

Statement of the Leader Muammar Al-Gathafi in the African Union/ European Union Ministerial Meeting on Migration and Development

22.11.2006

In the Name of God.

Welcome to Libya. I salute this gathering of the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU). Since the subject of our meeting is migration and development, this continental gathering is a testimony to the sense of responsibility of governments and other actors towards the citizens of our two Unions.

In addition to being an expression of a sense of responsibility for the citizens of the two Unions, it also reflects an awareness of the growth of that phenomenon which has imposed itself lately in a manner that made all concerned reflect on the best ways to address it.

I do not wish to speak at length. Neither do I wish to rehash what you have said today, or what had been said in other fora, about this phenomenon. Light has been shed on it and it has been fully scrutinized. I wish to dwell briefly on some constant human and natural principles and deal with the nature of people's life.

To act against nature is to swim against the current. Swimming against the current is a recipe for failure. Many of the important questions of today's world are swimming against the current. Therefore, there is a failure in many political, economic, social and security questions in the world. The failure results from ignoring the rules of nature.

It is in the nature of things that the Earth belongs to all human beings. God created the Earth for all humans. He instructs us to move in it. We have a Heavenly-Revealed book called the Koran (whether or not you believe in it, is another matter), in it, God orders us to migrate to various parts of the Earth. He tells us to go wherever we want in it. This is a recognition that the Earth belongs to all people and that they have the right to move in it in order to make a living. For all those reasons, one is entitled to migrate to different parts of the Earth because God created it for all.

We must pause at this fact. We must believe that the Earth belongs to all of us. People have the right to migrate and live in any part of the Earth. The political boundaries, official papers and such like are new fabricated inventions. Nature, however, does not recognize them.

You have seen how those new inventions caused problems, border disputes and wars among states. Sometimes, hundreds or even thousands of people are killed in a war over a few inches of land. The problem that you are considering now and that is causing so much concern is how to deal with the movement, or the migration, of people on Earth. This problem is the result of the borders we created, the identity we manufactured for every group of people, and the official papers they have to carry. We created all those unnatural, artificial things.

The natural thing is for people to move, live and seek their livelihood anywhere on Earth. Who are the current inhabitants of Europe? They are migrants from Asia. Europe used to be uninhabited. Had migration been forbidden, Europe would still be uninhabited today. Who are the inhabitants of North and South America? They are migrants from other continents. In North America, they are from Europe. To South America they came from the Iberian Peninsula, Africa and other parts. This is another fact.

We in North Africa are originally migrants. We came from the Arabian Peninsula 1000 years ago. Some of us came 5000 years ago. The so-called Berber, they are Arabs who emigrated from the Arabian Peninsula 5000 years ago. The Arabs, who came with Islam, have been here for over 1000 years. These migratory flows created the peoples that currently inhabit North Africa.

Now there is a lot of talk on the world level about the indigenous peoples, their rights, their tragic history and their extermination.

What does that mean? It means that migrants came to a certain place and became so dominant in it that they either exterminated the indigenous people or drastically reduced their numbers.

Their remnants are subjected to such discrimination that there is now an international outcry for the protection of their rights. When we talk of “indigenous peoples”, this means that emigrants came and settled in a certain place, be it Australia, the Americas, Africa or parts of Asia. Are the current inhabitants of Australia its indigenous people?

Not at all. They are emigrants. Where are the indigenous people of Australia? Only a few are left. The rest were oppressed or exterminated. Who are the indigenous people of America? They are the so-called Red Indians. Where are they now? They have been murdered and exterminated.

If we are to ban migration, let us then ban the human presence in all continents. Let every one return to the land from which they came. Let the inhabitants of the Americas return to Europe.

Let the Europeans go back to Asia. The Arabs of North Africa should return to the Arabian Peninsula. The inhabitants of Australia must return to Britain, Holland or any other country they hail from. The Boer in South Africa, who have become an integral part of its people, must head back to the Netherlands.

These are facts. However, when ministers and experts gather, they do not deal with them. Those irrefutable, disturbing facts are glossed over. We concentrate on the branches and leaves of a tree, while paying no attention to its roots. This is a doomed attempt.

