

**IOM INTERSESSIONAL WORKSHOP**  
**“DEVELOPING CAPACITY TO MANAGE MIGRATION”**  
**KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY**  
**THE HONOURABLE NN MAPISA-NQAKULA**  
**RSA MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS**  
**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**  
**28-29 SEPTEMBER 2005**

---

Chairperson

IOM Director for Policy, Mr. Gervais Appave

Fellow participants

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentleman,

It was with a great sense of humility and honour that I accepted your invitation to present the keynote address to this workshop. In accepting this invitation in turn, the South African government acknowledges the significance of the IOM and its work. In particular the work that the IOM is doing in capacity building – an issue I will deal with later. It is for this reason that I would like to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share with you some of our experiences regarding the management of migration in our country and our region.

Chairperson,

Towards the end of July this year, our country hosted the regional workshop on capacity in the management of migration. This was a consultative process organized under the auspices of Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA).

The workshop brought together senior managers of immigration within the SADC region to share best practices regarding their own national experiences. It also served to identify capacity building needs of each one of the member states, as well as ways in which all of us could work together to enhance the regions' capacity to manage immigration.

For us in the region, this was an important initiative. Particularly in so far as it addressed issues of the disproportionate levels of management capacity from one country to another. We had noted that this disparity has serious implication in ensuring uniformity in the application of standards. It was for this reason therefore, that the workshop considered the varying degrees of such capacity from one country to another, as well as the lack of harmonization of policy and management instruments throughout the region.

At the time of my opening address to this workshop, I had talked about the need for this dynamic link between immigration capacity and the harmonisation of policy, and I will like to reemphasise that point this morning.

*"The efforts to enhance capacity of officials from different government departments points to the importance and cross cutting nature of immigration. It underlines our belief within government that all departments whose services have a bearing on immigrants, and all officials who render a service to immigrants must be familiar with the subject of international immigration. Such an approach will ensure the development and synchronization of our policies, streamlined standard operating procedures, and the treatment of migrants in accordance with legal domestic and international instruments."*

Since then, a number of developments have happened in the area of policy both at national and regional level within the countries of SADC.

Most significant of these developments has been the adoption of the SADC Protocol on Facilitation of the Free Movement of People. This was concluded during the recent Heads of States Summit held in Gaborone, Botswana. For its part, the Protocol aims to ease the restrictions on the movement of persons in the region in accordance with stipulated provisions.



I thought I should single out this development as it demonstrates a particular approach by leaders of our region in the management of migration. It was indeed a bold move on the part of the SADC leaders to adopt such a policy at a time when the international trend is towards emphasis on tighter control and migration policies tilted towards security concerns.

The Protocol on Free Movement will have a number of implications for the management of immigration in the region both in terms of policy and capacity. In so far as policy is concerned, the protocol will put greater pressure on countries of the region in balancing the two tensions of immigration management.

This balance is in terms of making sure that immigration is able to play a facilitating role in stimulating development, and other socio-economic imperatives, while at the same time securing the integrity and security of the countries involved.

In this regard, one of the aims of the Protocol is to encourage legal immigration by making it less cumbersome for people to move around the region. There will be no visa requirements for certain categories of citizens who travel between the borders member states. We hope that this will assist in ensuring that resources are appropriately rediverted and reprioritization towards other capacity building initiatives.

It is our conviction that through increased uniformity and skills sharing, migration management in the whole region will be greatly enhanced.

Chairperson,

At an international level, the world has witnessed key developments that have impacted on the management of migration.

The twin tower attacks in New York, and the train bombings in Madrid and London, demonstrated and exposed some of the limitations within the immigration and security regimes of these states. It has also propelled immigration to the top of the international political agenda, and has compelled states across the globe to re-examine and reinvigorate their immigration regimes in an attempt to stave off threats to international security and peace.

However, these events have generated a situation where international migration is equated mainly with security considerations, at the expense of development. Such an approach distorts the immigration realities throughout the various regions of the world, and downplays the important multifarious challenges faced by the developing world and our continent in particular. In our view immigration issues must simultaneously address the multitude of inter-dependent challenges of security and the respect for human rights of migrants. It is our responsibility as managers of immigration

to ensure that these challenges are located and remain at the top end of our domestic, regional and the international agenda.

Discussions on the development of capacity in the management of immigration must take into consideration the collective and individual needs of different countries and regions. It is important that a common understanding of the premise on which we manage migration be established amongst the participating nations.

