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TWENTY FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES HELD IN GENEVA FROM 1 TO 5 SEPTEMBER 2014 – CONSIDERATION OF INITIAL REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA TUESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2014

OPENING STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR SAMMIE P. EDDICO, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA

Mr Chairman,

Distinguished Members of the Committee

Distinguishes Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honour and privilege to lead Ghana's delegation to this session and to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Government and people of Ghana.

In accordance with the practical guidelines issued to States under review, let me begin by introducing the other distinguished members of the Ghanaian delegation who are accompanying me to this session, namely Mr Ebenezer Appreku, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ghana and deputy head of delegation who was the former Legal Advisor of the Foreign Ministry of Ghana, Dr Prosper Asima, Head of the Ghana Immigration Command of Ghana's International Airport, Mr Charles Ofoe Kugblenu, Assistant Chief Labour Officer and member of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Migration in Ghana. Also, Ms Vivian K. Asempapa, Minister Counsellor/Head of Chancery in charge of the ILO schedule, Mr Alexander Ben-Acquaah, Minister Counsellor in charge of the International Organisation for Migration and last but not the least, Mrs Laila Heward-Mills, First Secretary responsible for the World Health Organization and Human Rights Council matters in the Ghana Permanent Mission in Geneva.

Mr Chairman we commend the able manner with which you and other members of the Committee have conducted this session so far. We can assure you of the continued cooperation of the Ghana delegation to ensure the success of the session in a spirit of constructive dialogue.

I also wish to use this occasion to warmly congratulate all distinguished members of this Committee on your election and for your dedication to the work of this important committee, recognizing your invaluable contribution to the progress towards the implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. We are equally gratified that Ghana has had the opportunity to present its Initial

Report today and in a year in which the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention has been celebrated.

Mr Chairperson, Ghana practises constitutional multi-party democracy underpinned by a strong culture of respect for the human rights of all the population, citizens and foreigners, including migrants alike, without discrimination. Ghana is currently party to almost all the core or important human rights treaties of the United Nations, the African Union and the ECOWAS.

The Government of Ghana is actively considering the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the ILO Protocol on Forced Labour adopted at the 103 session of the ILO in May (2014) and the optional protocol to the Convention against Torture.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration has adopted the final draft of the National Migration Policy aimed at harmonizing and integrating migration policies in Ghana and to address existing gaps in the management of migration and the protection of the rights of all migrants in the country. It is envisaged that by the end of this year, the draft policy document will be laid before Parliament for consideration and approval.

Mr Chairman, Ghana shares the commitment of members of this Committee and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights towards the goal of increasing the number of States parties to the Migrant Workers Convention. We believe that, to be sustainable, the Convention must be fully embraced by countries of origin, transit and destination together. During the Universal Periodic Review meetings at the Human Rights Council, Ghana will continue to recommend to countries, especially advanced industrialized countries and countries in the ECOWAS region and African continent, that have not yet ratified the Migrant Workers Convention to do so without further delay. To this end, Ghana stands ready to support initiatives to promote universal participation in the Convention.

Mr Chairperson,

In closing, I wish to reiterate that Ghana sees migrants as first and foremost human beings whose rights must be respected and protected regardless of their nationality or status. In this regard, it is tragic to find that in some countries experiencing violent armed civil wars, such as Libya, many foreigners or migrants including a significant number of Ghanaian migrants in that country have been deliberately targeted and killed. It is our prayer that the various warring factions will heed the appeal of the international community to respect international human rights and humanitarian law by ensuring safe passage for Ghanaians and other migrants who have gone into hiding for fear of their lives or have been detained or been injured and need medical attention.

Mr Chairperson, you will by now have seen that the Government of Ghana has endeavoured to provide frank and honest responses to the list of priority issues that are of concern to the Committee and so this statement has avoided repeating the substantive content of the Initial Report due to time constraints. In so doing, we have highlighted the progress we have made as well as the challenges we face in the context of national measures taken by the government of Ghana to implement the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This Initial reporting process should offer us the opportunity to exchange views and seek the guidance of the Committee in order to strengthen Ghana's capacity to implement the provisions of the Migrant Workers Convention.

I thank you for your kind attention.