Millions of blacks were transferred from Africa to Europe and America. Why are they being stopped now? These are double standards. When the blacks were needed to be used as beasts of burden, nobody said that they must be respected and left to live in their own continent.

On the contrary, it was claimed that their transfer was legitimate. They were shipped like cargo across the ocean. Those who were not physically fit were thrown overboard to feed the fish. North America and Europe were developed thanks to labor of the blacks.

That was a forced migration. When the movement of people from one place to the other was to the benefit of a certain party, migration was imposed on them. People were hunted like animals in the jungles of Africa. Now these very same people, the black Africans, are being told that their movement and migration from Africa is a cause for concern and that an end must be put to it.

Those poor souls ask: “When you were in need, you transferred our forefathers and said that migration was necessary. Why is it different now?” It is true that the things I just mentioned are present, in some way, in the back of the heads of many people including illiterate ones.

Those thoughts impel them to migrate. In their internal dialogue, they ask themselves: “If they transferred my forefathers, why are they erecting barriers in my path?” Migration was the engine of the development of the world. Certain races migrated to other places.

The indigenous people were assimilated. Emigrants came and developed Australia, the islands of the Pacific and the Atlantic. They settled in and developed all continents of the world. This is what that poor, illiterate African says to himself. Why are they stopping me now? The answer to this question is what makes him board the “Death Boats” that you have been talking about.

“The last age of slavery was the one when the Black race was enslaved by the White. The memory of that era will remain vivid in the minds of blacks until they feel that they were rehabilitated and their dignity restored. That tragic historical event, the painful awareness of it and the psychological search for the satisfaction resulting from the rehabilitation of a whole race are the reasons of the movement of the Black race to avenge itself and achieve dominance.

These reasons cannot be ignored”. This is a part of what the “Green Book” says about the Black Race. In order to save your time, I refer those who wish to read more to Chapter III of the Green Book.

The earth belongs to all human beings. Migration took place in the past. Slavery followed it. There was no objection to the transfer of people from their countries to be exploited as slaves. The era of colonialism was ushered in after that. All those elements intermingle in the hearts and minds of the African people who migrate today. Everybody is up in arms against that that migration.

Colonialism gave Africans, and other colonized peoples, the impression that the Earth belongs to all, and that no part of it is the exclusive property of a group of people and is forbidden to others. People in the heart of Africa saw Belgians come to settle in their land and own parts of it. They saw the whole of Congo become the personal property of Leopold.

They saw foreigners settle in Zimbabwe, Malawi and what they called Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia. Libya was considered Rome’s Fourth Coast. This gave Libyans the feeling that Italy and Libya were one state. If Libya is Rome’s Fourth Coast, why then is it forbidden for a Libyan to go to Italy? When it was necessary for Libya to be that “fourth coast”, war was waged to make it so. Now, what is said is “no, you are an illegal immigrant, you are not welcome here, you are Libyan and you are a foreigner”. Did you not say that Libya was your “fourth coast”? Was it acceptable then because it was in your interest, but now that it serves mine, it becomes unacceptable?

Until recently, France maintained that Algeria was an integral part of French soil. France ruled Algeria for 130 years. France annexed Algeria in 1830 and declared an indivisible part of its territory. That fact convinced Algerians that they and France were parts of one whole.

When they go to France, they go to their own country. How can it be said to Algerians now that they are immigrants? How could that be? You said to us that Algeria was a part of France. When we tried to challenge that statement, you fought us. One and a half million Algerians paid with their lives to challenge that

statement. At the same time, France and Europe continued to insist that Algeria was an integral part of France.

They convinced Algerians that they were French and Europeans. So, why can they not go France?

Morocco is an independent state. It is a member of the Arab League, the UN and the Islamic Conference. Ceuta and Melilla are geographically in Morocco but they are a part of Spain. How can anybody convince a Moroccan that Spain and Morocco are not the same thing. He considers the two countries to be one. As I said the case of Ceuta and Melilla proves that. How can Moroccans be told that they are aliens and immigrants in Spain? They should be able to go to Madrid like they go Rabat.

