

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



CLOSING STATEMENT

BY

RIGHT HONOURABLE DR SAARA KUUGONGWELWA-AMADHILA ,

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,

AT THE

CLOSING CEREMONY OF

THE 2019 MIGRATION DIALOGUE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA (MDSA)

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 28, 2019, WINDHOEK

- Director of ceremonies,
- Honourable Frans Kapofi, Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration, and Chair of the 2019 MIDSA Ministerial Conference;
- Honourable SADC Ministers and Deputy Ministers responsible for Migration, Labour and International Relations;
- Ms Rachel Odede, UN Resident Coordinator in Namibia;
- Ms. Jill Helke, Director of International Cooperation and Partnership of the International Organization for Migration;
- Senior Officials from respective SADC Governments and Stakeholders on Migration;
- Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Distinguished invited guests;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

Good afternoon!

1. I am delighted to have been invited to officiate at the closing ceremony of the 2019 Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA) Ministerial Conference held under the theme “**Regional Migration Governance and Sustainable Development: Priorities for the Southern Africa Region**”

which brought together Ministers responsible for migration, labour and international relations in the region.

2. The theme of this meeting touches on the nexus between the governance of migration and the sustainable development goals. This, in my view, suggests a shift from the notion where migration practitioners acted in a restrictive manner to a more flexible approach where development features in your agenda. I am hopeful that you were able to tackle the different issues on the agenda and arrived at conclusions that are workable and beneficial to the citizens of the Southern African Region.

3. All countries are, in one way or the other, affected by migration. There is, therefore, mutual benefit that, from time to time, we meet to share experiences on how to manage the mobility of persons in a manner that promote the realization of the commitments that we have made in regards to this matter. The mobility of persons has been around since human existence. In the olden days, however, it was easy to manage the movement of people across borders as it was not as complicated as

today. In today's time, migration has brought about challenges which, if not managed properly, can have negative consequences for all of us. These include but not limited to; illegal immigration, cross-border crimes, human smuggling and trafficking, terrorism, to mention just a few. However, there are also benefits that migration bring to recipient countries.

4. It is gratifying, therefore, to note that your discussions during this conference centred on migration as a potential development enabler and the need to mainstream it in the development policies of Member States. Thus, our take home lessons are, 'how we maximise the benefit from migration, while at the same time minimising its challenges'.
5. Sharing best practices and together charting the way forward on the management of the movement of people in the Region will ensure smooth facilitation of migration across borders. In the same vein, the policies governing the acquisition of permits for migrants will also get clear and hence ease the burden on migrants.

6. The Conference we are closing today is part of a journey that started in Windhoek in November 2010. This journey of continuous improvement of policies that deal with migration should become a compass for us to measure whether our practices protect the migrants and the receiving communities or are our policies a hindrance to provide for lawful migration.
7. It is our responsibility to ensure that lawful channels of migration are created so that our people do not fall prey to traffickers and do not undertake dangerous journeys because of stringent assessment policies or difficulties in acquiring visas. It is my strong belief that this platform will continue to be used as a discussion point to chart ways for all actors in migration to harness benefits from it, such as transfer of skills and filling gaps in employment markets.
8. The biggest challenge facing policymakers today is to put in place policies that will effectively manage migration and its modern time complexities

while at the same time ensuring that tourism and trade is facilitated for us to accrue benefit from cross exchanges. Our Region has put in place several protocols aiming at governing trade and flow of persons. The implementation of these protocols has faced some challenges. Some of them might have been drafted without taking into account the realities of our Region. What might work one country might not necessarily work for every country, and these are facts to take into account.

9. It is therefore my hope that MIDSA Ministerial meeting would be used in future to analyse some of these Protocols relating to migration with a view to making them work for SADC first and eventually for Africa and the world at large.

10. In conclusion, I am hopeful that your deliberations produced outcomes and firm commitments that all of you are taking with you and will implement in your respective countries. I am further hopeful that you were able to discuss issues related to protecting the most vulnerable in our societies who migrate due to the desire for a better life elsewhere. They

need protection from traffickers who tempt them into exploitation, promising good jobs and scholarships for young girls.

11. Lastly, let me encourage you to use this opportunity to visit sites of attraction in Windhoek. If time does not allow now, you are welcome to return and spend your holidays in Namibia at our various sites of attraction.

12. It is now my distinct honour to declare the 2019 MIDSA Ministerial Conference officially closed.

I THANK YOU