

**A Statement Made by**

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on

**International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) 2012  
Managing Migration in Crisis Situations**

**PROTECTING MIGRANTS DURING TIMES OF CRISIS:  
IMMEDIATE RESPONSES AND SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES**

**13- 14 September 2012**

**World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

**Mr. Chair Person**  
**Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General, IOM**  
**Honorable Ambassadors,**  
**Other Protocols observed**  
**Fellow speakers**  
**Distinguished guests**  
**Ladies and gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to thank the IOM for inviting the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to participate in this pertinent and timely International Dialogue on Protecting Migrants during times of crises: Immediate Responses and sustainable Strategies.

As we all know, migration is a challenge as well as an opportunity for concerned individuals, communities, and government. In this regard, IDM is important since it brings key stakeholders together to participate in order to exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences in the area of migration. As the new member state of IOM, the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia expresses its agreements for the opportunity to participate in this dialogue.

With this few remarks, let me now turn to my deliberation on the theme: ***Immediate Response – Assistance and Protection to Migrants Stranded in crisis*** in the context of Ethiopia.

Migration in general and irregular migration in particular has received the great attention of many countries, including Ethiopia. The pattern of irregular migration observed in Ethiopia is both intra- and inter-country where men, women and children become victims.

As existing information reveals, the irregular migrants or trafficked persons move from Ethiopia mainly to countries in the Middle East and some neighboring countries. some southern African countries are also major transit and destination of migrants.

Main factors contributing for migration of Ethiopians are, the high demand of Middle East countries for cheap labour, promises of better job opportunities as provided by Brokers, and generally the citizens economic demand for better life. Because of these and other relevant reasons, many irregular migrants from Ethiopia were stranded in transit and destination countries.

Therefore, the government of Ethiopia has been implementing the program called “**Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)**” for Ethiopian irregular migrants in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) host countries, International community and other key stakeholders.

As one can imagine, the cost for returning stranded persons from host countries to their origin is undoubtedly an expensive one. It is necessary to consider that the irregular migrants often go through traumatic experiences during their journey and as well as upon apprehension by government authorities. Due to unpleasant situation in their overall journey, when these migrants return and reintegration back to homeland and with their communities of origin, it requires clear understanding and proper response to their needs like; psycho-social, health, logistic and financial and other needs.

In Ethiopian case, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Main Department for Immigration and Nationality are lead government agencies in managing **Assisted Voluntary Return programs**. These two government agencies cooperate and coordinate to verify the identities of Ethiopian citizens, and issue the travel documents to those who don't have upon verification of their citizenship.

As it has been mentioned earlier, there is a strong collaboration with countries in the region, International Organization for Migration, and the international community for the return of Ethiopian irregular migrants stranded in different countries.

Once the Ethiopian government has processed pre-return arrangements, IOM and the Ethiopian government in collaboration with the governments of the host countries, and as well as Ethiopian diplomatic missions in the host countries coordinate pre-return and return arrangements including travel and accommodation, medical screening, counseling, etc. Then the stranded migrants are assisted to return to their home country safely and in dignified manners.

On arrival, they are provided with temporary shelter, medical assistance (as needed), counseling services, and local transportation to areas of origin and reintegration assistance by IOM.

The local governments in areas of origin also support in the rehabilitation of the returnees though there are resource constraints to enable full reintegration and lack of clear referral mechanism.

Upon arrival, the government ensures the safe arrival of returnees to final destinations. There is no interrogation or detention/persecution of the returnees.

As data of the IOM indicates, in 2011 about 7,395 (6,551 male and 844 female) Ethiopian irregular migrants stranded in different host countries have benefited from the ***Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration*** program. In 2012, only about 299 (277 male and 22 female) Ethiopian irregular migrants were covered by the program.

From our experience, we may say that local collaborations and coordination in the country is of great importance to engage all concerned government and civil society stakeholders at all levels so that they can contribute to the return and sustainable reintegration of returnees. **In addition, clear and effective referral mechanisms need to be in place.**

**Mr. Chair,**

Let me take this opportunity to quickly address what measures we are taking in Ethiopia as a sustainable solution to deter irregular migration or human trafficking.

Ethiopia has established legal or regular labor migration options to its citizens seeking employment opportunities abroad. Our Employment Service proclamation No.632/2009 and the related guidelines clearly indicate the mechanisms for acquiring overseas employment and the roles and responsibilities of concerned bodies, namely, the government, host countries, the private employment agencies and the migrant workers themselves.

The proclamation clearly addresses and promotes about the **right, safety and dignities** of the migrant workers consistent with the **Ethiopian constitution** and relevant international legal instruments.

Furthermore, a **National Committee** at Federal level and **Regional Committee** under each regional state, which are composed of various government and non-government bodies, are established to oversee the implementation of the legal employment legislation and to promote prevention of human trafficking.

In order to improve regular migration, Ethiopia has Labor exchange agreements with some Middle East and neighboring countries. In 2009 Kuwait signed the employment agreement with Ethiopia and accordingly it is being implemented. Similarly, Memorandum of

Understanding of labour exchange has been signed recently with Jordan as receiving country.

Considering that search for decent employment and better life are the central motives for migration, Ethiopia has clear and comprehensive employment responsive policies. In this regard, it suffices to mention our Education and Training policy for producing skilled and competent manpower for our economy. As Ethiopia is following free market policy, our economic policies are attractive enough for foreign investments which can be seen from the ever increasing FDI flows to the country.

More specifically, our country has good experience in promoting the Micro and Small Enterprises (MSES) development policy and strategy towards jobs creation in rural and urban area. We have clear MSE policy, which emphasizes conducive and constructive environment, and how youth can utilize their capability and exploit existing local resources in creating their own job. MSE in Ethiopia is expected to facilitate conditions for the private sector, so that it can extend its job creation capacity and expand employment opportunity for the citizens.

Our MSE policy and strategies are also expected to serve as vehicle of development and broaden employment opportunities at urban centers. They can also serve as incubation centers for developmental investors; they play a great role in utilizing local resources and are labor intensive.

In view of this, we have achieved the following results in the past five years:

- About 1.5 million Job opportunities were created mostly for the youth, of which women shared 50%.
- More than **4 billion birr (200million USD)** loan was given through Micro Finance Institutions.
- While **1.2 million** MSE operators became beneficiaries from various training, 10,000 operators became beneficiaries from Business Development Services (**BDS**)

We believe that all these efforts help to curb the flow of irregular migration from Ethiopia.

**To conclude**, there are some encouraging measures that are being taken by Ethiopia in the management of migration flows. However, we recognize that much has yet to be done to scrutinize the positive and negative effects of migration in our context. We strongly believe that well-informed choices on migration realities by potential migrants, home and host

countries, and other key stakeholders can help realize the positive potentials of migration in economic, social and political spheres.

We also would like to emphasize that while one-sided efforts may contribute to the migration management in Ethiopia, the very nature of migration makes it necessary for host countries to support the same.

Henceforth, we strongly believe that a more binding labour exchange bi-lateral agreement between sending and receiving countries is the footstep towards protecting migrant workers from all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation and thereby ensuring good working conditions, decent wage and the like.

We also find it necessary that policies, strategies and incentives are in place so that temporary migrants are attracted to return to the home country and become potent actors in development. Lastly, our approach sets a framework within which we can continuously have a dialogue for cooperative responses from host countries so that the gains from circular migration are shared by all and sustained.

Thank you for your kind attention.