During the colonial era, the people of Africa were made to believe that Europe and Africa are an integrated whole. The King of Belgium was the owner of the whole of Congo. This being the case, then the Congolese, as the property of the King of Belgium, could go freely to the land of their King and Owner. They could move to Belgium, live and work there as if they were in Congo. The same applied to Algerians in France. As their country was considered Rome's Fourth Coast, Libyans had the right to go to Rome. Citizens of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Rhodesia were told that their countries belonged to Britain. Therefore, they could go to Britain as if they were moving inside their own country.

At one point in time, the Suez Canal was British. How can an Egyptian citizen be prevented from going to Britain while the latter owned a part of Egypt? How can he not be allowed to go to work, or even to reside, in Britain? If the Suez Canal, an integral part of Egypt, was the property of Britain, how can an Egyptian be denied the right to live in Britain? Which is graver; the recognition of the ownership by a foreign power of a whole canal that falls within the territory of Egypt, or the presence of some Egyptians who seek work in Britain?

To this day, there are High Commissioners of the British Crown in various countries. India was the Jewel of the Crown. Then, Indian citizens can go to Britain in their millions, since they are subjects of the Crown. How can they be told that they are foreign immigrants?

The First and Second World Wars were ignited by Europe. Tens of millions of men were killed in them. Europe needed labor so, Asians and Africans were encouraged to move to Europe to make up for the shortage in manpower. This fact is very important because it gave Africans and Asians the feeling that, in time of need, they can go to Europe.

When Europe needed the, they were transferred. When they were needed as slaves, soldiers and cheap labor, they were transferred. When Europe needed colonies, it came to their countries.

It would be both ignorant and superficial on our part to ignore those historical and psychological accumulations. In addition, the colonial era resulted in the pillage of Africa's riches. The gold mines were depleted and left as gaping holes in the ground. Diamonds, copper, iron ore, cobalt, manganese and phosphate were transferred to the old colonial powers.

After achieving their so-called independence, people of the former colonies wanted to build their countries. They discovered that their riches were plundered. They had a feeling that they need to go after those riches. A French writer whose name escapes right now once said: "Either wealth comes to people, or people will go to the place where wealth is found".

This statement is true. Riches were transferred from Africa to Europe. Africans go after those riches of their land. They cannot restore those riches to their countries. So, they go to work as laborers in the factories built on the riches of their continent. They feel that the road networks, the irrigation systems and the railroad tracks that criss-cross Europe and America are the fruit of the labor of their forefathers. They feel entitled to a share of that prize.

Can the raw materials of Africa be returned to it? If that is the case, then well and good. This must be the first decision to be made. Africans went to Europe seeking a share in their plundered wealth. If it were returned to them, migration would stop. They go back to their continent to find that their gold, diamonds, cola and other materials have been returned to it. This would contribute to ending migration.

The agricultural products of Africa such as mango, pineapple, cocoa, coffee and papaya are made into shampoos and body lotions in Europe while Africans need them. Instead of Europeans washing their bodies with pineapple, let them return it to the children of Africa to eat. Or, let us all go to Europe and use it to wash our hair and bodies. Who has turned nutritious food into cosmetic products? It is the private sector.

It seeks nothing but profit even at the expense of the misery of millions. We hear a lot of talk about the need to encourage the private sector. However, it was that sector that stole the food of the hungry children and transformed it into cosmetic products for the sake of profit while the children starve to death. Eggs, cocoa, milk and all kinds of fruits were made into shampoos!

Let us move now to some existing measures that actually favor migration. The purpose of your meeting is to address, and reverse migration. However, there are some existing political and administrative measures that act against that purpose and favor migration.

Let us take the Barcelona process. North Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Mediterranean are covered by that process. Therefore, as a citizen under the umbrella of Barcelona, I am entitled to move to Europe.

Has the Barcelona process not called for cooperation, the elimination of poverty, the freedom of movement and labor?

Has it not advocated mutual help and living in peace with one another? Does it not aim at the creation of a single parliament and the harmonization of legislation, and the achievement of similarities among its component parts? How can we be similar while you are rich and I am poor? I must become as rich as you are. Then, you as a European citizen must allow me, an African citizen, to share your wealth.

The Barcelona Process has encouraged this line of thinking. How can you initiate that process then decide to stand against its logical results? This meeting is against the spirit of Barcelona.

