

Press Release N°134/2015**African Union holds Memorial Service for Migrant Victims**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27th May 2015: “Member States must do more to make their countries attractive, safer and prosperous enough to discourage our future leaders of tomorrow from making these perilous journeys” emphasized the Commissioner for Social Affairs, H.E Dr Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko during the migrant victims’ memorial service held at the African Union headquarters on 27th

May 2015.

This event, organized by the African Union, brought under one roof African ambassadors and Embassies accredited to the AU, Partners, Local and International Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, students, religious leaders and Returned migrants.

In his remarks, the Commissioner expressed concern at the pattern in which young people are losing their lives through the hazardous journeys in search of better lives and order to support their families and underscored the need to find immediate and long-term solutions to prevent this kind of catastrophes.

“Despite the initiatives that the African Union is undertaking on the issue of human trafficking and irregular migration, we have to accept that the challenges still remain and more needs to be done. We need to make a conscious effort to address the root causes of these tragedies by building each other up honestly and sincerely. We all can promote the positives of migration and minimize its negatives in our bid to fast track African integration which the AU Vision and Pan Africanism seek to promote.” Dr Kaloko said.

The Commissioner highlighted that the event is not only to pay tribute and to honor the victims, but a time to reflect on where we have gone wrong and how we can all work on preventing such recurrent calamities in the future.

The Ethiopian Government Representative, Ambassador Wahade Belay echoed the Commissioners' sentiments, acknowledging that indeed irregular migration is a major challenge noting well that this increasingly severe situation requires a comprehensive and universal response to address and eliminate the abuse, violence and exploitation experienced by migrants and stressing the urgency for not only national but global action. "We need to get durable and comprehensive approaches to this situation within the context of poverty eradication, creation of employment and sustainable development," he said.

African Union Commission and partners, notably the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Labor Organization (ILO) and European Commission (EC) have been promoting the need for coordination on migration management, supporting Member States in strengthening responses to irregular migration and transnational organized crime, notably trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and the protection of persons of concern.



The AU partners, present in the event, also reiterated the fact that the situation needs to be addressed by attacking the root causes, agreeing that the challenge is huge and needs international interventions. The partners reaffirmed their support and promised to continue working closely

with the African Union to find a permanent solution to these vices.

The service ended with prayers and benediction from religious leaders.

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