



**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME
AFFAIRS OF SOUTH AFRICA, MR MKN GIGABA,
DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
98TH MEETING OF THE IOM COUNCIL, GENEVA,
23-26 NOVEMBER 2009**

Chairperson,

Our delegation congratulates you and we are convinced that under your excellent leadership this meeting will have a successful outcome.

Further, we wish to join others in congratulating the Deputy Director General on her election and wish her well in her new and challenging post.

Chairperson,

South Africa is pleased to participate in this important debate and align ourselves to the statement delivered by the

distinguished representative of Sudan on behalf of the African Group.

International migration has increased markedly globally in recent years and become a veritable driver of development, person-to-person contact across countries and cultural interaction among different peoples from different countries and regions. The countries that have managed it well have also reaped immense benefits and simultaneously minimised the risks and negative impact.

That migration leads to development is evident, but most countries, especially in the developing world, still lack the capacity to harness migration for development. Forging the linkage between migration and development will become the most important challenging of the 21st Century

This is more compounded in the context where developing countries face increased volumes of low-skilled and unskilled migrants, whereas migration policies tend to favour business and skilled migrants.

Managing migration effectively, securely and humanely is of vital national and global importance. In this regard, we continue to strive hard to combat xenophobia and related intolerances.

Chairperson,

Managing migration requires sound policies that balance promoting the immigration of investors and skilled professionals and that of working class persons. Migration is about people, and hence there are human rights issues involved. All countries are duty-bound to protect migrants, be they regular or irregular, including those regarded as illegal, consistent with their obligations under international human rights law. This includes the need to ensure that particularly immigrant workers are protected from abuse by unscrupulous employers under the national labour relations legislation.

Chairperson,

On the 22nd – 23rd October, in Kampala, Uganda, the African Union held the first ever Heads of State Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and unanimously adopted a Convention and Declaration that must ensure the protection of the rights of refugees and IDPs.

The Southern African region has made significant progress in the management of migration. It is our belief that we should enhance bilateral, regional and global inter-state cooperation with the view to ensuring shared responsibility and benefits,

especially between sending and receiving countries. The SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons has set in motion bilateral visa waiver agreements and initiatives such as dialogue between developed and developing countries which attempt to accomplish exactly this. Such policies also help to re-channel human movement away from illegally crossing borders towards regular entry through recognised ports of entry.

It is our belief that the pursuit of peace and stability, development and democracy is vital to address the root causes of migration and forced displacement. We believe that this will curb irregular migration.

Chairperson,

South Africa faces serious challenges of human trafficking, mixed migratory flows and irregular migration.

The African Union Commission Initiative against trafficking reflects the African continent's commitment to address the scourge of human trafficking. This Initiative will no doubt benefit from the ideas generated through IOM mechanisms, programmes and expertise.

We believe that the paucity of human and financial capacity, as well as reliable data on migration, continues to remain a major obstacle in better managing and fully understanding the dimensions of migration in Africa.

We appreciate the recently established African Capacity Building Centre in Moshi, Tanzania, and remain convinced that it will have a positive impact in ameliorating the challenges faced by the African continent.

Chairperson,

As is well known by all present here, South Africa will be hosting the FIFA Soccer World Cup next year. This event will further present an opportunity for South Africa to improve on its migration management. We congratulate all the countries that have qualified for the World Cup.

Finally, the South African delegation wishes strongly to align itself with the African Group's position on the restructuring of the IOM's regional offices. We hope that there could be reached a new proposal that takes into consideration our collective opinions on this matter.

I thank you.