That spirit calls for integration, for allowing us to move to Europe in our millions. End the Barcelona Process. When that happens, you can say that Europe and Africa are two distinct entities separated by a sea. Yes, when that process is annulled, I will be convinced that we are two separate entities not one. However, when you talk of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, you have included me in Europe. You make me in Libya a part of Europe.

Under Barcelona, I am entitled to go all the way to Scandinavia. If this is unacceptable, then the contradictory process must be terminated.

There is another notion; that of the New Neighborhood put forward by the EU. This is as interesting as the Barcelona Process. If we want Barcelona, then let us accept its results. But let it not be like slavery and colonialism; good if it works in your favor and evil if it works in mine.

Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan have become the “neighbors” of Europe under the new initiative. Neighbors have rights and duties towards each other. When they are in need, they go to their neighbors. Someone can say: “I am from the Neighborhood. I am going to my neighbors”. Who are those neighbors? They are the Europeans who have accepted me as their neighbor. Have you not said that Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and even Jordan in the Middle East are

your neighbors? Then those people have the right to go to their neighbors in Europe.

One of the results of all those arrangements (Barcelona, the New Neighborhood and the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation) is that the Africans who are not a part of that circle, now come to those countries as a way to get to Europe through its “neighbors”. Someone comes from an African country not part of the Barcelona Process. He heads to a country that is part of that process. Then goes to Europe on the basis of it.

“Where are you coming from?” “From Algeria” he says. “Why are coming to Europe?” His answer would be “because Algeria is a part of the Barcelona Process. Does that process not cover Europe and the Mediterranean? I am from the Mediterranean. Why are you preventing me from migration? I am here to live and benefit from Barcelona and the New Neighborhood”.

There is another thing called the “Mediterranean Partnership” or something like that. A partnership means that we share everything as partners. When you speak of partnership while you are rich and I am poor, it means that I must share your wealth. This is what partnership is about. Is this the meaning of the partnership proposed to North African countries? If so, fine let us become partners and share everything.

These are attractive slogans. No one can object to them. However, the fact that they were designed to serve ulterior motives and based on double-standards would destroy international cooperation. Their contradictions are a grave threat to international politics. You talk of partnership, the say you cannot share. Go back where you came from. Have you not told me I was your partner? If you are serious about the resolutions you are going to adopt here, then all those things, the Partnership, Neighborhood and Barcelona, must be cancelled. The visas must be re-instated.

Among the things that facilitated migration is the Shengen visa. Now, people try to get to the closest European country. Once there, they heave a sigh of relief because the whole of Europe is open to them.

Under Shengen, no visas are required between European countries. You cancelled them and then you ask why migrants are increasing? You opened the door wide. Reinstate visas. In the past, someone would want to go Germany. He asks himself ‘how would I make it there?’ Now, all he has to do is sail to France, and from there go to Germany.

Shengen allows him to do that. When he knows that Shengen is no longer, he will think twice. If there are borders and visa requirements, how will he be able to get from France to Germany? Those obstacles will discourage his leaving Ghana, Mozambique or Zimbabwe. Now, they think that getting to Europe is easy.

All one has to do is get to the closest European country, even if they have to swim to get there. Once there, the whole of Europe is open to them. To stop immigration, you must cancel the Shengen visa. Otherwise, you cannot ask why the migration flows are increasing. Libya too, must reinstate the visa requirement with Arab and non-Arab countries. Any Arab can enter Libya without a visa. Libya is an Arab country and a member of the Arab League. It is a rich, oil producing country with a small population and no poverty. It is logical that many Arabs would want to come to it.

However, in truth Libya is not their destination. From Libya, they head to Europe. Statistics show that 80% of the migrants from Libya are Arabs. The remaining 20% are from Africa. They exploit the lack of a visa requirement to enter Libya. Then, they find the gangs, the smugglers, the boats and the agents to go to Europe. Investigations are underway in Libya.

It was discovered that some officers here take bribes and are involved in smuggling operations. They have created mafias and gangs with citizens from Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and some African and European countries. Some European tourists marry men from Egypt and Libya. This is a way for their husbands to gain legal entry into Europe.

