

**Directorate of Information and Communication****MEDIA ADVISORY****AU REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING IN
THE HORN OF AFRICA****INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA**

What: The AFRICAN UNION REGIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA.

Who: The African Union (AU) in collaboration with the Government of Sudan, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Core Countries in the Horn of Africa, the neighboring countries, and partner countries and organizations.

When: The Conference will be organized from 13 to 16 October 2014, as follows:

- Senior Officials/Experts Meeting: 13-14 October 2014
- Senior Officials Meeting on EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (Khartoum Process): 15 October 2014
- Ministerial Meeting: 16 October 2014

Where: POLICE CLUB HOUSE, KHARTOUM, THE SUDAN

Objectives:

The Regional Conference aims to foster improved cooperation among the member states in the region in addressing the challenges of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants within and from the Horn of Africa.

The Conference is expected to result in developing a strategy, action plan and declaration, that will aim to improve the capacity of Horn of Africa Member States to address trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and irregular migration in a comprehensive and effective manner while ensuring access to asylum, and create a forum for cooperation in the region, transit and destination countries.

Background:

The Horn of Africa remains, due to various factors, an area where volatile and insecure conditions continue to motivate large numbers of people to move within and across borders. These historical irregular migration flows include refugees, asylum seekers, smuggled and trafficked persons, as well as economic migrants.

The involvement of highly organized and at-times transnational criminal syndicates coupled with increasingly grave accounts of human rights violations against migrants is causing significant concern to the international community and AU Member States in particular..

In light of this, the African Union (AU) with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have been promoting the need for regional dialogue and coordination on migration management, supporting Member States in strengthening responses to transnational organized crime, notably trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and the protection of victims within the Horn of Africa region.

Following series of preliminary consultative meetings in Addis Ababa since November 2012 with Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan, a preparatory meeting on human trafficking and smuggling was organized in Khartoum, Sudan, from 21 to 22 May 2014 to discuss and agree on the objectives, outcome, harmonization of approaches and initiatives on the issue.

Senior state officials from Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan had deep and frank discussions on the root causes of human trafficking, smuggling of migrants and circular and irregular migration, as well as, refugees and asylum seekers within the Horn of Africa and outside of the region. There was a general understanding and realization that the problems of human trafficking and irregular migration cannot be solved by one country alone. It should be addressed from a regional and global perspective and must be situated in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development. Thus, recognizing the value of adopting a comprehensive regional approach, it was agreed that a regional conference should be convened to discuss the issue further.

It is against this background that the AUC is convening a regional conference in Khartoum from 13 to 16 October 2014, which will bring together Ministers and Experts from the countries in the Horn of Africa region, major transit and destination countries, as well as partners.

Media representatives are invited to cover the event.

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