

Media Advisory

32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union: High-Level Side Event on Migration and Displacement in Africa

Theme: *“Migration and Displacement in Africa: Addressing the underlying causes through innovative risk financing mechanisms Background”*

INVITATION TO MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

What: High-Level Side Event Hosted by the AU Commission (AUC), African Risk Capacity (ARC), African Development Bank (AfDB), and UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

When: Saturday, 9th February 2019

Time: 11:00AM – 12:30PM

Where: Old Plenary Hall, African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Background:

Historically, migration on the African continent has been caused by political instability, civil insecurity, and poverty. But in recent times, migration is accelerated by the negative impacts of climate change. Between 2008 and 2015, an average of 26 million people was displaced annually¹ by climate or weather-related disasters. In 2016, an estimated 1.1 million people were displaced by sudden on-set natural hazards². The increasing frequency of droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events means that migration is expected to grow further. These intersecting climate and migration trends in Africa increase the vulnerability of the poor populations, namely the smallholder farmers that rely on subsistence, rainfed agriculture and form the backbone of the African economies.

The 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) will be held on 10 and 11 February 2019 under the theme “Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa.” Among others, this will present the opportunity to explore and showcase African innovative mechanisms which address the underlying causes of migrations, notably natural disasters and extreme weather events.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/news/climate-change-is-a-key-driver-of-migration-and-food-insecurity>

² Internal Monitoring Displacement Centre and Norwegian Refugee Council (2017). Africa Report on Internal Displacement. (<http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2017-africa-report-on-internal-displacement/>)

One of such innovative mechanism is the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Agency, a Specialized Agency of the AU, that was established in 2012 to help Member States better plan, prepare and respond to extreme weather events and other natural disasters, thereby protecting the food security and livelihoods of their most vulnerable populations. With ARC, the AU has set the pace at the continental level by convening African leaders to establish an institution that can deploy innovative mechanisms that respond to the growing impact of natural disasters and extreme weather events on the continent. In its first four years of operations, the ARC insurance mechanism has triggered over US \$36 million to countries in the Sahel and Southern Africa to provide timely assistance for over 2.1 million people and 900,000 livestock affected by extreme droughts.

In an effort to scale up the protection against extreme weather events in rural areas, the African Development Bank (AfDB) took the leadership to design the Africa Disaster Risk Financing Facility (ADRFi), a programme that will expand access to ARC's risk transfer facilities for African Union Member States.

The proposed high-level side event will highlight the interdependency between migration, food security and climate change. Based on experience from AU Member States, ARC will be explored as a mechanism to address the underlying risks and causes of climate-induced migration and displacement in Africa. The event will also showcase how African institutions' partnerships can bring complementarity in addressing the challenges associated with the causes of migration.

This high-level side event is in line with Executive Council Decision (**EX.CL/Dec. 997 (XXXII)**), where the Council "*Further Requested the Commission to engage with ARC to develop concrete mechanisms and instruments of collaboration to raise awareness and galvanize political support amongst Member States*".

Furthermore, the proposed side event will provide an ideal platform for discussion amongst African leaders on the ADRFi programme, in line with the Executive Council decision - **EX.CL/Dec.952 (XXX)** - "*Encourages and welcomes the African Development Bank (AfDB) initiative to develop financial mechanisms to fund disaster insurance premiums for ARC Member States.*"

Outcomes:

Expected outcomes of the event include:

- a) Strengthened support to the African Risk Capacity:
 - i. African Union Member States encouraged to join and ratify the ARC Treaty;
 - ii. international partners' significant contribution in supporting the implementation of Africa's initiative in disaster risk management recognized;
 - iii. ARC encouraged to work hand in hand with the AfDB and the ECA.

- b) Increased AfDB's financial provision to the joint ARC-AfDB Africa Disaster Risk Financing Programme (ADRFi).
- c) Greater involvement of African insurance and reinsurance companies as well as other financial institutions to expand the scope of tools and financing available to the continent.
- d) Identification of a champion at the level of a Head of State or Government to raise the profile of the ARC institution.

Discussants:

- H.E. President Alassane Dramane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- H.E. President Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda and Outgoing Chairperson of the African Union (tbc)
- H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (tbc)
- H.E. Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group
- H.E. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
- H.E. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Chairperson of the ARC Agency Governing Board

Contributions from Heads of State and Government in attendance:

- H.E. President Kabore, President of Burkina Faso
- H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- H.E. President Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of Gambia
- H.E. President Nana Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana
- H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya
- H.E. President Ibrahim B. Keita, President of the Republic of Mali
- H.E. President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Republic of Mauritania
- H.E. President Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger
- H.E. President Faure Eyadema, President of the Togolese Republic

Media personnel are invited to cover this event.

The draft concept note is attached

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