As noted in the report of 86<sup>th</sup> Council workshop held in 2003, we have to be honest in our identification of the challenges we face in developing this capacity. It is important that our approach should be one that moves us towards shared goals. The undertaking made during that workshop remains relevant as the starting point to our discussion on developing capacity for migration. To quote the report:

"Participants agreed that capacity building needs are complex and varied. It was also noted that the world has limited resources, the question of resource allocation is essential. In this context, the possibility of establishing priorities in capacity building was examined. During the discussion, the participant identified a range of capacity building areas as being of great importance for their country or region and discussed the feasibility of finding criteria for determining overall priorities."



Chairperson,

It has been four years now since the launch of the Berne Initiative, which provides a platform for multilateral engagement on issues of the management of migration. In addition, the IOM's Technical Cooperation on Migration has been assisting governments in the area of capacity building in this regard. I am happy that in some of the presentations during this workshop we will have an opportunity to assess this and other initiatives that have been implemented in the area of capacity building.

Having said that, Chairperson, I must also caution that our assessment of the implementation of current initiatives, should not result in reinventing the wheel. A workshop such as this one creates a useful and relevant platform for us to agree on ways in which we can further enhance what we have.

I most certainly believe that the objectives that we seek to achieve through programmes such as the Technical Cooperation on Migration are relevant to the challenges we face. Correctly, these programmes seek, among other objectives, to provide cooperation in the area of migration policy and administration, exchange of experts and skills transfer, as well as reintegration of skilled expatriates. These objectives should be at the heart of addressing the challenges faced by any technical cooperation initiatives.

The point however, is to find practicable means through which we can adopt these to the specific conditions of the countries where they are implemented. We must also agree on how such support and cooperation is exchanged between countries. It will not be useful to have a one-size-fit-all approach given the diverse of participating governments.

Chairperson,

It will be important to share with you some of our own domestic experiences.

More than a decade since the advent of our country's democracy I have observed that insufficient attention has been paid to proper of organization of our immigration services. Ideally, we require our immigration service to be organized in such a way that it can fulfill the policy mandates such as service delivery, human rights, facilitation of investment and border control. We are currently making specific interventions with regard to training, structural arrangements, as well as much needed capacity in infrastructure. Much of these policy parameters that I have referred to, have been adversely affected by a lack of capacity within our immigration branch.

The point, Chairperson is that a country such as ours, which is regarded relatively as a model of economic success within our region,



has these limitations. You can, therefore imagine the nature of our capacity needs in the rest of the region and generally in the continent.

Understandably, we are indeed excited by the possibility for enhancing capacity through such technical cooperations as we are discussing in this workshop.

One of the areas that I will request the workshop to consider seriously is the need to develop capacity for research and information gathering. This will enable governments to understand better the contributing factors that have implications for their management of immigration. It will also go a long way in developing necessary integrated approaches to addressing some of the problems whose solutions extend beyond migration.

Following on credible research findings, governments will also need to assess push and pull factors that impact on migration management in their own countries. This is because in the cases such as economically driven migration, a relationship exists between development in the country of origin and the high volumes of emigration from such countries to more developed countries. Addressing the socio-economic factors that result in economic migration, therefore, should be an integral part of our programme to improve the management of immigration.

Lastly, Chairperson, this workshop must not underestimate the need for building capacity of states in fulfilling their obligations with

regard to the protection of refugees. It is my view that any interventions on matters of capacity, must ensure that those who are forced to flee their homes to seek protection in foreign lands, are given such protection in a manner consistent with provisions of the 1951 United Nations Convention.

For many countries in the developing world, their capacity to fulfill this obligation is greatly overstretched. Interventions need to include the sharing of best practices in this field, always keeping in mind our assumed responsibilities in terms of the Convention.

Accordingly, we should in this context, continue to strengthen efforts towards increased burden and responsibility sharing as opposed to burden shifting in handling asylum cases.

Again, our experience as a country is that the lack of capacity in the management of this area of our work has failed many asylum seekers and refugees at a time when they desperately needed such protection.

As Minister responsible for migration, I have recently lamented that the huge backlog in the processing of asylum applications in our own country was unacceptable. We have now started the process of ensuring that asylum seekers do not have to wait for too long, after their application, for their status to be determined. We understand that we will have to create the necessary capacity for such a turn around, and we realise the enormous challenges we face in this

regard. For this reason, I feel that special attention needs to be given to the issue of building capacity in the area of managing refugee affairs within the broader context of migration management.

Chairperson, matters of management of migration affect the lives of millions of people all over the world. I hope that your deliberations will contribute to a better understanding of the needs and concerns in this area. It is also my wish that the workshop will device means to strengthen capacity and develop systems that are responsive to the needs of all regions. In this regard I wish you a successful and empowering workshop.

**Thank you very much.**

---