

**DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION**

**Press Release No:056/2020**

**Date: May 26, 2020**

**Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Improving Labour Migration in Africa Discussed, Despite COVID-19 Challenges**

The economic shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting public health measures have left thousands of migrant workers in African countries, and beyond, hard-hit and struggling to make ends meet.

Deprived of work, many do not enjoy access to any social protection and the various relief measures that some governments are extending to their populations.

Even today, countries such as Djibouti, Sudan, South Africa and Botswana find themselves in the difficult position of having to deport or repatriate stranded migrants back to their home countries, with those who choose to stay seeing access to the labour market shrinking rapidly.

It is in this context that the African Union Commission (AUC)-International Labour Organization (ILO)-International Organization for Migration (IOM)-Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration (better known as the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP)) held the third Steering Committee meeting on 26 May 2020.

The virtual meeting discussed ways to strengthen the management of labour migration on the continent, despite the recent challenges brought forth by COVID-19.

Progress achieved was reviewed, and future directions discussed. The JLMP Priority workplan for 2020 was closely considered, especially as it relates to the priorities of African regional economic communities (RECs).

Progress made by the AU Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC) was also brought under the spotlight.

It was highlighted that with the support of JLMP Priority Project, in 2019 LMAC conducted several consultations with RECs, as part of its mandate to advise AU and RECs' decision makers on labour migration management and governance.

H.E Mrs. Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs, commended the work of the joint programme and said, "JLMP has been one of the most successful projects the AUC has worked on. It is a sustainable and growing project with many successes and presents opportunities to improve the way we manage labour migration on the continent".

The Commissioner added that JLMP is improving the labour migration landscape across the continent and is a key project for implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063, the UN SDG's for 2030, and the Migration Policy Framework for Africa.

Ms. Maureen Achieng, IOM Ethiopia Chief of Mission and Representative to the AU, IGAD and UNECA, also noted that despite the challenges we face due to COVID-19, the JLMP provides an opportunity to improve the lives of migrant workers across Africa during and beyond this crisis.

Ms. Ulla Andren, Head of Development Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa at the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa representing the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) stated that the programme is more important now than ever and that as a flexible donor they would continue to support implementation despite the COVID-19 induced slowdown.

Representatives of RECs presented regional experiences and priorities in the next six months and expressed satisfaction with working with the programme.

Participants of the meeting included representatives from Department of Social Affairs of the African Union Commission, IOM Ethiopia, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), International Labour Organization (ILO), as well as representatives from Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and social partners also attended.

#### **Notes to the Editor:**

The JLMP's ultimate objective is to improve labour migration governance in order to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration in Africa, as committed in relevant frameworks of the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), international labour conventions and other processes.

The programme, launched in 2015, works with AU Member States, RECs, social partner organizations, migrants and diaspora associations to address identified challenges to effective labour migration management in many countries such as labour and skills shortages, dearth of statistics, weak ratification and domestication of labour standards and free circulation frameworks, and addressing the challenge of jobless growth and widespread youth unemployment.

In order to have a significant and realistic take-off of the Programme, a Three-Year Project (JLMP Priority) was developed and launched in 2018 with the overall objective of improving the governance of labour migration to achieve safer, orderly and regular migration in Africa as committed in relevant frameworks of the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), as well as international labour conventions and other cooperation processes.

The JLMP Priority prioritizes four specific objectives closely drawn from the JLMP: Outcome 1: Enhanced effectiveness and transparency of operations of labour migration stakeholders, such as labour market actors and institutions, migration authorities, in consultation and cooperation with workers and employers' organizations, the private sector, recruitment industry and relevant civil society organizations, in delivering improved labour migration governance services. Outcome 2: Improved policy and regulatory systems on labour migration at Member State (MS) and Regional Economic Communities (REC) levels, and considering the gender dimension and relevant international human rights and labour standards. Outcome 3: Multi-stakeholder policy consultation and practical coordination on labour migration and mobility to provide advisory support to MS, AU and REC decision makers; and Outcome 4: Strengthened capacity of the AUC for continental and regional operational leadership in labour migration management including spearheading/steering the implementation of the JLMP at all levels.

The JLMP Steering Committee, which is made up of implementing partners namely AUC, IOM, ILO, ECA and UNDP, participating RECs, regional social partners and development partners provides strategic guidance to ensure the programme is effectively implemented.

The Committee oversees the overall policy and direction of the project and ensures that activities are in line with the AU strategy on migration, and REC's frameworks and common approaches on migration.

**For more information related to the meeting, please contact:**

1. Mr. Oumar Diop, JLMP Support Unit Coordinator, African Union Commission | Email: [DiopO@africa-union.org](mailto:DiopO@africa-union.org)
2. Ms. Adaeze Emily Molokwu, Consultant, African Union Commission | Email: [MolokwuA@africa-union.org](mailto:MolokwuA@africa-union.org)

**For further media inquiries, please contact:**

1. Mrs. Esther Azaa Tankou | Head of Information Division | Directorate of Information and Communication, African Union Commission | Mobile: +251911361185 | E-mail: [yamboue@africa-union.org](mailto:yamboue@africa-union.org)
2. Mr. Gamal Ahmed A. Karrar | Senior Communication Officer | Directorate of Information and Communication, African Union Commission | E-mail: [GamalK@africa-union.org](mailto:GamalK@africa-union.org)

**Directorate of Information and Communication** | African Union Commission | E-mail: [DIC@africa-union.org](mailto:DIC@africa-union.org) | Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia Follow Us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)