



STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SOUTH AFRICA
ON THE OCCASSION OF THE
103rd SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION
(IOM)

GENEVA, 26-29 NOVEMBER 2013

Chairperson,

I wish to take this opportunity to express South Africa's gratitude to the Director-General, Ambassador Swing and the esteemed members of his staff for their commitment and dedication to the IOM, as the global leading agency with extensive knowledge, expertise and experience in all aspects related to migration and development. Migration and development is not just a fact of life but part of human life.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement presented on behalf of the African Group by the distinguished Representative of Angola.

Chairperson,

Contemporary international migration is set in the context of globalisation, where migration is a vehicle in national and international labour markets. People often migrate because of lack of economic opportunities in their home countries (push factor), or they are attracted by demand of labour in countries of destination (pull factor). However in contrast to the flow of goods and capital, which are progressively being liberalised, the movement of people remain much more restricted.

We nonetheless, think it is important to give attention to the challenges of migration in the context of underdevelopment. The question which arises is how can poor countries convert migration into an opportunity for development other than a further addition to the poor and most vulnerable?

Some countries are vulnerable because of inadequate immigration systems and low levels of security and have become victim to criminal syndicates that engage in identify fraud and human trafficking especially of women and children. This august gathering should respond to their challenge as well.

South Africa firmly believes that the IOM and partners should help countries to resolve current migration challenges through creating linkages between stakeholders that will lay the basis for effective solutions to these challenges.

South Africa's foreign policy interventions are guided by the understanding that migration, if properly managed and fully supported, could contribute significantly to development through the consolidation of the African Agenda and NEPAD, thus addressing the root cause of migration which is underdevelopment and poverty. The South African Government's priority is to fight poverty, under-development and inequality, while promoting migration policies that will lead to socio-economic growth, enhanced skills, improved human security and global partnerships to benefit the country and migrants alike.

Diaspora engagement is another development issue, with diaspora communities being increasingly valued internationally for their potential roles as catalysts of development. The member states of

the African Union (AU) have already declared the African Diaspora as one of the regions of the African Union and are seeking to ensure greater Diaspora engagement in the development of the Continent. This was one of the successful outflows of the African Diaspora Conference hosted by South Africa in 2012.

It is also worth noting that migrants preserve linkages with their countries of origin and create beneficial effects such as, the transfer of skills and knowledge, as well as short and long term return migration. Strengthening these feedback effects by enhancing collaboration with the African Diaspora is a key aspect in fostering the migration development nexus and was identified in NEPAD as a sectoral priority within its human resources development initiative.

It is in this regard that the AU Summit in Banjul in 2006 developed the “Migration Policy Framework for Africa” which has identified priorities such as capacity-building, the upholding of humanitarian principles of migration, border management and security, the promotion of regular and labour migration, the integration of migrants in host communities and migration and development.

That said, South Africa would like to recognize the ‘**I AM A MIGRANT TOO**’ campaign of IOM in partnership with the UNHCR and the City of Johannesburg aimed at promoting dialogue on the positive impact of migration on South Africa’s social and economic well-being and is running concurrently with the recognition of International Migrants Day on 18 December 2013.

Chairperson,

In the SADC region, several efforts are underway to incorporate migratory flows such as intensifying engagements within the sub-region to address irregular migration and through the establishment of one-stop border posts and insistence by South Africa on proper passport and travel documentation being used. We believe, building common standards are critical in managing migration as the experience of the European Union and other regions, have shown.

South Africa is committed to integrate regional development which includes flows of people, goods and capital across borders. We are fostering a positive view of migration while taking collective responsibility for its effective and secure management. The issue is not how restrictive or open a particular policy or strategy is, but how effective the policy or strategy will serve the national and sub-regional goals and aspirations of the people of Southern Africa.

In conclusion, as the number of international migrants reportedly reached 232 million in 2012, and as people continue moving beyond borders in pursuit of a better life, and in recognition of the potential contribution of migration to socio-economic development, the debate on migration and development as part of the discussions on a Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, is supported.

I thank you