There many ways to circumvent the law. I am sure you are aware of them. Some people destroy their passports upon arrival and make taking care of them your problem and burden.

There are also the other calls for human rights, the right to asylum, the rights of migrants, combating discrimination and racism. They are wonderful humane slogans. They are even revolutionary. They also are among the elements that encourage migration.

If you want to limit migration, you have to deal with those elements. If anyone can be granted refugee status and receive a monthly salary the moment they arrive in Europe, then thousands will rush to Europe.

The right of asylum was corrupted by you. There are precise definitions of who is a refugee or a political refugee. Now, a criminal could write that he is the chairman of a democratic party. He can go to Switzerland or any other country and claim that he is persecuted in his country.

He is then accepted as a political refugee and receives financial support. When people see that a criminal is living happily in Switzerland and enjoying himself there, they think they must follow his example.

Every criminal, every thief and every “stray dog” is tempted to do the same. Fabricate some papers and claim to be in the opposition in your country. When those crooks hear the talk of human rights and freedom, they jump on the bandwagon and claim to be advocates of human rights and freedom to get asylum. This attitude has encouraged all and sundry to do the same.

Who is a political refugee? It is someone who is involved in politics; a minister, a president, a king, a member of parliament, the holder of a diplomatic passport or a member of a legitimate political party who faces persecution in his country for purely political reasons.

If such a person seeks asylum in another country, he can be accepted. Some commit murder and assassinations in their country. Once they are discovered, they flee to Europe and be treated like political refugees. This is a farce. Some people have no political position in their countries, escape from their countries and claim to be in the opposition and seek political asylum. They are not politicians. They are nothing but stray dogs. How can you receive them as political refugees? This attitude has encouraged a lot of people to do the same so as to be able to live in Europe ultimately.

Europe needs to reconsider and redefine political refugees. Can anybody who deceives you be a political refugee? Look at those who were given political asylum and then turned into terrorists. In Europe, you have a simple choice. You can be true to your slogans, which means you can longer discuss migration. You must accept all the migrants who come to your doors even if there were a hundred million of them.

Or you must reconsider your slogans and policies to close all the loopholes that encourage immigration. The security approach to deal with migration is doomed to failure. Libya’s land borders extend for six thousand kilometers. We cannot prevent the smuggling of the subsidized cheap foodstuffs to Chad, Niger, Sudan and other neighboring countries. Whatever we do, even if we bring NATO to help us, we will not be able to control those borders.

You could also accept reality. You could come to terms with the fact that migration is a natural phenomenon that has its historical, psychological and economic causes. You could accept that phenomenon like we accept Tsunami and other natural phenomena.

Then, there will be no need to exert ourselves in meetings such as this. You could do that or deal with the causes that encourage migration. The modern causes are well known. They must all be terminated. I mean the visa question, Barcelona, the Euro-Mediterranean, the Partnership, human rights, the manner of granting political asylum, the rights of migrants and the rights of refugees. All these things must be reconsidered in a manner that does not encourage migration. All the things you do and the things that exist now encourage it. Then you ask why migration is taking place? If a hungry animal sees food nearby, it will definitely go for it. How can it not? It is only natural for it to go where food is available.

People go to Europe because everything you put in place encourages them to do so. Barcelona, the Euro-Mediterranean, the plunder, the single visa, human rights, the rights of refugees, the rights of I do not know what, the civil society organization and all the other elements of the existing mess, all of those things encourage migration.

They all work against this conference. Even language plays a role in this. If Nigeria is an English-speaking country, how can a Nigerian not go to Britain? If he has been made a part of that language and culture, how and why is he prevented from going there?

Ghana too is English-speaking. Why is a Ghanaian not allowed to go to Britain? He was colonized, oppressed, enslaved and a language was imposed on him. No one thought that one day he would use that fact to create a problem, to demand his right to go to your country because he speaks the same language.

The same is true of French speakers. They would find it hard to understand why a conference like this one, a conference that opposes migration, is held in the first place. They would say that they are Francophone and that they have a right to go France. We speak the same language, we are part of the same culture and we are the same people. What is this conference for? Cancel it, for we are going directly to France.

