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Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development

Newsletter

HHS



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M. Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees, and H.E. Mrs Amira El Fadil, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND! – ENSURING ACCESS TO COVID-19 VACCINE FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

On January 29, 2021, the High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi made a special visit to Ethiopia, and the African Union Commission, where he met with the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development H.E. Amira Elfadil. The discussion raised concerns toward access to COVID 19 vaccine for refugees in the camps, as the majority of them are hosted in low and middle-income countries. The international community must do more to support host governments regarding access to the vaccines. The High Commissioner for Refugees stressed that the African Union Commission through Africa CDC is the gate to provide the COVID19 vaccine to the African Refugees in many African Countries that host refugees' camps.

H.E. Elfadil addressed the concern of vaccinating refugees by assuring that the African Union Commission has put in place a strategy aimed at vaccinating 60% of the people of the continent. This will be achieved through the Continental Strategy and the work of the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT), who negotiated with manufactories and vaccine producers, and had discussions with airlines for delivering the vaccine. Commissioner Elfadil stressed that the AU will make sure no one is left behind when vaccine is available and will give a special

consideration to the vulnerable groups such as migrants, refugees, and IDPs. The Commissioner also highlighted the different mechanisms and negotiations that the AUC held with other partners to support the financial aspect for providing the vaccine to AU Member States.

More recently, under the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) for Refugees and asylum seekers hosted by the government of Rwanda in collaboration with African Union and UNHCR, a group of 197 refugees and asylum seekers from Libya who are temporarily hosted in Rwanda received their first Covid-19 jabs on Wednesday, March 10. The ETM was set up following an agreement signed in 2019 between the Government of Rwanda, African Union and UNHCR. Under this agreement, Rwanda agreed to receive and provide protection to refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as others identified as particularly vulnerable and at-risk, who are currently being held in detention centres in Libya. They will be transferred to safety in Rwanda on a voluntary basis.

Sarah Abdel-Mohsen Elsayed, HHS

MIGRATION AND GENDER POLICY AREA: PANEL DISCUSSION ON “GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY”

To commemorate the International Day of Social Justice (20th February 2021) and the International Women’s Day (8th March 2021), the Labour, Employment and Migration Division hosted, with support by GIZ, a panel discussion to address the challenge of **“Gender-based violence and women migrant workers in the informal economy – how can Africa achieve social justice by including everyone’s protection needs and voices”**.

With inputs from the AU Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD), ILO, GIZ and the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) the topic was introduced through perspectives from the international and continental policy level all the way to insights into the work with female migrants in the informal sector, with examples from Uganda. Together with representatives of the AU, RECs, AU Member states, international organizations and civil society issues of International and AU policies to protect female migrant workers from gender-based violence, protection needs of female migrant workers in informal economies, and how female migrant workers are considered in response mechanisms to the Covid-19 pandemic were discussed.

Women make up approximately half of the 244 million international migrants worldwide. While women and men decide to migrate for similar reasons, gender-specific social and cultural norms also play decisive roles in the migration process and therefore affect the experience of migrant women and girls. Women migrant workers face different needs and realities throughout the migration cycle, including the manner of their recruitment, the feminized sectors in which they tend to work, and the way that their remittances are sent and spent. While migrant women of various skill levels face discrimination in the process of migrating, especially low-skilled migrant women and those who are often migrating through irregular channels face heightened risks of abuse and discrimination at all stages of migration.

Cases of violence against women and girls in Africa have significantly increased during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Recent reports analysing the cases of violence against

women and girls show a tremendous increase in all AU regions due to restrictions in movements and reduced financial resources. For an average lockdown duration of three months, statistically there are additional 15 million cases of violence against women and girls. In general, women in Africa have become and are becoming more vulnerable to human rights violations as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Especially women migrants and refugees are more likely to experience the negative effects of the pandemic measures, such as closure of borders and markets and curfews. In the informal economy most women migrants do not have (adequate) health insurance and face the challenge of loss of income.

Whilst the migration of women can have a positive effect on the labor force and the economy in countries of origin and destination, it can be associated with various costs for the migrant. Limited access to health and education services, coupled with isolation (both physical isolation and isolation created by language barriers), family separation or delays in family reunification, can have long-term deleterious effects on the health and well-being of women migrant workers and their children. At the time, migration can also contribute to an increasing independence of women and the liberation, if not even change, of rigid gender norms.

