



MEDIA ADVISORY

ROUNDTABLE ON INTRA-REGIONAL MIGRATION AND LABOUR MOBILITY WITHIN AFRICA

ON

“Enhancing capacities of RECs and Member States to facilitate Intra-regional Migration & Labour Mobility for Regional Integration and Economic Cooperation in Africa”

INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

- What:** Roundtable on Intra-regional Migration and Labour Mobility within Africa held under the theme ***“Enhancing capacities of RECs and Member States to facilitate Intra-regional Migration & Labour Mobility for Regional Integration and Economic Cooperation in Africa”***
- Who:** The event is a joint initiative of the African Union (AU), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in conjunction with the Swiss government.
- When:** 23- 25 March 2015.
- Where:** Serena Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda
- Participants:** About Sixty (60) Senior Officials and Experts from the AUC, RECs, AU member states, UN Agencies and International Organizations notably; AfDB, IOM, ILO, EU, World Bank, UNCTAD, UNHCR, WEF, UNECA, UN Women, UNDP, Swiss government, Social Partners, Development partners and other Co-sponsors. The Roundtable will also invite experts and resource persons from key partners, the academia, civil society, and private sector.
- Objectives:** The main objective of this joint initiative is to encourage and facilitate free movement of persons within Africa with the potential to provide alternative legal channels of migration.

Other specific objectives include:

- To improve the awareness and understanding of the benefits that migration and labour mobility, as powerful drivers of sustainable economic

and social development, bring to countries of origin, transit, and destination as well as to migrants themselves.

- To result in policies and actions to unlock opportunities to deepen regional integration and economic cooperation for inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa.
- To provide a platform for a wide range of stakeholders to holistically evaluate the issue of intra-regional migration and mobility in Africa.
- To share experiences, good practices and lessons, empirical data and evidence-based information on the benefits, opportunities and challenges of intra-regional migration and labour mobility from other regions including Western Europe and South America and its potential to boost intra-regional trade and investment.

Expected Outcomes:

It is expected that the knowledge shared and understanding gained at the roundtable will motivate and encourage African governments and AU member states to ratify the protocols on free movement of persons in order to unlock opportunities to deepen regional integration and economic cooperation for inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa. It is also expected to dispel myths about the negative impacts of free movement of persons and cross-border labour mobility. It is envisaged that the Roundtable will empower decision and policy makers to adopt comprehensive approaches to migration management and to undertake necessary actions to facilitate intra-regional movement of people. As a result of the evidence-based information and lessons from the roundtable, governments will recognize the need to ratify the protocols on free movement of persons, and existing international conventions on the protection of migrant workers and a migration governance framework for better migration management.

Background: A growing body of evidence suggests that the ratification of free movement protocols increases trade levels and boosts development. The experiences of the EAC and ECOWAS economic communities as well those of the European Union and the Union of South American States have shown that free movement of persons and goods has positive effects on economic development. However, intra-regional migration and cross-border labour mobility still face several impediments in Africa, which has negatively impacted the level of intra-continental trade. These include the lack of effective domestication and implementation of regional and international instruments, lack of mutual recognition of credentials and qualifications between and among countries. Moreover, of the eight African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), only two (2) have fully ratified their protocols on free movement of persons. Consequently, intra-African trade lags far behind other global regions. Over the past decade intra-African trade averaged 10 – 12%, whilst the average was 40% in North America, 40% in Asia and 63% in Western Europe.

To address these challenges, the African Union has adopted the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), to strengthen migration governance for

regional economic integration and inclusive development. Furthermore, the AU has adopted an Action Plan to boost intra-African trade and a roadmap to fast-track the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by 2017. African Union Member States therefore need to aggressively pursue comprehensive and harmonized regional trade policies as part of their collective development and transformation strategies in the context of regional integration.

Building on the endorsement of the Special Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission in Windhoek (April 2014), the 24th Summit of the African Union held in January 2015 adopted the AUC/ILO/IOM/ECA Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) a strategic and flagship initiative in support of the implementation of the labour migration priority of the Ouaga + 10 process. While the region is now well equipped with a strategy (MPFA) and a politically validated programme of action (JLMP), there is a renewed focus towards an operational roadmap.

Media representatives are invited to cover the opening ceremony meeting on 23rd March and the closing ceremony on 25th March 2015.

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