

**NIGERIA'S STATEMENT AT THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION,
GENEVA, 5-7 DECEMBER 2011**

**Mr. Chairman,
Director-General,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Nigeria associates itself with the position of the Africa Group and wishes to make these additional comments.

We appreciate the Director-General's comments (yesterday) on the evolution of our organization and the achievements it has recorded over the years. We note with admiration that from less than 30 states at inception, IOM has grown to about 146 states in 2011 with several offices around the world. Such exponential growth is a clear evidence of the acceptance of IOM as a credible instrument for tackling the multidimensional challenges of migration in our time.

Among other things, rapid population growth, escalating ethnic conflicts, persistent economic decline, poverty and natural disasters have exacerbated the challenges of migration. The increasing population growth has not been matched by economic growth leading to widespread poverty, political instability and therefore, unprecedented human mobility from the low to the high income and more stable developed economies.

Mr. Chairman,

In Africa, migration remains a historic instrument of cross-cultural linkages among the various nationalities long before colonialism. There was an absence of structured borders, among the nationalities, the lure of socio-cultural affinities, trade and economic opportunities, facilitating cross border labour mobility. In 2010, more than 8.4 million international migrants excluding irregulars were recorded in West Africa, making the sub-region one of the most migration-intensive regions in the world, a situation that informed the formation of the Economic Community of West African States in 1975. Today, the free movement of persons and goods is a landmark achievement of ECOWAS, which other developing regions of the South may copy to promote Action on Migration and Development.

Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria is a key player on issues of migration as a country of origin, transit and destination. Consequently, a draft national policy on migration and development is in place. It features a number of cross-cutting social issues such as security, irregular migration, the rights of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons, and proposes the establishment of an Agency for migration management consistent with the national development plan and international best practices.

Currently, Nigeria's economy is undergoing transformation towards private sector ownership of capital, stimulation of entrepreneurship, and provision of critical infrastructure, such as

roads, railways, electricity and water supply, at a cost of over 25 billion dollars in the next four years. The plan will benefit from labour migration hence the government is seeking partnership with foreign investors, skilled migrants and suppliers of technology.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the role of IOM in protecting the lives and safe-guarding the welfare of African migrants, including Nigerians caught up in the conflicts in North Africa. The IOM has thus become a critical player in securing the dignity and human rights of peoples, especially blacks who are the historical victims of xenophobia and discrimination.

Mr. Chairman, Nigeria recognizes IOM's effort to improve service delivery through structural and budgetary reforms, as it explores alternative funding sources beyond member states' contributions. We encourage private funding that guarantees flexibility and do not stymie the capacity of the organization to perform its core functions. We also support increased funding and donations to the IOM Development Fund (1035 facility) hence the appreciation of my government to the Government of Austria, the United States, Italy, Hungary and other donor countries whose generosity has sustained this crucial facility over the years.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.