

**Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable
Development Goals (SDG) Ministerial Segment
Ambassador Laura Thompson
Deputy Director General
International Organization for Migration
Addis Ababa, 4 and 5 November 2013**

Mr. Moderator, Honourable Ministers, Excellences, Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), I would like to thank the Government and people of Ethiopia for hosting this Ministerial forum, and the African Union, UNECA and African Development Bank for organising this Regional Consultative meeting on sustainable development.

Human mobility is extremely relevant to Africa's Development agenda. We live in an era of unprecedented human mobility, in which more people are on the move – roughly one in every seven people in the world – more than at any other time in recorded history. Migration trends are increasingly complex and diverse, and impact significantly development, including economic growth and labour markets, national demographic profiles, and built and natural environments, in particular urbanisation trends. Today, South-south migration is as

important as south-north migration. 19.3 million African migrants move within the continent according to the World Bank.

The relationship between migration and development is complex, multifaceted, and mutually reinforcing:

- On the one hand, migration is a key enabler for equitable, inclusive and sustainable social and economic development.
- On the other hand, migration can exacerbate vulnerabilities or lead to human rights abuses and exploitation, and can itself be the result of poor development including environmental degradation and climate change.

In addition, migration holds important potential as an enabler of the three pillars of sustainable development, and of peace and security, and offers significant economic benefits to both countries of origin and destination, as well as to individuals and their communities.

However governments face challenges to understand how to enhance the positive contributions of migration to the development of countries and societies. They face lack of good data; lack of systematic analysis on the migration realities they face; they don't know how migrations trends are affected by their legislation and policies and how they impact on development.

In this context, I would like to underline 3 issues of significant importance for consideration in the sustainable development agenda for Africa:

• From an Economic perspective:

Remittances are one of the developmental effects of migration and their effects are felt most distinctly at the individual or household level but also at the community or national levels. As African migration is generally on the rise, remittances are bound to increase with significant impact on poverty reduction. Remittances constitutes between 8-25% of the the GDP of some African countries such as Lesotho, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, and The Gambia, and represent the largest source of foreign currency.

Furthermore, the role and contribution of the African Diaspora in terms of investment, skills, innovation and social remittances is a major contribution to the development of a number of African Countries. It is therefore important that Governments and financial institutions reduce transaction costs, improve their basic reporting and tracking of official remittance receipts and loosen foreign exchange controls to allow migrant workers to open foreign currency accounts.

• From a Social perspective:

Migration is also a social phenomenon, especially in Africa where the young population is in search of better opportunities in employment, education, and safety from conflicts. However, if **not** managed properly, Migration create risks of inequalities and vulnerabilities including trafficking in human beings especially women and children; and the need to prevent unfortunate tragedies as those witnessed very recently in Lampedusa and Niger.

Additionally, the 'feminisation' of migration represents one of the most significant trends in recent international migration streams, 9 million women migrants in Africa according to the World Bank. This relatively new phenomenon influences the shaping of roles and affects traditional relationships between men and women in countries of origin as well as of destination as a result of their empowerment through education, work experience, exposure and economic independence, but also creates new potential vulnerabilities important to address to prevent their exploitation and abuse.

The freedom of movement in some regions in Africa has also contributed to intra-regional integration and economic cooperation; including in boosting intra-Africa trade especially for women who constitute the bulk of cross-border trade in Africa. This calls for effective migration and border management schemes.

ð Finally, from an Environmental perspective:

Environmental degradation has a direct implication on human mobility and, at the same time, massive population movement can also be a factor of environmental degradation. Climate change will continue to have serious implications especially on pastoral communities.

Similarly, environmental degradation is often the trigger for massive population displacement contributing to the growing number of IDPs. Including migration in disaster risk reduction policies could curb the marginalisation of these vulnerable groups by enhancing capacities for disaster risk reduction and emergency humanitarian response.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the on-going process to define a new UN development framework beyond 2015 provides a unique opportunity to integrate migration more fully into the institutional and normative framework for sustainable development. This was fully recognised by the declaration adopted and the conclusions achieved at the United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development that took place a month ago in New York.

It is in light of the social and economic development potential of migration and its contribution to sustainable development and the well-being of society as a whole, and in the esprit of ownership that the Honourable Deputy Minister of Finance of Liberia was referring at before, it is that IOM would like to urge that migration be integrated in the African Common Position on the Post 2015 Development Agenda as one of the Development Enablers and as an indicator for a number

of development goals, such as poverty alleviation, disaster risk reduction, education, health and decent work.

Thank you