



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IMMIGRATION

AT THE IDM DIASPORA MINISTERIAL FORUM

18 – 19 JUNE 2013

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

- **Mr. Chairman,**
- **Ambassador Swing, Director General of IOM**
- **Distinguished Heads of Delegation**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

I feel privileged to raise and address this gathering on issues pertaining to the Diaspora in relation to development. As a young nation and still building the capacity needed to run the affairs of our country, including the area of migration management, we always look forward to participate in these discussions with a view to share and gain experiences. At this juncture, my delegation wishes to thank the International Organization for Migration for organising this forum and inviting Namibia to take part on the preparation for the UN high level dialogue on migration and development to take place this year in New York.

Mr. Chairman

Namibia's Diaspora population remains negligible and therefore the contribution to development made through remittances is equally low. According to the World Bank, Namibia's total remittances for 2011 stood at US\$ fifteen million four hundred and ninety-two thousand five hundred and nineteen (15, 492, 519) representing less than one (1)

percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. The monetary contributions of Diaspora are therefore comparably low, although the assumption is that the remittances can still be of great benefit, in terms of support to low income households in reducing poverty and inequality, as well as for national investments for economic growth. Equally, the potential of Diaspora to contribute to the country's development in other ways is still high. It is thus clear that Namibia requires a multi-pronged approach to pursue development initiatives. Be that as it may, Namibia has realized that there is a need to develop relations with the Diaspora, particularly in the area of bringing back skills that is scarce in the labour market at home. Namibia has created a taskforce led by Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare comprising of the National Planning Commission, National Statistics Agency and Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration to roll out a national skills assessment for key sectors to identify the gaps and shortages. Surely, some of these gaps and shortages would benefit from the return of qualified Namibian nationals living abroad. An approach on how to better engage the Diaspora will thus be needed.

In addition, we have started with the process of drafting an overarching migration policy which will take into account the following key migration management areas.

- i) Migration and Development;
- ii) Facilitation Migration;
- iii) Regulating Migration; and
- iv) Forced Migration.

Once the policy is formulated, it will then provide for a framework for Diaspora engagement strategies to ensure the country can tap into what they can offer. Since Namibia has always advocated for a well-managed and orderly migration an Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee on Migration Management consisting of key state and non-state actors has been established and is charged with doing ground work for the policy development.

Mr. Chairman

The Namibian labour market continues to experience gaps in the supply of skills to run the economy, hence our government's effort to import skills as short term measure while training local personnel. We are also aware that there are skilled Namibians in the Diaspora whose skills can be used at home to fill some of the gaps in the labour market. In this regard, we will have to conduct a Diaspora mapping to establish the whereabouts of these skilful Namibians abroad with a view to engaging

them so that programmes for their return on temporary or permanent basis can be organised.

In conclusion, while recognising that Namibia can benefit from the contribution of migration in general and Diaspora in particular in our quest for economic growth and national development, as a country, we need to pursue human resource planning and development, targeting the youth to take forward our development agenda. The recently launched twenty year human resource development plan as part of a multi-pronged approach aims to improve our human resource development endeavours. It is our belief that encouraging the return of skilled migrants and training the youth will complement the effort to ensure a balanced labour market with adequate national skills in sectors that can take the development of our country forward.

I thank you!