The African Union recognizes that gender is a cross-cutting issue in the area of migration and mobility. The Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) identifies the need to make national migration strategies and policies gender-responsive and to strengthen responses to the particular needs of migrant women and girls, ensuring their human and labour rights and their health needs.

The African Union does recognize the positive contribution of women migrants to sustainable and inclusive development and acknowledge that development cannot be truly sustainable and inclusive until it encompasses and fosters the full economic, social and political empowerment and the leadership of women and girls at all stages of migration.

However, a greater understanding of migration as a gendered phenomenon can enable Member States to better protect migrant women and girls from gender-based discrimination, abuse and violations at all stages of migration, and fulfil their human rights. Consequently, it is necessary that the laws that govern migration respond to the distinct needs and priorities of women and girls. When migrant women are excluded from the development of protection policies aimed at supporting them, they are mis-served, misrepresented and mistreated, and experience marginalization and rights violations. For example, policies aimed at protecting women migrant workers have historically restricted women’s mobility and scaled back their labour migration rights. As a result, women migrant workers are more likely to be undocumented and migrate through unsafe channels, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation.

The panel discussion, hosted by the AU Labour, Employment and Migration Division and supported by GIZ, was an opportunity to launch the Migration and Gender policy area. The gender dimensions of migration in Africa, remain largely unexplored and there is a lack of gendered research and analysis. The migration data and research centres - a decision for their establishment was adopted during the African Union Summit in February 2020 – through their mandate will be generating migration data and research and therefore better policies and practice response can be developed. Additionally, increased ratification and implementation of relevant continental and regional instruments for the protection of women migrant workers is needed as well as cooperation and involvement of women migrant workers in identifying the right approaches and solutions on the national, regional and continental level.

Evelyne Nkeng Peh, HHS



H.E. Mrs Amira El Fadil delivering opening remarks

OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND RESEARCH ON MIGRATION

The AU Commission and the Government of the Republic of Mali launched the African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration (CAREM) in Bamako, Mali on the 19th March 2021. CAREM will serve as a specialized technical office to advance the knowledge base of the African continent on migration and mobility, and contribute to evidence-based interventions on migration in Africa. This follows the inauguration of the African Migration Observatory (the Observatory) which was launched in Rabat, Morocco on 18 December 2021. H.E. Mrs. Amira El Fadil (the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development) represented the AU Commission at the launch, while H.E. Alhamdou Ag Ilyene (Minister of Malians Abroad and African Integration) represented the Republic of Mali.

Working in collaboration with the Observatory, the Continental Operational Centre in Khartoum (forthcoming) and the Tunis-based [Pan-African Institute for Statistics](#) (STATARFIC) and other research and capacity building facilities on the continent and beyond, the CAREM will have a number of functions, including the following:

- Undertake empirical, applied research on all aspects of migration and mobility;
- Provide technical assistance to AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the area of migration governance;
- Prepare and disseminate a journal and periodic reports on the state of migration and migration governance in Africa;
- Prepare position papers on migration and mobility for the African Union;

- Provide a platform for experts, policy makers, African diplomats and academics to debate migration and mobility issues on the Continent; and
- Serve as an interface between Members States, RECs, African/African Diaspora think tanks and civil society organizations on the migration debate.

During the plan period of the [AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa](#) (MPFA): 2018 – 2030, the AU Commission has prioritized building the capacity of Member States and RECs in the area of migration governance, an issue that is fundamental to the coherent management of migration on the continent. Therefore, within the context of the aforementioned functions, the CAREM will endeavour to improve the overall migration governance regime in Africa as it guides the continent in implementing MPFA while simultaneously feeding Africa with up-to-date information on migration through studies and research.

With the inauguration on 19 March, 2021, the CAREM is expected to start operations immediately, thanks to the provision of an office building, furniture, equipment and amenities by the host government, the Government of the Republic of Mali.

