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**THE AU-EU-UN TASK FORCE MEETING CALLS TO RESCUE STRANDED
MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN LIBYA**

Addis Ababa, 18 April 2019: The task force met on 16 April 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting follows the latest developments in Libya and the escalating conflict in Tripoli. The meeting, which was chaired by the Special Envoy of the Chairperson and Commissioner for Social Affairs, H.E. Madam Amira Elfadil, and attended by the Head of the EU Delegation to the AU, the Chief of Mission IOM and the UNHCR Representative to the AU, deliberated on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Libya, as the available humanitarian space continues to be threatened each passing day by the ongoing conflict.

The meeting highlighted the urgent need for humanitarian assistance, especially for basic needs such as food, water and medical services for internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees caught in the conflict, and called upon the AU Member States and the international community to come to their rescue by providing the necessary support and assistance.

The task force called upon and appealed to all warring parties not to use civilians, including migrants and refugees as human shields but instead provide them with safe passage/corridors to safe and secure areas where they can be afforded the necessary humanitarian assistance.

The meeting noted with concern that in spite of the progress made by the Assisted Voluntary Humanitarian Return Programme (AVHRP) implemented by IOM and relevant Member States and evacuation of refugees by UNHCR, a considerable number of refugees seeking protection and resettlement, and migrants remain in Libya. With more than 7,000 migrants and refugees being held in detention centres. In addition, there is a growing number of internally displaced persons whose plight causes grave concern.

In respect to the need to accelerate the return programme, the task force appealed to all concerned Member States with nationals in Libya, to double their efforts, including, in provision of consular services and issuance of travel documents so as to facilitate and fast-track their return from Libya. The task force also appreciated the role played by Niger in hosting the majority of vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers evacuated from Libya.

In the same vein, the task force also appealed to the Libyan authorities to continue facilitating landing rights to other airlines, consular services of concerned Member

States and fast-tracking of exit visa processing to allow swift return of those wishing to return to their countries of origin.

In conclusion, the task force expressed much appreciation for the continued support and assistance offered by the people of Libya and its authorities to the multitude of stranded migrants and refugees in Libya this far, and appealed to other Member States to generously contribute, accordingly. The task force also calls for the protection of all migrants and refugees in line with international and regional standards.

The task force will continue to engage and work with all stakeholders, including concerned Member States, the Libyan authorities and the international community in seeking practical solutions to the migrants' situation in Libya as we continue to seek for a durable political solution to the impasse.

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