



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

ADDRESS BY

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**MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IMMIGRATION AT THE 2016 UN HIGH
LEVEL MEETING ON ADDRESSING LARGE MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES AND
MIGRANTS**

19 SEPTEMBER 2016

NEW YORK

Mr. President

Your Excellencies

Members of delegation

Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning!

I am privileged and honoured to address the 2016 UN High Level Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants in this historic City of New York. This meeting is taking place when the movement of people have reached an unprecedented level requiring nations to work together to manage the movement and ensure that the rights of migrants and refugees are observed and respected.

Namibia as a country hosting refugees that came to our country as a result of conflicts in their countries of origin. In this regard, a place where Government provides support and amenities is dedicated, making it easy to ensure safety, and provides shelter to refugees. The Government also provides free primary and secondary education to refugees and asylum seekers' children as well as free medical services to all refugees. Currently Namibia is hosting 3388 (three thousand three hundred and eighty eight) refugees and asylum seekers.

Providing assistance to refugees and asylum seekers is however not a sustainable exercise for Governments and also does not provide a dignified life for the affected community. The world must look at addressing the root causes of displacements forcing human beings to abandon their livelihood in the countries of birth, to a life in refugee settlements. Although host countries may, where possible, consider the local integration for those who so choose, and

which provides a degree of a dignified life, not all refugees can benefit from this option.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Namibia has just launched the first country Migration Profile in June 2016. The profile has provided further clarity that migrants are contributing to economic growth and development in our country, through filling of positions in various sectors where the internal labour market has critical shortages. This has presented us an opportunity to tap from migrants in those sectors while directing training of locals in areas identified to reduce the deficit in the labour market. Deliberate policies are now being crafted to respond to the need and provide a policy framework in managing the process.

While migration has a positive impact on development, Governments must ensure that people are not migrating out of desperation but as a choice. Equally, we need to encourage our people to use legal channels of migration. The sending, transit and receiving States need to work together on this to reduce the vulnerabilities created when illegal migration channels are used.

Mr. President

Ladies and gentlemen

Continued political unrest worldwide remains the driver of millions of people from the places of habitat to the unknown world across international boundaries. At the same time resources to provide support to the refugees are diminishing. The international community needs to work towards the elimination of all man-made causes of migration to

reduce human suffering and improve human lives. These causes are well known and well documented such as human rights violation and abuse, armed conflict, persecution, terrorism, poverty and food insecurity. Environmentally, some countries are adversely affected by natural disasters as a result of climate change and natural disasters.

In conclusion, nations need to work together to improve conditions so as to make migration a choice rather than the only alternative. On the other hand, receiving and sending countries need to work together to ensure respect of human rights of those who choose to migrate and those forced to leave their places of residence due to unfortunate conflicts or natural disasters. Namibia, though also affected by climate change effects, is ready to play its part in this endeavour.

I thank you.