in order to build national capacities concerning migration related issues.
- Assist in the development of programmes on combating migrant trafficking, in particular women, children and vulnerable groups.
- Facilitate the return of highly skilled workers, especially from the sectors like education and health; to reduce brain drain.

On the other issues of the IOM structure review, the African Group expresses its satisfaction in relation to the objectives of the review which are enhancing the coherence of the structure at Headquarters, and consolidating the core structure and resources in the Field; we furthermore value the efforts undertaken by the Structure Review Team (SRT) to prepare the proposal before us, and we welcome the opening of the CCB in Tanzania. However, the Group reiterates the need to have adequate time to study the proposal and receive the feedback from the capitals. In this connection, we request that our concerns reflected during the informal consultations and SCPF be taken into consideration.

Mr. President, we note with satisfaction the continuing growth of IOM membership, activities and budget which surpass for the first time one billion dollars. However, we remain concerned that the sum allocated to Africa does not correspond to its actual needs.

The Group recognizes the utmost importance of the 1035 Facility, we consider with appreciation the enlargement of the fund via the two lines in 2007. We acknowledge and appreciate the effort of the donor countries, and request the Organization to ensure that the Facility shall be made available and accessible to developing Member States.

Concerning the outstanding contributions, the issue was seriously considered by the Group. We appreciate the dialogue the Organization has established with governments of Member States at the Headquarters or through its regional offices; we express our readiness to actively cooperate with the Administration to address the issue seriously. To conclude, Mr. President, the Group reiterates its concerns regarding the unbalanced representation of Africa in IOM, especially the high ranking officials.

Finally, the African Group confirms once again its commitment to work closely with the Organization to achieve its ambitious goals and objectives.

Thank you Mr. President for allowing me. I'm sorry to go over but there are serious matters which the African Group needs to elaborate and ten minutes were not enough for that.