Peter Mudungwe, HHS

MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY AREA INITIATED

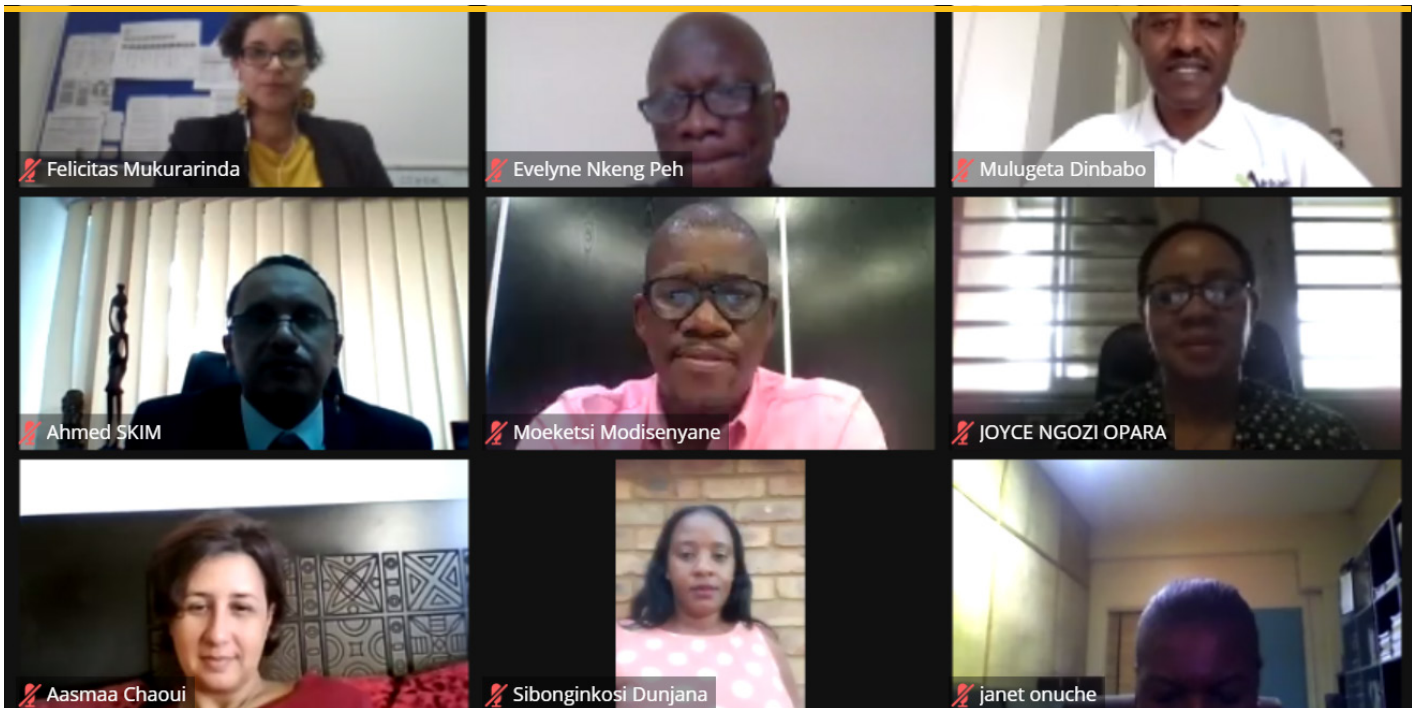
Migration and Climate Change thematic/policy area

Expansion of the portfolio of Labour, Employment and Migration Division saw the inauguration of the programme to be known as **Shaping the Future of Mobility in Africa: Addressing Climate-Forced Displacement & Migration in the Continent**. The first meeting of experts to launch this initiative took place on the 4th December 2020. The key partners for this stream of work are AU, UNDP, World Bank & IOM as well as academia which plays a role of knowledge partner.

African Union recognizes that climate change is undeniably impacting Africa and migration and forced displacement are its face. There is broad global consensus that the impending climate crisis threatens sustainable development and could affect people in critical ways, including through the greater frequency and severity of extreme weather events, water scarcity, and decreased crop yield, rise of sea levels, as well as health and sanitation challenges.

In particular, the climate crisis is emerging as a key driver of forced displacement and migration. By 2050, it is estimated that over 200 million people globally may be forced to leave their homes for climate-related reasons. It is against this reason that LEM undertakes to explore nexus between migration & forced displacement and climate change.

Sabelo Mbokazi, HHS



MOVING FORWARD ON THE MIGRATION AND HEALTH AGENDA

The nexus between migration and health is recognized as a key cross-cutting issue to achieve effective migration governance in Africa. The MPFA highlights the fact that linkages between the two topics are constantly brought to the fore in the international discourse on migration, in the context of the spread of communicable diseases. The current COVID-19 pandemic is an unfortunate but perfect example of how various migrant groups are exposed to health risks because of their pronounced conditions of vulnerability, including their restricted access to health services, both during and after periods of mobility. In order to sustainably address these challenges, the MPFA recommends, inter alia, to

- Ensure that migrants have adequate access to health care services by granting access to national healthcare systems and programmes,
- Ensure the minimal healthcare service package for refugees and displaced persons, including prevention, treatment and health education, with special regard for the needs of vulnerable groups,
- Advocate for the inclusion of migrants and mobile population health issues into national and regional health programmes and strategies and to
- Ensure that healthcare personnel in high migrant receiving areas are trained to provide healthcare needs of migrants.

