

~~DRAFT~~ STATEMENT DELIVERED BY ZIMBABWE ON
BEHALF OF THE AFRICA GROUP AT THE 99TH
SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL: 29 NOVEMBER - 2
DECEMBER 201

Mr President

^ Your Excellencies

Mr Director-General of the IOM

Distinguished Delegates

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Africa Group.

The Africa Group wishes to extend to you and the other members of your team our warmest congratulations on your election to the bureau. We have confidence in your wisdom and ability to successfully steer the work of the Council and its committees during the coming year. We look forward to working closely with you in the fulfilment of your mandate.

The Africa Group also extends its warm welcome to ^{all} the countries and organisations that have been formally admitted as members and observers respectively, to the IOM today. We are particularly delighted to have Botswana, Central African

Republic, Lesotho and Swaziland, in the organisation as this will further enhance Africa's engagement with IOM, both in Geneva and in the continent.

We thank the Director General for his comprehensive report on the activities of the IOM for 2009. We share his concerns over the rising anti-migrant sentiments in some countries. We urge the I.O.M. to step up its public awareness campaigns to highlight the positive contribution of migrants to the economies of these countries. We commend the strenuous efforts the Director-General has made to maintain the core functions of the organisation given the tight budgetary constraints that it is facing.

The Africa Group will participate actively in the Working Group on Budget Reform to ensure the realisation of a new structure that strikes a practical balance between the financial means of the organisation and the need for it to maintain optimal operations on the field. We are aware that this will not be an easy task given that member states continue to face pressures on their own budgets while the organisation faces increasing demand for its services especially in the Africa region.

Under the stewardship of the Deputy Director-General the IOM has completed the first phase of the structure review of the organisation, at Head Office within the time limits that it had set. We commend her for these efforts and the regular briefings that she has conducted to update member states on the process.

While these briefings are appreciated, the group would welcome more active engagement and prior consultation with member states during the field restructuring phase which will be rolled out in 2011. It may be recalled that the IOM Resolution 1186 of 26th November 2009 specifically mandated the Director-General to address the migration-related specificities in agreement with concerned Member States. We look forward to working closely with you in addressing the regional and sub-regional specificities peculiar to the African continent as you implement this important phase of the structure review.

Let me conclude by reiterating the importance ~~with~~ which the Africa Group places on the IOM in its role as the premier migration management body in the world. We will continue to work closely with you, the membership of the organisations and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of its 12 point strategy are realised.

WE applaud the partnership between the IOM and the UNHCR which culminated in the joint meeting in Tanzania, recently

to find a solution to the mixed migration flows affecting the Horn of Africa, East Africa the Great Lakes Region and Southern Africa.

Thank you!!!