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STATEMENT

BY

**HON. TEOPOLINA MUSHELENGA
DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS
AND IMMIGRATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
AT**

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

NEW YORK, 14 SEPTEMBER 2006

**Madam President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you on your election as President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly. I would like to assure you, Madam President, of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation is very pleased to participate in this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. This important forum offers Member States an opportunity to address one of the global challenges facing the world today, the international migration. We welcome the opportunity to discuss and reflect more on these issues which have both common and also different implications for our countries and indeed for the world at large. In this regard, Namibia reiterates its full support for the African Common Position on Migration and Development adopted in Banjul.

Madam President,

Migration is multi-faceted and complex, affecting and being affected by human security, economic, social and political developments, gender inequality as well as many other processes.

Therefore, responses to migration must be comprehensive, contextually appropriate and cognizant of both the contribution and effects of migration to development, security and political stability. It is equally important to take into consideration that the majority of migrants worldwide are women and in many places they outnumber male migrants. Gender inequality contributes to the forced migration of women and girls and also to their trafficking.

Madam President,

The foundation of Namibian immigration policy is our desire to promote development with equity and to manage migration in order to ensure that it contributes to our over-all development objectives and does not undermine the progress we have made so far. We are, therefore, seeking to attract sustainable and suitable investment into the country, importation of specific skills and their transfer to Namibians. We also believe that those who come can learn new skills from us that they will eventually take with them.

We are realists and therefore recognize that an immigration policy in today's world should also address security concerns of both receiving states and migrants. We will need to find ways to ensure that state security and the obligations to guarantee social, economic, security and safety to its citizens are not compromised.

Madam President,

We recognise the positive effects that migration can have on economic development of both the countries of origin and the countries of destination. However, we are convinced that the migration of skilled persons presents a drain to the country of origin because it loses the investment made in their

training. We therefore hope that this High-level Dialogue will provide us with best ideas that will help us formulate policy guidelines that ensure that brain **gain** in some countries does not mean **brain drain** in others. In this regard, we recognize the need for more cooperation between States and non-State actors in maximising development benefits derived from Migration. We welcome the participation of the private sector, non-governmental organisations and civil society **in** this Dialogue.

Madam President,

Some migration **is** fuelled by instability and uncertainty – while many are searching for places where the economic and social conditions are better. Others are simply searching for a place where they can be safe. In the Southern African region the asylum/migration nexus is an increasing problem. Over the last decade and a half or so, Southern Africa was transformed from a sending to a receiving region. Namibia – with its long history of support from the United Nations and its own experiences of exile - continues to respect the institution of asylum and refugee rights. At the same time, we are also seeking to promote voluntary repatriation of those refugees who can return to countries where stability and peace now have returned. In the near future we will also look at the issue of local integration for a to-be-determined number of refugees – long-stayers who no longer have ties to their countries of origin or are unable to return for other reasons, and who can contribute to our national development objectives.

Namibia along with other African countries has been reviewing legal and normative frameworks to promote safe and managed migration. An important guiding instrument is the SADC Protocol on Facilitation of Movements of Persons and Goods. This instrument however, needs to be buttressed by good practices.

One of the recommendations of the comprehensive study done by the Global **Commission** on International Migration calls for bilateral agreements as a means of addressing migration issues that affect two States. In this regard, Namibia has Agreements with our neighbours, Angola and Zambia, to allow communities living along the common border – free movement within limited distance inside each country – with the simple requirement of a border pass. These arrangements encourage cross border time, cultural exchanges and harmonious relations between and among States.

Finally, Madam President, Namibia hopes that this Dialogue should not be an end in itself but a beginning of multilateral discussions that will help the international community to find solution to this challenge. This Dialogue should also look at the capacity of the receiving State with the view to helping it to better manage the challenge posed by migration. In this regard, the need for technical and humanitarian assistance for the developing countries should be recognized and addressed. In this context, Namibia welcomes and supports the proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish an International Forum for Dialogue on Migration and Development.

I thank you.