



**Republic of South Sudan
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
Directorate of Consular Affairs**

**Statement of the Hon. Deng Dau Deng Malek, Deputy Minister
of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation of the Republic of South Sudan**

**International Dialogue on Migration
COVID-19 Crisis: Reimagining the Role of Migrants and Human Mobility for the
Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
Geneva, 15-16 October 2020**

H.E. António Vitorino, Director General, IOM,

Distinguished Panellists,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greet you all on my own behalf and on behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of South Sudan.

It is an honour to be one of the Panellists on this important topic (safe, coordinated and inclusive human mobility is key to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic), and to exchange views on the implications for and the future of migrants and human mobility during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

As this year session of International Dialogue on Immigration convenes discussions on the implications of COVID-19 pandemic on migrants, migration and human mobility as well as migrants' contributions towards recovery efforts from the COVID-19, we look at disruptive patterns brought upon migrants and migration as whole by the pandemic.

Traditionally, people migrate around the world as a result of conflict, natural disasters or environmental challenges. Disruptions such as floods, droughts and wildfires destroy homes and properties, and contribute to the displacement of people. These challenges contribute to some of humans' decisions to move away in search of better living conditions around the globe.

In addition, the onset and continuous spread of COVID-19 around the world doubles up stress on migrants. Currently migrants worldwide are more vulnerable than others because of personal, social and situational factors brought upon by COVID-19 pandemic. People displaced internally and across borders are particularly also at risk due to regulatory changes introduced as part of **global response** to contain the pandemic.

In efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 and flatten the curve of infections, governments around the world, including the government of the Republic of South Sudan, have introduced stringent measures that include travel restrictions. Labour migration has been temporarily suspended in some countries while, in others, migration processing and assistance to asylum seekers are being frozen. These restrictions are already impacting the mobility, migration and economic.

With current global infections and death toll standing at alarming figures, the impact of COVID-19 over economies and migration is likely to be catastrophic in the foreseeable future.

South Sudan has seen large population movements between South Sudan-Northern Kenya, Northern Uganda, North Eastern DRC, South West Ethiopia, Eastern Central African Republic, and Northern borders with Sudan.

In light of these movements, the government of the Republic of South Sudan responded by formulating a migration policy to improve and to establish a system of policies and institutions to manage migration in the country. This policy organizes action through four main objectives:

1. To develop a comprehensive framework for border management and the governance of free movement.
2. To promote regular labour migration for the socio-economic development of the Republic of South Sudan and its people.
3. To manage forced migration and provide adequate support to victims of forced migration.
4. To promote migration and development in South Sudan by mobilizing the South Sudanese diaspora for country socio-economic development and welfare of South Sudanese abroad, reaping development benefits of remittances, facilitating reintegration of returning labour migrant.

The policy takes stock of decades of protracted conflict together with the emerging challenges brought about by mobility and migration in the region, combining humanitarian with long-term migration agendas. Despite ongoing progress in building national and state economic, legislative and judicial structures, the institutions in charge of migration management remain in critical need of actions to improve the capacity of the State in dealing with migration-related challenges.

As of latest, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the IOM have launched the national awareness programme to sensitize citizens on human trafficking. The launch which took place last week aims at raising awareness on trafficking in persons among all stakeholders, especially policymakers, legal practitioners, traditional and faith-based leaders and the general public.

As of now South Sudan has recorded over 2,600 cases and about 49 deaths so far. We believe that as part of the community of nations, we still face the risk of recurrent surge of infections if enabling measures are not implemented. Allow me at this juncture to seize the opportunity and thank the friendly and sisterly countries which have been assisting South Sudan in efforts of combating COVID-19, and I appeal to them to continue doing that.

Challenges face by migrants:

As we all know, migrants are currently facing enormous challenges, including but not limited to, the following:

1. Health crisis, as they become more exposed to the virus, often in crowded conditions in makeshift camps where social distancing is an impossible.
2. Socio-economic crisis, especially those working in the informal economy without access to social protection.
3. Protection crisis, since most of the countries have imposed border restrictions to contain the spread of the virus.
4. Stigmatization of migrants through fake news, misinformation and politicization of the issue of migration. This stigmatization carries the risk of higher infection when migrants for instant hide potential symptoms instead of seeking treatment. It can also entail longer term consequences for migrants' integration and social cohesion.

Contributions of migrants in response to COVID:

- The contributions of migrant doctors and nurses during the pandemic have been critical and important component of the frontline workers in some countries around the globe.
- A state with a sufficient number of skilled and motivated health workers performs well as seen in some countries during this pandemic and inclusion of Diaspora medical professionals has been relieving in dealing with aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic;
- Remittances from migrants to their relatives in their home countries support families which would have been in a direr economic situation;

Way forward for Recovery:

- Recognition of foreign qualifications and credentials to bridge the shortage of health workers by including migrants in health system without discrimination;
- Ensure that migrant health workers have equal working conditions with other health workers and acknowledge their contribution to the functioning of national health systems while fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Identify the opportunities associated with the globalisation of medical education that aligns the number of internship and specialty training places to allow international students to complete their training.

I thank you all for your listening