The AUC Migration and Health program was launched in July 2020, with the global objective to initiate and define Policy and Programming priorities that will advance discourse on access to health for migrants and refugees, guide the policy work of the AU system and inspire AU Member States into action towards promoting equitable access to health for migrants and refugees. However, identifying these priorities requests to have a better understanding of the state of affairs regarding the health needs of various migrant groups and of continental and regional policies linking migration and health. In order to address this need, the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union Commission requested a study on “Migration and Health: Addressing Current Health Challenges of Migrants & Refugees in Africa”, a project supported by GIZ and conducted by the Centre for Rural Development (SLE; German: Seminar für ländliche Entwicklung) of Humboldt University in Berlin’s post-graduate study programme ‘International Cooperation for Sustainable Development’. The overall research objectives of the study were to:

- Provide consolidated information on existing national, regional and continental migration and health policy frameworks in Africa,
- Compile existing research on migration and health governance in Africa, indicating existing research gaps,
- Identify well-developed practices regarding the governance of migration and health, as well as areas for improvement,
- Provide an in-depth analysis of the status quo of healthcare provision for migrants from a multi-level (national, regional and continental) and multi-stakeholder perspective (migrants, government and NGO officials, healthcare providers),
- Provide recommendations to the AU to guide its MS in governing the migration and health nexus,
- Provide a proposal for contents of a training module on migration and health for the AU to guide its MS.

The study was realised through a two-phased approach. The scoping study focused on policy review and scoping review of available literature at the international, continental, and regional levels, as well as in 15 African countries. The analytical phase gave the opportunity for in-depth analysis on DRC, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa. The online technical review meeting held on 11 March 2021 gave the opportunity to about 40 representatives from AU departments and institutions, Member States, international organisations, as well as African and international research institutes to provide in-depth feedback on the findings and preliminary recommendations from the study. The study report is currently being reviewed and the final product will be launched in April 2021. Following this, the AUC and its partners will continue working on this program through, inter alia the publication of policy briefs and academic articles and the development of a training on migration and health. In the mid-term, the conclusions of the study will pave the way for the identification of concrete measures to guide AU Member States in better governing the migration and health nexus.

Evelyne Nkeng Peh, HHS

THE AFRICAN MIGRATION OBSERVATORY INAUGURATED

H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco, and H.E. Mrs Amira Elfadil, the AU Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development cutting the ribbon



The African Migration Observatory (the Observatory) was officially inaugurated on 18 December 2018 in Rabat, Morocco. Officiating at the inauguration were Her Excellency Mrs Amira Elfadil, the AU Commission's Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development and His Excellency Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco.

The Observatory is an AU organ that is set to address the pressing need for Africa to generate knowledge and better understand the migration phenomenon. Hitherto, the scarcity of migration data has limited the capacity of AU Member States to conceive evidence-based migration policies and programmes. Furthermore, the informal character of migratory movements, the porosity of borders and the complexity of collecting data on human mobility at the continental level have made the management of migratory movements difficult. To this end, the AU made the commitment to establish the Observatory as a mechanism to gather reliable and accurate data on migration. This will facilitate the continental quest for a robust migration governance regime that is based on evidence.

The main objectives of the Observatory are to:

- 1) Provide the Continent with a centralized, unified source of data on migration for further research, policy formulation and programming and to improve the overall migration governance regime in Africa;
- 2) Advance the knowledge base of the African Continent on migration and mobility;
- 3) Contribute to evidence-based policies and interventions on migration in Africa;
- 4) Support and bring together the other existing initiatives on migration, notably the African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration in Mali, the Continental Operational Centre in Khartoum for combating irregular migration, the Tunis based African Union Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC), national bureaux of statistics and migration data hubs in Africa and beyond.

The observatory will aim at "harmonizing the national strategies of African states and improving interactions with partners" thus dealing with the collection and development of information on migration within Africa, the regulation of policies and their harmonization throughout Africa, and the interaction with partners abroad. It will also guide African countries in elaborating efficient migration policies within the context of the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA).

