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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
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STATEMENT

BY

**HON. MAJOR GENERAL MOENG R. PHETO, MP
MINISTER OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS**

AT THE

**HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

14 SEPTEMBER 2006, NEW YORK

Madame President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me, Madame President, to congratulate you on your election to the helm of this august body. My delegation is confident that your vast diplomatic experience will steer our deliberations successfully during this important Dialogue. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development Is a milestone in the global discussions on one of the most important issues of our time.

We thank the Secretary General for his illuminating report, as well as the Global Commission report on International Migration, which brings to our attention the important international migration issue, and above all, its relationship to development, and the imperative need to prudently manage it for the benefit of all.

Madame President, migration has always been part of human behaviour, influenced by the desire and quest for a better life, safety and security. The phenomenon has accelerated with the advent of globalization. This Dialogue Is a clear testimony that migration is a global issue that cannot be ignored and consequently requires international cooperation, partnership and coordination. It should also be an opportunity to openly deal with the root causes of migration, for in doing so, there is hope that proposed solutions may have a long lasting effect.

Madame President, allow me to share with you our national experience in this connection. Botswana evolved from one of the poorest countries in the world to attain the status of a middle-income country over the last forty years. With the literacy rate of about 69% and a small population of a little over a million in 1993, it is very clear that the country could not have achieved this on Its own. It was through the help of migrants from all over the world, including professionals from different fields of human endeavour. In addition, we have benefited from investors who created much needed employment opportunities that contributed to the social welfare of our people. Botswana is grateful for the tremendous contribution these foreigners have made in building our economy.

We also had thousands of our people going abroad to look for employment opportunities, as well as for educational purposes. Over the years, some of these citizens have come back home having acquired expertise In different areas. This has proved to be extremely beneficial to our national development. In this sense, we have been both a country of origin and a receiving state.

This is a story to which most of us can relate. The challenge, as always, is the ability to strike a balance between the interests of the receiving states and the sending states. There are issues of varying development levels amongst countries, between regions, continents and hemispheres. There are also challenges of nation building and democracy. Not very far from these are issues of security and health.

Madame President, Governments, In the first instance, carry the responsibility of improving the lives of their people by exploiting both the human potential of their subjects and the natural resources found within their borders. The international community, in the second instance, has a moral obligation to support the efforts of countries in the throes of development. Foreign direct investment, bilateral cooperation, as well as multilateral arrangements have a significant role to play in this respect.

A case in point is the HIV/AIDS scourge which threatens much of the developing world and in particular sub-Saharan Africa. Not only are countries compelled to divert their meager resources from development to wage war against the pandemic, the same countries lose the few health workers they have to the developed world, thus worsening the scares skills gaps in the health sector. A further complication is that in practical terms, it is difficult to treat one part of the community e.g. citizens, and exclude other community members e.g. migrants, and still hope to overcome the disease.

This disease brings to the fore the argument for collaborative efforts across the world through a comprehensive and coherent framework. This international solidarity and complementary action should extend to all aspects of international migration.

Madame President, let me conclude by reaffirming Botswana's commitment to the continuing dialogue on international migration and development. We have already put some policies in place to manage international migration, and we look forward to learning from other countries' experiences. We also stand ready to exchange views on how to collectively address the migration challenges.

Thank you.