

**Press Release N°158/2017****Experts session of the STC on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons opens**

Kigali, Rwanda 17 October 2017– The Second Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons began at the experts level on 16th October 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda.

The objectives of the STC under the theme “Opportunities for Migration and Free Movement of Persons in Africa and Mitigating Challenges” is to deliberate and propose for the adoption of STC ministerial session the following issues: Protocol to the treaty establishing the African Economic Community on Free Movement of Persons and its Implementation Plan; AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa and its 10- years Plan of Action; The Global Compact on Safe, Ordinary and Regular Migration and Report on Horn of Africa.

Africa is faced with a difficulty in free movement of persons in Africa where Africans are forced to go through lengthy and restrictive processes in order to travel. Additionally, many Africans embark on long, complicated and dangerous routes across the deserts and the Mediterranean Sea.

“At present, Africa is faced with an unprecedented number of voluntary and forced migration, as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs) resulting from labour migration, conflicts, climate change, and natural disasters. These factors are not new, they have driven migration in history. Undoubtedly, this has posed certain social, economic and political challenges in the management of migration, protection of refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs”, said Amb. Olawale Maiyegun, Director for Social Affairs, AU Commission.

Speaking at the opening ceremony the Director also underscored the huge challenge that Africa is facing as most migration is within the continent that represents 4 out of 5 migrants i.e. more than 80% of African migrants remain in the continent. This implies the need to refocus the policies and measures to address migration inside Africa, in addition to overseas migration. “The African Union understands the importance of migration in development and issues of migration and mobility have pre-occupied the minds of our Heads of State and Government for quite some time now, given the centrality of human movement within Africa for continental integration”, he added.

Officially opening the expert session Mr Nikobisanzwe Claude, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Republic of Rwanda stressed the significance of the STC to the future of Africa as a continent inline with its focus on key

framework policies and important legal instruments for the implementation of Agenda 2063 of the AU and its first 10 years implementation plan.

While elaborating the thematic areas of the STC meeting, Mr. Claude said, “The Common African Position will be anchored on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African solidarity as well as shared values and informed by other existing African Union (AU) frameworks...” it includes the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the African Common Position on Migration and Development of 2006, the Common African Perspective for Valletta Summit on Migration of 2015, and Agenda 2063, as well as guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. “It will also be informed by ongoing AU processes including development of Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in African, and the Continental Free Trade Area negotiations, among others”, he added.

“The realization of the free movement of persons in Africa would indeed have the advantage of boosting the integration and development process of the continent so that our Union, beyond its intergovernmental character, will become a Union of peoples within which Africans will find a space; their own space”, underscored H.E. Fafre CAMARA, 1st Vice Chair of the STC and Ambassador of Mali in Ethiopia.

The STC experts session will continue between 16-19 October and will be preceded by the ministerial session on 21-22 October. *Media representatives are invited to cover the ministerial session opening on 21 October at 9:00am, Serena Hotel, Kigali.*

For additional information on the STC:

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