In a related development, the AU Commission will accelerate the operationalization of another migration centre: the Continental Operation Centre in Khartoum, Sudan (the Khartoum Centre).

Working in collaboration with the Observatory, the Khartoum Centre and STATAFRIC and other migration research institutions in Africa and beyond, the Mali Centre will undertake empirical, applied research on all aspects of migration and mobility that will facilitate actionable migration policy formulation for AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities.

Also working in collaboration with the aforementioned centres, the Khartoum Centre will focus on the management of irregular migration and other transnational organised crimes. Specifically, the centre will facilitate cooperation among law enforcement agencies of Member States in the fight against human trafficking, migrant smuggling and other transnational organized crimes through the exchange of information and intelligence among countries of origin, transit and destination.

Peter Mudungwe, HHS

LABOUR MIGRATION MANAGEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) continues to be a priority for the African Union. It is focused on intra-African labour migration and supports Agenda 2063, the SDGs and the MPFA and its Plan of Action (2018-2030). Despite the pandemic, the programme has utilized virtual tools to ensure that partners remain engaged and more stakeholders participate in capacity building efforts.

During the pandemic, there was an increased record of return migration of African citizens, especially from the Gulf. Ethiopia, for instance received over fifteen thousand returnees mostly from Sudan, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Lebanon.¹ It has been reported that there are over 400,000 Ethiopian migrant workers trapped in Lebanon alone, and they are mostly in an irregular situation.

This raises a number of issues including safe and dignified return to these migrant workers and their families, wage recovery, psychosocial support, sustainable reintegration which may involve seeking for employment, vocational skills or micro-credit facilities for setting up businesses. This requires cooperation and synergy among governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as putting in measures to monitor and evaluate those initiatives.

Since 2019, the African Union initiated discussions on development of a cooperation mechanism for the protection of African migrants in the Gulf. This has involved field visits to Kuwait and United Arab Emirates. Three consultative meetings have been held with African Member States on fashioning the mechanism for such cooperation. The African Union has also strengthened its engagement with the Gulf and expressed its priorities through the 2020 Global Forum for Migration and Development. The Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC) has also released policy papers and statements calling for improved protection of the vulnerable population, including migrant workers in the informal economy. LMAC

has also called for a well-managed movement of health workers from sending to receiving countries, in such a way that the gaps in the health sector in Africa is not further expanded.²

The COVID-19 pandemic calls for a review of the labour migration landscape, with emphasis on expanding decent work opportunities, evidence-based policies, migrants' protection, safe and dignified returns. Virus spread and containment efforts should be evaluated vis-a-vis its socio-economic impact, especially on the vulnerable population and adequate relief measures should be put in place. Finally, migrant populations should be covered in vaccine-distribution efforts as no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Further, in an effort to enhance the availability of labour migration data, the Commission in collaboration with the JLMP partners IOM and ILO with the support of Statistics Sweden, the Commission has put more effort to improve the availability of data through the production of the 3rd edition of the labour migration statistics report for Africa following the successful production of the 1st and 2nd editions of the report. The report is at an advanced stage with the launch planned for the second quarter of 2021. The availability of labour market data continues to be a challenge to many African countries. However, in an effort to improve this process, the Commission adopted new LMIS guidelines to assist countries to develop a comprehensive, up to date and well monitored robust labour market information systems to monitor labour market trends for informed policy development. Further, the guidelines will assist Member states to establish a more robust integrated Labour market information systems in Africa with a comprehensive set of institutional arrangement, technological platforms, datasets and information flows. The first beneficiary of this process is Ethiopia, where bilateral deliberations have been held to fast track this process with a stakeholders training scheduled to take place in the second quarter.

Expanding the use of administrative data sources has been one of the key areas that is of interest to the Commission and the JLMP partners. Through the support of the Joint Labour Migration Programme, pilot studies are being conducted in two selected member states (South Africa and Cameroon) to assess the availability of labour migration data in these sources for

better enriched reporting of disaggregated migrant stock and flows. The pilot assessments will also contribute greatly towards development of a comprehensive methodology and visibility tools that will be used to roll our similar initiatives to other member states.

