

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MRS. EBUN ADEBOLA JUSU, DEPUTY MINISTER  
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AT THE  
IOM CONFERENCE**

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Colleagues

It is my pleasure to join you today at this historic occasion that marks the 100<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOM Council meeting which coincides with the organization's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Migration is a catalyst for change that affects all nations of the World and impacts on society in diverse ways. I trust our gathering here today will discuss this all important phenomena with a view to chart the best way of addressing the fundamental challenge of developing humane, orderly and equitable migration polices that will acknowledge national sovereignty vis-à-vis population movement and at the same time respect the peoples' desire to migrate, in the bid to improve their lives.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, you would agree with me that migration is linked to several economic factors such as improved quality of life, financial stability, and access to education, to name but a few, which are some of the factors responsible for global immigration. For the new migrant and the host country, migration changes the economic landscape of the new home country and its inhabitants.

The benefits of migration are several and varied and one of the most important is the chances of increased financial remuneration for work. Most first world economies have a statutory minimum wage which is very attractive to migrant workers from the less developed countries. Because these migrants have been used to a lower wage and surviving on a lower standard of living, increased remuneration create an opportunity for financial savings and these savings are repatriated back home. There is a corresponding benefit to the host country where the contribution of the migrant remains perpetually significant

Another significant experience migration offers to migrants in highly developed welfare states is the benefit system for the unemployed, the state-funded health care and subsidized education which are accessed without having to pay exorbitant fees. To the host country, the economic consequences are grave as migration on a larger scale can put welfare services into crisis. In essence, migration results in a deficit for the welfare services of developed countries. However, it also results in net increase in the economy because of migrants contribution in taxes and other forms of revenue.

At this stage I would also like to reemphasize migrants' transfer of money. Such transfers appear both on the current and capital accounts of the balance of payment. For example when remittances are made by migrant workers, a portion of their monthly wage might be sent back to their families living in another country. In most cases, the capital transfer transaction may not end between the migrant worker and his family, but transfer can arise from the migration of a person from one economy to another. As a result money that accumulates in bank accounts and returns from investment that is sent, is remitted home.

Viewing it from the angle of inward foreign direct investment, migrants' capital transfers are now the second largest source of capital inflow to emerging markets and developing countries and this help to fund the current account deficits of economies with balance of payment problems.

Apart from the financial remittances that have been recognized earlier on, social remittances including the transfer of ideas, behavior, identities and social capital which have been receiving much less attention, are also very relevant. Migration serves as an engine in the process of pursuing transformed notion and personal identity. It helps societies redefine their collective identities and maintain social cohesion in the face of increasing diversity. On the other hand, migrants may bring new ideas into their host countries whereas in some cases some migrant communities may cling to their original cultures/traditions, even if those practices have since changed. As a result there are bound to be tensions in such situations, which could be negotiated in daily social interactions.

Sierra Leone has gone through these experiences, in an environment where migration was at its climax during the civil war (1991-2002), when most Sierra Leoneans were subjected to forced migration to other parts of the world for safety and /or in search of other greener pastures.

After the war, the Government saw the need for accelerated economic development and post-war reconstruction, and it took a decision to call back home Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora. They joined the vanguard of experts to spin the wheels of our economy with the diverse ideas they had acquired from the diaspora. Currently, they are our most reliable partners in promoting social change and fostering positive contributions

Much of the remittances sent home by the Sierra Leonean migrants have been invested to strengthen the private sector of the economy, which is currently better off than it had been over the past two decades.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is therefore advisable that we view migration as a blessing to a state and its nationals, provided the process is well coordinated. You would agree with me that it has been difficult for emerging economies to succeed without the impact and contribution of migrants in both home and host countries, as migration itself keeps societies dynamic.

I would also at this stage like to brief this august body that the IOM has been doing remarkably well in post conflict Sierra Leone. The IOM has been resourceful in joining other organizations in the resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) in areas declared safe in the country, and has also been collaborated with the National Commission Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration and the UN-OCHA (United Nations Office in Charge of Humanitarian Affairs) in the implementation of the project for income generating opportunities for demobilized ex-combatants. The organization has also continued to assist with all travel arrangements and airport exit procedures for refugees resettling in the USA, Canada, Australia and Scandinavian countries. This encompasses family reunification as well. Through the IOM, Sierra Leone's Immigration Department has received serious capacity development of its staff including the introduction of Passenger Information Registration System (PIRS) at the country's main Airport and some border areas.

To combat the scourge of trafficking in persons, the IOM has been working assiduously through projects, with the Government of Sierra Leone. Through the Peace Building Projects, the organization has been able to rehabilitate the prisons system, supported the capacity building of Parliament and the implementation of Sierra Leone Reparations Programme. Under the Diaspora Programme, the Organization is supporting the Human Resource and Capacity Development Programme through temporal transfer of Sierra Leonean from the Netherlands to

support development of the country. It has also supported the establishment of Labour Migration Unit at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

In spite of the assistance discussed above, the Government's huge task in pursuing post conflict reconstruction, has denied some areas, including the IOM adequate attention as we have not been able to pay our contributions regularly. We are sensitive of the fact that as a government emerging from war, our assistance to adding to the core fund of the IOM remains our responsibility in the near future.

Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, It is my fervent hope that by the end of this conference, states party would have acquired enough ideas and expertise to help manage pertinent migration issues that border on the perception of migrant and migration, migration policies and the negative impacts of migration. I trust the exchange of ideas at this conference would help enrich our ideas on migration issues and help promote strategies for building social capital and cohesion at local level, as a catalyst for ensuring that migration remains a development tool.

In conclusion, let me use this opportunity to acknowledge the good work being done by Mr. Sanusi Savage the Officer in Charge of IOM activities in Sierra Leone. He is generally coordinating IOM activities in that country and was instrumental in putting my trip together. As Sierra Leoneans, we feel honoured to have a trusted Sierra Leonean running the IOM Office in Sierra Leone.

I thank you for your attention.