

**112th session of IOM Council – Council Panel on the launch of the World Migration Report 2022
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**Statement by the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Kingdom of Eswatini, Hon.
Pholile P. Shakantu**

Excellencies, Director General, Deputy Director General, Ambassadors and High Commissioners and Distinguished Representatives of IOM Member States,
Distinguished Participants,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address this IOM Council meeting of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on the launch of the new World Migration Report. I am particularly delighted because the Kingdom of Eswatini was the 130th Member State of IOM when it joined the Organization in November 2010 and since then our partnership with IOM has blossomed into numerous areas of cooperation on migration governance and I would like to seize this unique opportunity to express my profound appreciation to IOM for its continuous support and for inviting me to make a few remarks at this launch of the *World Migration Report 2022*.

Our gathering here also occurs at a time of continued anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which has resulted in global economic and financial downturn, and the changing composition of the Nation State as countries face the challenge of managing social diversity within their borders. It is a cruel irony that as IOM celebrates its 70th Anniversary in 2021, even traditional migrant countries that have, in the past, taken pride in being a "migrant society" or a "nation of migrants" are no longer sure they want to welcome newcomers; and yet migrants are critical for economic recovery and future growth.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted all forms of human mobility, including international migration as a result of travel restrictions including border closures, suspension of flights, lockdowns, etc to contain the virus. Preliminary estimates suggest that by mid-2020 the pandemic may have reduced the growth in the stock of international migrants by around two million. The pandemic is projected to cause a significant decline in remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries including my own country.

In that regard, the IOM's support to its Member States in response to the Covid-19 pandemic is and remains commendable and shows even more the important role the IOM plays in the recovery process. The resumption of more international flights and cross-border mobility and international migration while at the same time safeguarding global public health are some of key areas where the IOM will continue be a key actor.

While there is no magic formula nor one that is universally applicable, a responsible migration policy and action plan is one that – on one hand, respects national sovereignty in determining who enters a country and that those who do enter will uphold and respect local custom and laws; and, on the other hand, that

policy must respect the age-old desire of people to migrate to seek a better life – mankind's oldest poverty reduction and development strategy – and the person's expectation is that his/her rights as a person will be honoured and respected when they do migrate.

Migration is a key feature of all IOM Member and non-member States and is overwhelmingly positive for migrants and communities both in countries of origin and destination, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, migration will remain an important facet of the global socio-economic landscape. We therefore need to reimagine the role of migrants and human mobility for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is in light of this reality that I commend IOM and the Member States for this World Migration Report; a flagship publication and IOM's significant contribution to improving the understanding of migration globally. The report has high utility and impact, being used as a fact-checking tool to counter misinformation on migration and migrants and has helped governments to manage migration more effectively by providing accurate, reliable, and rigorous information and analysis on key migration topics, including policy challenges raised by emerging migration issues.

As governments, it is our hope that the report would be a very useful guide and a tool to inform the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration at the regional, subregional and national level as well as inform member state dialogues with the UN Migration Network.

I am therefore confident and hopeful that the World Migration Report will provide additional perspectives that ensure a more complete understanding of this complex phenomenon, thereby correcting misconceptions regarding international migration especially African migration and we look forward to working with all IOM Member and non-member States to manage migration for the benefit of all nations around the globe.

To that end, we have seen the expansion of language outputs of the World Migration Report increase over the years, reaching a record 10 languages for the 2020 edition, including Swahili and Portuguese. Language accessibility is particularly important if we are to encourage common understandings of migration based on evidence, data and knowledge. I look forward to current and new donors from government and non-government sectors continuing to support IOM in its efforts to extend the World Migration Report's linguistic accessibility, including in more official languages of the developing world.

Thank you for your kind attention and for the opportunity to offer our remarks on the IOM's World Migration Report.