In addition, the JLMP is a critical instrument of implementing the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and Plan of Action (2018-2030) adopted by the AU Assembly in January 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Supported by the JLMP and the AUC Migration Governance Facility, the EAC Secretariat is conducting a Labour Migration Situational Analysis and the finalization of the Regional Labour Migration Policy in other to improve the labour migration governance in the region. The East African Community (EAC) Secretariat and its Partner States are among beneficiaries of the JLMP which aims to, among other outcomes, improve policy and regulatory systems on labour migration at Member States and RECs levels, taking into account gender dimensions and the relevant international human rights and labour standards. The Commission is working with experts from IOM, ILO and GIZ in EAC. The Commission is also providing technical support to the Kingdom of Lesotho to finalise the country's National Migration and Development Policy.

**Adaeze Molokwu, Brian Okengo,
and Amohelang Ntsobo, HHS**

¹ <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-ethiopia-assists-hundreds-returning-covid-19-affected-migrants>

² https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39884-doc-mobility_and_migration_of_african_health_workers_post_covid-19.pdf

MAINSTREAMING TRAINING ON COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING IN THE CURRICULA OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS TAKES OFF FOR AU HORN AFRICA INITIATIVE MEMBER STATES

Deputy Commissioner General Mesfen Abebe Bedye, President of the Ethiopia Police University, M, Peter Mudungwe of the AU Commission and high officials of Ethiopia police discussing the mainstreaming initiative



Due to a variety of factors, irregular migration continues to be an issue of concern among Member States of the AU Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants (AU-HoAI). This is an initiative that was launched by Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Tunisia in October 2014 in Khartoum in quest to foster cooperation among Member States in the region and improve their capacity in addressing the challenges of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

In an assessment of the capacity building needs of Member States of the AU-HoAI that was conducted by the Initiative's Secretariat (comprising the AU Commission, IOM and UNHCR) in 2018, one major finding was the need for capacity building of law enforcement agents of the Member States in combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling. The consequent recommendation was the prioritization of training and capacity building of law enforcement agents of the Initiative's Member States in combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Pursuant to this recommendation, the Secretariat initiated a proposal to mainstreaming training on combating

human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the curricula of academies that train Member States' law enforcement agents. After the proposal was adopted by the Member States, the Secretariat invited interested Member States to submit requests to the AU Commission. In this regard, Ethiopia was the first Member State to submit a request, and the Secretariat and the Ethiopian authorities designed the Ethiopia Mainstreaming Initiative.

According to the design of the Ethiopia Mainstreaming Initiative, the AU Commission will develop a curriculum and training modules on combating human trafficking and migration smuggling which will be integrated in the training curricula of police academies and training institutions of the judiciary in Ethiopia. Thus, the training on combating human trafficking and migration smuggling will become an integral part in the training of police cadets/officers and prosecutors.

To kick-start the Ethiopia Mainstreaming Initiative, on 2 February 2021 the AU Commission held an inaugural meeting with the President of the Ethiopia Police University, Deputy Commissioner General Mesfen Abebe Bedye. The meeting discussed the finer details of the

Ethiopia Mainstreaming Initiative, and the President of the Ethiopian Police University welcomed the collaboration between the AU Commission and law enforcement agencies in Ethiopia within the context of the AU-HoAI, and expressed his full support for the initiative.

The mainstreaming initiative in Ethiopia is the first of its kind in Africa, and should it be successful, the AU Commission will replicate the initiative in other Member States of the AU HoAI, and indeed the Continent on a needs basis. In this respect, imbedded in the design of the Ethiopia Mainstreaming Initiative is a robust monitoring and evaluation system from which lessons will be gleaned for posterity.

SKILLS PROOFING AFRICAN YOUTH FOR POST-COVID

The economic contraction effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have revealed the flaws in the labour market structure of most countries, including African Union Member States. The economic and social collateral damage is even more acute for workers in the informal sector who have little or no protection from these shocks. This is expected to have a long-term effect on Africa's labour force as some Member States are projected to take up to 10 years to bounce back to pre-covid income levels. Member States are therefore required to reassess the kind of skills and type of work that will be available post-COVID for young people in a bid to 'build back better'. With a de facto unemployment rate of around 20% and an extreme working poverty rate of 40%, young Africans are particularly vulnerable to the influence of transnational criminal elements including human traffickers and smugglers.

As the main victims of this situation are young people, the continent requires a specialized form of skills achieved through a high quality of education that aligns with the digitized and dynamic global work environment. According to the International Labor Organization (2020), migration in Africa plays a critical role in exchange of skills among the youth even though it is mainly intra-regional and is dominated by low-skilled workers. The African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and the Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (popularly known as the Joint Labour Migration Programme -JLMP) – guided by Agenda 2063 and African Youth Charter- highlight the importance of the consolidation of skills for African youth in search of decent jobs and better employment opportunities.

