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**PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**STATEMENT BY MR BURTON JOSEPH
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ON BEHALF OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION
TO THE 90TH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL**

Mr Chair
Director-General
Deputy Director-General
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me, on behalf of the South African delegation to congratulate you, Mr Chair, and the other new Members of the Bureau upon your election. Our appreciation also goes to the previous Bureau, especially Ambassador D'Alba who lead our discussions on the IOM Strategy paper. My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement by the Algerian delegate on behalf of the African Group.

Mr Chair,

In keeping with the theme of this year's *International Dialogue on Migration of policy coherence* in the domain of migration management, we wish to highlight some important developments in the South African and our region, Southern Africa.

The South African Government has recently undertaken important steps to fundamentally overhaul its immigration policies. *The Immigration Amendment Act* was adopted during October 2004 and South Africa finalized the *Immigration Regulations*, which regulates the practical implementation of the Act, during July this year. This new immigration regime facilitates increased investment, trade and tourism, employment, the attraction of skills and expertise and the movement of natural persons into South Africa in line with our economic growth and development policies. At the same time the immigration legislation also discourages irregular movement by providing for a series of visa options that will allow visitors and migrants alike to regularize their stay.

It is also important to note that the new immigration policy regime is the product of a *consultative process* amongst government departments, organs of civil society, business, non-governmental organizations, organized labour, academics and the Immigration Advisory Board.

In South Africa, there is a growing recognition of the fact that migration management is a *cross-cutting issue* which impacts on the mandates of many government departments and agencies. In this regard, the Government of South Africa emphasizes the harmonization of legislation and the coordination of the activities of departments through our "cluster system". These efforts at harmonization and coordination will contribute to policy coherence and will change that nature of migration management in the country quite profoundly.

Mr. Chair,

In terms of dealing with issues of *skills flight*, South Africa has entered into an agreement with the Government of the United Kingdom on the recruitment of health professionals from South Africa. South Africa also supports initiatives such the *Code of Conduct* signed by *Commonwealth Health Ministers* to address brain drain issues. South Africa is also relying on innovative *South-South arrangements* to address its

skills shortage. We believe that the current process of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on a *draft multilateral framework on labour migration* will address some of the concerns of African and other developing countries.

Mr. Chair,

During the panel discussion on policy coherence, we heard that *bilateral agreements* on migration issues could pave the way for more coherent multilateral approaches to migration management in regions. In this context we are also pleased to mention that we signed a visa waiver agreement with Mozambique during April 2005, which brings the number of such visa waiver agreements with our neighbors, to eight. These agreements reflect our recognition of the reality of migratory movements in our region and our view that this movement should be managed in a manner that is conducive to the growth and development of the region. South Africa and Mozambique have also signed a bilateral labour agreement aimed at balancing the objectives of improving the efficiency of the bilateral labour market with, at its core, ensuring the protection and security of migration workers in the two countries.

Mr. Chair,

In terms of achieving policy coherence at the regional and sub-regional level, it could be mentioned that the *Southern African Development Community* (SADC) has adopted the *Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of People* during August 2005 and that SADC member states are now in the process of formal ratification. The Protocol emphasizes sustainable economic development in the region and therefore aims to facilitate the movement of our people in the region by eliminating obstacles that impede our people from conducting activities that contribute to the development of the region. This Protocol, together with those of the other sub-regions of our Continent, will contribute to an eventual continental migration management framework that incorporates the migration issues and solutions unique to various regions in a coordinated manner.

Our delegation would like to thank the IOM Regional Representative Office in Pretoria for its continued and substantial support to our region. The South African Government was pleased to co-host the recent *Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa* (MIDSA) Workshop on Capacity-building, sponsored by the Swiss Government. Capacity building, which encompassed both systems and human resource dimensions, is one of the key issues that directly influences the attainment effective migration management in our region and remains a priority.

In this regard, South Africa welcomes the establishment of the IOM's *Technical Cooperation Center* in the Southern African Region to provide sustainable capacity building support. Since South Africa views migration as a developmental issue in the first instance, it is our hope that these initiatives would enable governments in the region to effectively realize the potential developmental benefits of migration.

Mr. Chair,

Our delegation wishes to express our appreciation for of the IOM, and in this regard, wishes to thank in particular the Deputy Director-General, Mrs Ndiaye, for her

commitment and enthusiasm for the developments in our region. Our close cooperation with the African Regional Advisor, Ms Meera Sethi, and the advice she offers to our and other African delegations is of great value.

During the debates of the past few days, we came to appreciate anew how migration is a phenomenon of truly global dimensions. As such, we would like to encourage the IOM, in developing programmes and planning budgets, to continue its efforts to approach this phenomenon in similar global manner where the push factors in developing country's receive as much attention as the management of migration issues in developed countries. South Africa would therefore encourage the IOM to develop its programme of work in such a manner that we in Africa can recognize ourselves in the Organisation's budget allocations, projects, issues and representatives. In this regard, we wish to register our concern with the issue of arrears and encourage the IOM to continue to engage relevant member states in order to find ways to deal with the issue in an innovative and proactive manner.

I thank you.