



## PRESS RELEASE

## Malabo hosts Sixth African Union Commission Forum on International Law (AUCIL)



*Legal and Socio economic consequences of immigration, refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa was at the center of discussion*

**Malabo, Equatorial Guinea: 4 – 5 of December, 2017:** As part of the ongoing concerted efforts to facilitate the growth and development of African Union’s Agenda 2063 to ensure Africa is a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner in world affairs, the African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL) convened its 6<sup>th</sup> forum under the theme “***Legal and Socio economic consequences of immigration, refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa***” in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The rationale behind the theme was to create the platform to discuss the issue of immigrants, refugees and internally displaced persons through the prism of international law and the African Union Law with the view to raising awareness on the necessity of accelerating regional integration, enlightening African decision makers on legal implications of regional integration, present the steps already achieved towards the African integration, identify ways to accelerate regional integration throughout the continent. The Forum also evaluated recent ongoing initiatives such as of the Draft African Union Common African Position (CAP) on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and draft Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic

Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment.

The opening ceremony of the forum was graced by the presence of, practitioners on international law, legal advisers of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ambassadors of AU Member States and Diplomats, Academician from Educational and Research Institutions and students. In his opening remark, the Vice Prime Minister in Charge of Parliamentary Affairs in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomed all participants to Malabo. The Vice Prime Minister expressed solidarity and support for everyone fleeing their homes.

Hon. Busingye Johnston, Minister for Justice and Attorney General of the Republic of Rwanda and Chairperson of the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons emphasized on the importance of free movement of persons in Africa to curb the various challenges faced. Representing H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E Zaina Nyiramata, stressed on the need to build synergy with all AU Organs and institutions in order to build an integrated and prosperous Africa. She stated that the selected theme comes at a time where the world is witnessing unprecedented number of migrants and the challenges they face within the continent and beyond. Ambassador Prof. Sebastiao Da Silva Isata, Chairperson of the AUCIL in his speech welcomed the participants to the meeting and explained the significance of Africa's contribution to the development of international law in addressing the phenomena of migration.

Prof. Chaloka Beyani, Former UN special rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced person, in his key note address noted that the only continental tool forward is the "realization of the 1991 Abuja treaty establishing the African Economic Community as a framework under which a Protocol on Free Movement in Africa was envisaged and is currently being negotiated [...and further stated that] an important topic for discussion is the protection of migrants at sea, which implicates the law of the sea, in the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone, and on the high seas." He concluded by calling on the AUCIL to ensure that this deliberation add significant momentum to the attainment of these initiatives.

The African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL) team also took this opportunity to organize a joint training on AU Humanitarian Law and Policy Training Programme with the Department of Political Affairs, the Focal department on all matters related to Humanitarian Law within the African Union Commission from 6 to 8 December 2017 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

## **Editor's Note**

AUCIL was created in 2009 as an independent advisory organ to undertake activities relating to codification and progressive development of international law in Africa with particular attention to the laws of the AU. AUCIL Forums are held annually following the inaugural forum in December 2012, as a platform for discussing and interacting on matters of interest for Africa through the prism of international law and the African Union Law with the view of raising awareness on the necessity of accelerating regional integration, enlightening African decision makers on legal implications of regional integration, present the steps already achieved towards the African integration, identify ways to accelerate regional integration throughout the continent.

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