Africa's youthful population is projected to exceed 830 million by 2050. This rapid population growth has become one of the major assets of the continent. The proper harnessing and utilization of this asset can probably produce one of the most educated and skilled generations of the continent. Through the MPFA and JLMP, the African Union has put the weight of its economic, political and social future on its youth to overcome its past half millennia that is riddled with issues of global marginality, underdevelopment and dependency while developing a properly integrated, inclusive and innovative democratic developmental society within the region. The contrast is a frightening challenge of millions of unemployed and underemployed youths, a real depiction of an unforgiving and unimaginable dystopia. With Covid-19 changing entirely every way of life in the content and everywhere globally, it has become necessary for African Union Member States to undertake the immense responsibility of turning the continent youth into a skilled society.

Through governmental and intergovernmental agencies, most African economies are working on instilling specific skillset to their youth by eliminating prevailing skills and job mismatches and upgrading their employability skills. This includes promoting innovative technology (IT, green technology, etc.) that will enable the continent to leapfrog and take advantage of the opportunities from various initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area as

well as the post-covid global economy. Simultaneously, governments are also strengthening and reforming their educational systems, increasingly adopting digitalized infrastructure and competencies. This can only be achieved by undergoing and embracing digital transformation due to the effect of the pandemic, which has suddenly affected educational institutions in Africa - known for their snails' pace aversion to change as they transferred their learning and research activities online.

There have also been cross-sector partnerships in most countries in Africa that have undertaken successful youth training initiatives. For example, the AU and EU have developed the Youth Employability Programme to support skills development programmes and productive engagement with the private sector, promote best practices and capacity development to improve labour market information systems and undertake staff development through mobility and exchanges of experience with European counterparts³. The African Development Bank's Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy focuses on practical and high-impact education and training to address the youth unemployment and underemployment crisis⁴. Under the Skills Development for Youth Employment (SKYE) programme, the German government through GIZ provides needs-based technical and vocational education and training for youth in various AU Member states⁵.

In Kenya and Nigeria, government agencies in charge of youth affairs have collaborated with AU-NEPAD and other private agencies such as Rockefeller Foundation, IBM Digital Nation Africa (IBM-DNA), online platforms such as Upwork and giant global technology firms to undertake a review of the various curriculum for digital skills training to ensure that the minimum set industry standards are met. These agencies have also prioritized the integration of socio-emotional skills into the curriculum to assist the youth in developing leadership and problem-solving skills as well as provide full-time employment opportunities and internships for the beneficiaries.

To skills proof African youth for a future where disruptions such as Covid-19 might become a permanent aspect of our daily lives, the education system must embrace change in learning and teaching with the prioritization of technological innovation such as content management systems (CMS) and learning management systems (LMS) coupled with an approach that improves access and equity. The proposed African Continental Qualifications Framework will also contribute to the implementation of innovative education initiatives and skills and capacity-building mechanisms that work towards achieving sustainable competencies.

Another set of important skills necessary for the youth in a post-Covid-19 society includes critical thinking, normative dialogue, and transformative leadership. These are indispensable tools in the synthesis of problems and their solutions, especially in

³ <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/projects/au-eu-skills-youth-employability-programme>

⁴ <https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/jobs-for-youth-in-africa>

⁵ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/72119.html>

understanding and working within a diverse stakeholder context. As such, skills proofing will require a greater application of innovation and emerging technologies to adjust to the 'new normal' and accommodate the new demands.

**Philip Bob JUSU, Socioeconomic Officer,
African Union Permanent Mission to the
European Union**

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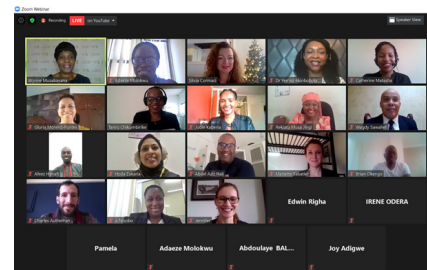
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CHECK OUT!

