

STATEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE ON MIGRANTS AND CITIES – GENEVA, 26TH OCTOBER 2015

(By Maurice Mbolela, Executive Secretary, LGAZ)

It is indeed a privilege for me to be among this distinguished panel of speakers and I wish to thank the organizers for giving me a slot in this session to share the experiences from Zambia on Migrants and Cities.

In order to appreciate the dynamics of the internal and international migration flows, I have considered it necessary to quickly say something about Zambia. As most of the delegates are aware, Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa and shares borders with eight countries – The Democratic Republic of Congo, to the North, Tanzania to the north east, Malawi to the east, Angola to the west, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to the south. The Capital City as is well known is Lusaka. The population of Zambia is close to 14million people.

The internal and international migrant inflows in Zambia are influenced by various factors which include:

1. Liberation Movements and Civil Strife in Neighbouring Countries (Political Factor)

Two days ago, Zambia was celebrating 51 years of political independence having liberated itself from colonial rule in 1964. From that time, Zambia maintained an open door policy to the liberation movements in neighbouring countries and this had a deep underlying influence on the international migration flows to the country. Zambia, along with other neighbouring countries that had attained political independence at that time, was a hospitable and strategic base for national liberation movements especially from countries bordering Zambia in the south.

The civil strife that followed in the Angola, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo including Rwanda and Burundi also contributed a great deal to the number of immigrants seeking asylum. According to the World Refugee Survey published by the US Committee for Refugees and

Immigrants in 2009, Zambia had a population of asylum seekers numbering approximately 88,900. The majority came from:

- DRC 47,300
- Angola 27,100
- Zimbabwe 5,400
- Rwanda 4,900

2. Copper Mining (Economic Factor)

Zambia's economy comes from copper. The first copper discoveries were made in 1895 when attractive copper prices gave early explorers an impetus for prospecting. The chief asset, on which the early miners depended, was the phenomenally low cost of local labour from rural areas. From then onwards, settlements grew into what are now the major Cities and Towns on the Copperbelt. Copper mining did not only attract labour from rural Zambia, but immigrant workers come from neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe and Tanzania as well as traders from countries such as India thus making the copperbelt cosmopolitan.

This industry has continued to attract internal and international migration flows. The contributing factor to internal migration flows, especially the rural-urban drift, is in response to urban employment opportunities as well as availability of social facilities.

In terms of international migration flows, a sizeable number of Chinese nationals have come to invest in copper mining as well as in other secondary industries to service the mining sector including farming, in the recent past.

Further, Zambia hosts the headquarters of the Common Market for Eastern and Sothern Africa (COMESA), whose secretariat is located in Lusaka. One of the objectives of COMESA is to overcome trade barriers faced by member states which has encouraged cross border trading which is another contributing factor to international migration flows. In Lusaka, the local authority has designated an area called "COMESA Market" for small traders from member states who deal in various merchandise. A number of

immigrant traders from the Common Market countries operate from this market together with their Zambian counterparts.

Local policies on migration

There are no specific policies made by cities to address migration factors save for the usual basic and infrastructure mandates provided and enjoyed by all the inhabitants of a given city council area. In the past, government working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) established refugee camps in various parts of the country. The camps were fully supplied with basic services. These camps have since been disbanded and most of the refugees repatriated to the countries of origin and those who have opted to stay behind have been integrated into local population enjoying public services provided by cities and towns like other Zambians.

In fact, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) encourages the principle of free movement of persons within member states and rights of residence.

Challenges Associated with mobility flows

The challenges associated with mobility flows both internal and international include, exerting pressure on cities and towns as regards the provision of basic services including the problems associated with land management which have led to the mushrooming of unplanned settlements.

As you will agree, internal and international migration has a bearing on issues of urbanisation. In this regard, the Local Government Association of Zambia has recognised a policy vacuum on urbanisation and has resolved to engage government to develop policy guidelines for local government on this matter.

Social policies and services

In terms of social policies and services, the contemporary social challenge is that relating to HIV and AIDS. The National HIV and AIDS Framework covering the period 2014 – 2016 constitutes a multi-sectoral, multi-layer and decentralized response to HIV and AIDS in Zambia. The Framework is designed to provide

adequate space and opportunities for various stakeholders to actively participate in the implementation of evidence supported programmes based on their mandates and comparative advantages.

The Framework has identified sex workers, mobile and migrant populations as key targets in the population needing impact interventions in the national response to HIV and AIDS. The National AIDS Council in collaboration with the country office of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders Initiative for Community Action on Aids at the Local Level (AMICAALL) identified three border towns of Chililabombwe, Kazungula and Sesheke as targets for the implementation of high impact interventions. The three towns were assisted in the development of strategic plans to be used as key documents to guide local response. The plans have since been finalized and operationalized focusing on sex workers, migrant and mobile population regardless of their country of origin. The high impact strategic interventions include:

- Treatment care and support;
- HIV Testing and counseling;
- Elimination of mother to child transmission;
- Voluntary medical male circumcision;
- Comprehensive condom programming; and
- Social behavior change communication.