You know these facts but you prefer to deny them. It would be a catastrophe if you did not know them. There is another very dangerous dimension related to migration. Look at the map of the world. You will see the countries from which migrants leave and the countries to which they go. A major population explosion has started in Asia.

It will reverberate all over the globe. Waves of immigrants will go wherever there is a population vacuum. Now, you are addressing migration from Africa to Europe. Soon, all of us in Africa and Europe will face the new challenge of vast waves of immigration from Asia. They will come like swarms of locusts as a

result of the population explosion in China, the Indian Ocean and East Asia. A look at the map would make that threat abundantly clear. How do you propose to deal with this challenge?

You are gathered here to discuss migration from Africa to Europe. Now a human deluge of astronomical proportions is about to be upon us. Like the biblical Gog and Magog, they will come. I am sounding the alarm before the whole world. The population explosion in Asia is another grave challenge. It will engulf Africa and Europe. Please note it down and be my witnesses.

Another look at the map would reveal additional causes for the increase in migration. The current military interventions in Iraq, the Gulf, the Middle East, the Kurdish region in Turkey and Iran, and the situation in the Horn of Africa, all feed migration. So do the numerous civil wars in the Southern Philippines, in the south of Thailand, in Chechnya, in the Great Lakes region in Central Africa, in Cote D'Ivoire, in the Horn of Africa, in Chad and the Sudan. All these civil wars increase migration. Who is behind them? The same hands that created colonialism and caused havoc in the world are behind those civil wars. The private sector, the weapons manufacturers and the arms merchants benefit from them.

The European intelligence agencies pick a person, train him, provide him with funds and assign him the responsibility of starting a tribal war, a border dispute, an ethnic conflict or a religious war in some part of the world. When this war flares up it benefits the arms merchants and the weapons manufacturers.

It also becomes a convenient pretext for an international intervention. Those who contribute Blue Helmets will also benefit. Even the UN will make a profit. It has become such business! When a war breaks out they send seventy thousand peacekeepers. These of course need money. The money is given to the UN. If the operation is estimated to cost ten billion dollars, the UN spends six billion and keeps four billion for itself. Even the UN has become a merchant of war and an agent that works on commission.

In conclusion, I don't want there to be any confusion or a misunderstanding of what I said. I did not wish to discourage you. Nor did I wish to object to the measures to combat migration. On the contrary, I am with you completely. I hope to see an end to migration. Libya is one of the countries that have been severely affected by migration.

It has depleted our resources. We have twice or three times as many people as our own in Libya. We feed them, house them, provide them with transportation, and they take their share of all the cheap products subsidized by the Libyan budget. We sincerely hope that you will find a solution for this problem.

I was completely honest with you. I have uncovered the truth, and laid it bare before you, in order for you to find a solution. This is proof of my sincerity. If a patient needs surgery we cannot give him painkillers. That would be an act of deception, an act that can only be carried out by an ignorant person. Honesty dictates that a professional doctor talks honestly with the patient and tells him the truth about his case. And to inform him that he is in need of a major surgery and not just painkillers.

What I tried to do was to put the whole truth before you. Earth belongs to all human beings. The inhabitants of all continents are all originally migrants. This has to be taken into account. The elements I raised concerning the eras of slavery, colonialism, and the plunder of natural resources need also to be taken into account. We cannot overlook the First and Second World Wars which took the lives of millions of men, and thus encouraged migration to Europe and other parts of the world. We need to remember the reasons and the causes of those wars.

It was the colonial powers that imposed their language on the colonized peoples. It was they who gave them the impression that Africans and Europeans are of the same continent and are the same peoples. How could anybody talk of two distinct continents while at the same time talking of the Belgian Congo, Italian Libya, The French Sudan, the British Sudan, and French Algeria? That gave people the impression that they are entitled to go to the “Mother Country”.

In addition I must say that the matters I mentioned earlier such as the single visa, Barcelona, the Euro Mediterranean cooperation and partnership, and the calls of human rights and the rights of refugees have all facilitated migration. I put them all bluntly before you in order to assist you in your task. If you wish to solve the problem, you must solve it by addressing those facts.

I wish you all success. May peace and the blessings of God be upon you.