1ST LABOUR MIGRATION MEDIA AWARDS

In partnership with Africa Women in Media (AWIM), the 1st Labour migration media awards was held on December 18, 2020 to recognize and celebrate journalists who have reported labour migration in Africa. Over 70 entries we submitted to 8 categories of Awards which include gender-based migration, migration and health, migrants' rights, fair recruitment, remittances and diaspora contributions, economic impact of migration, intra-Africa migration and labour migration governance. The winners of are as follows:



CATEGORY	WINNER	ABOUT THE ENTRY
Gender-based migration	Rekiatu Musa Jingi (Cameroon, Cameroon Radio Television)	" Migration Of Women In Cameroon As A Result Of Boko Haram Crisis "; won this category not only because of its highlights of the struggles women are facing as a result of displacement but also showcasing their resilience amidst such suffering.
Migration and Health	Judie Kaberia (Kenya, Capital FM)	" Human Trafficking Victims at Risk as COVID-19 ravages the world "; explored the increase of human trafficking cases during the COVID-19 pandemic. It won the category because of its beautiful narration of one man's journey as a migrant worker from Zimbabwe to South Africa in the 1970s. It tied very well the historical context with present struggles.
Migrant Rights	Chahreddine Berriah (Algeria, Daily El Watan)	" Au Niger, sur les traces de Maria "; explored Migrant's Rights through the story of a Cameroonian Migrant. It won this category because of its timeliness and respect of ethics while covering migrants.
Fair recruitment, forced labour and Human Trafficking of Migrant workers	Hoda Zakaria (Egypt, Alyoum Elsabea Newspaper)	" The inferno of human trafficking " focused on the trafficking of Nigerian women to Europe and the Middle East. The entry was not only relevant and timely but used data and excellent imagery to expose the crime of human trafficking.
Remittances and Diaspora contributions	Abdoulaye Balbone (Burkina Faso, Edition Sidwaya)	" Les bonnes œuvres des Burkinabè d'Italie "; won due its expert and professional language, it's specificity and precision and its new perspective in talking about issues around remittances and diaspora contributions
Economic Impact of Migration	Abdel Aziz Hali (Tunisia, Mangeons Bien)	" Tunisia: Migrants and Syrian Refugees: "Our Gastronomy saved us!" ; explored the lives of two migrants who have successfully achieved socio-economic integration through restaurant projects in Tunisia. It won this category because of its creativity and the way it offered a new perspective in the conversation around Migrants.
Intra-Africa Migration	Afeez Hanafi (Nigeria, Punch Newspaper)	" Xenophobia: Our South African Classmates bully, tell us to leave their country- Nigerian pupils "; won this category because of its specificity and precision and offered a new angle and perspective of looking at xenophobia issues in South Africa.
Labour Migration Governance	Wagdy Sawahel (Egypt, University World News)	" COVID-19 drives medical brain drain- is it all bad? "; explored the mobility and outward Migration of health workers from Africa to the Western hemisphere. The story won this category due its relevance and timeliness and expert focus on movement of health workers during the COVID-19 era.

Adaeze Molokwu, HHS

AFRICA MIGRATION REPORT – THE FIRST EDITION IS AVAILABLE!



The general perception and stories behind African migration has been guided and influenced by the image of young African migrating to countries in the Global North in search of better economic opportunities or because of conflicts, instability and violence. This also gives the impression that migration arises from failed development and that, in most cases, migration negatively affects both sending and receiving countries as well as migrants and their communities. However, the best available evidence tells a different story!

In order to challenge the dominant narrative and highlight the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon, the AU Commission and the International Organisation for Migration jointly initiated the production of the first ever [Africa Migration Report](#). This inaugural edition seeks to provide additional perspectives that ensure a more complete understanding of this complex phenomenon, thereby correcting misconceptions regarding African migration. The report, which was produced with the support of the USA and Switzerland, was launched virtually on October 15, 2020. Over 200 technical experts, government ministers and representatives of member states, officials from the development sector, development partners, and other interested individuals attended the event.

Through its 16 chapters, the report discussed topics such key trends on African migration, migration and trade, remittances, labour migration, migration and health or migrant children. Following the launch, specific thematic webinars will be organized with authors and key stakeholders to further discuss key issues. The French, Arabic and Portuguese versions of the report will be available soon.

Evelyne Nkeng Peh, HHS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Commissioner Elfadil Visit to the Emergency Transit Mechanism in Rwanda – end of March 2021
- Stakeholder meeting to review and validate the Feasibility Study of Ethiopia Mainstreaming Initiative: May 2021.
- Symposium on fostering labour mobility within and from Africa
- Validation workshop of the Regional Labour Migration Policy for East African Community
- Finalisation of the AU Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers
- Launch of the 3rd edition of the Labour Migration Statistics Report
- Trainings on LMIS Guidelines at REC level

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