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African Union launches the second edition of the Labour Migration Statistics Report in Africa in collaboration with IOM, ILO, ECA, and SIDA

September 28-29 2020 The African Union Commission in partnership with International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) launched virtually the second edition of the report on Labour Migration Statistics in Africa. The launch event was carried out in two events, drawing over 100 technical experts, government ministers and representatives of member states, officials from the development sector, development partners, and other interested individuals. On the first day, the experts deliberated on the key findings and challenges experienced in producing the second edition of the report. They also held discussions on the best practices of collecting and using labour migration statistics in Africa, the strategies to address the challenges and data gaps existing in the collection of labour migration data in Africa identified in the Second edition and deliberated on the way forward of enhancing or establishing better coordination mechanisms at national level so as to improve production and availability of high quality, reliable and timely labour migration data in the continent.

In cognizant of the challenges of Migration issues in the continent, the African Union adopted the New AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030) and the AUC/IOM/ILO/ECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration known as the (JLMP) to govern migration in the continent.

These policies address international migration through focusing on a number of thematic areas with the aim of supporting member states to develop policies which maximize on development-oriented benefits while minimizing negative impacts. This will ensure that labour migration policies are effective in addressing migrants needs, support the development of policies for Member States and enhance regional integration. To this effect, these two frameworks advocate for reliable, accurate, comparable, verifiable and up-to-date data on all forms of migration in Africa. The regular production of a Labour Migration Statistics Report in Africa every two years, is the key information instrument for the Commission and all other stakeholders.

The launch of the second edition followed on the second event organized through a virtual meeting on 29th September 2020 marking good progress of the process toward its maturity.

In her remarks, H.E. Amira Elfadil Commissioner for Social Affairs assured that the African Union Commission (AUC) together with partners are looking forward to strengthening labour migration governance in the continent. “We understand better that we urgently need evidence based labour employment and employment intensive policies, strategies and programmes that integrate critical indicators disaggregated by sectoral, education, skills and occupation with a strong emphasis on capturing the demand side of the labour market.” She Said. She praised the exemplarity of the collaboration with the Department of Economic Affairs, the strong technical support from ILO, IOM and Sweden Statistics, and acknowledged the financial support from SIDA. She also recognized the contribution of the Regional Economic Communities and committed for enhanced cooperation in all areas of labour migration governance. She also acknowledged that the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) is one of the successful programmes implemented so far. The programme identifies migration data and statistics as key pillars for improving migration governance and integration in the continent which has a major impact in developing evidence-based policies and decision making for extended social economic benefits, protection and well-being of migrants in Africa.

Further, H.E. Amira Elfadil reiterated that the JLMP’s implementation goes along away towards poverty eradication, inclusive development as well as ensuring that migrants are well protected when they leave their countries of origin in search of better opportunities.

To achieve this, she acknowledged the need for Member states, experts and the Commission to develop good strategies to capture and improve the availability of high quality, reliable and timely data on labor migration on the continent so as to achieve Africa’s vision for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa whose development is driven by its own people with development of good and effective policies that are strongly grounded on evidence so as to respond to the interests and benefits of migrants in the countries of origin, transit and destination. She also reiterated on the Commission’s willingness to support member states to improve on the availability of accurate, verifiable and timely labour migration statistics for better labour migration governance and integration in the continent.

On his part, H.E. Prof Victor Harrison Commissioner for Economic Affairs stated that Labour migration statistics contributes greatly to understanding the major causes of poverty and exclusion amongst our people in the continent and thus having high quality, reliable and accurate statistics plays a crucial role in the development of policies that are grounded on evidence. He acknowledged that the Commission is looking forward to create effective mechanism within various intra-regional regimes and member states on good labour migration governance, mobility and social protection of migrant workers in the continent but this can’t be done without having harmonized data and comparable labour migration statistics.

He stressed on the need for strong data coordination and sharing mechanisms amongst state agencies, departments and institutions collecting labour migration data to improve data availability. He also acknowledged on the importance accorded to the use of existing administrative data sources and new data types to understand the flows

of migrants in our countries. He also stated that the Commission will assist member states to improve statistics in the continent using the Commissions structures and institutions with strict adherence to the African Statistics Charter and SHaSA2 guidelines. He also reiterated AU Commission's willingness to support member states and RECs to ensure that there is accurate, reliable, high quality and timely labour migration statistics in the continent.

Ms. Cynthia Samuel Olonjuwon, the Regional Director of ILO Africa, underscored that the Second Edition of the Labour Migration Statistics Report in Africa is a milestone in improving labour migration governance, and it will contribute to reducing labour migration data gaps for monitoring the agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU Agenda 2063. In her remarks, she expressed ILO's deep appreciation to the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for supporting the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) thus leading to the publication of the 2017 (Second Edition) of the Labour Migration Statistics in Africa Report. She also acknowledged and appreciated on the great collaborative efforts between the AU, ILO and IOM in the implementation of the JLMP-Priority programme for effective labour migration governance in Africa through the improved production, collection and analysis of labour migration data.

Further, she acknowledged that the Second Edition of the Labour Migration Statistics in Africa Report is a useful tool for delivering results, which will help to change the labour migration narrative in Africa as well as help shape the bright future of work desired in the continent. She also expressed ILO's commitment to continue supporting African countries in sharing and using harmonised international statistical standards as a contribution to the second Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA II) as well as support the production of new editions of the Labour Migration Statistics in Africa Report to contribute to the effective implementation of the JLMP and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to achieve to the Africa that we want as articulated in the AU 2063 Agenda and the UN 2030 Agenda.

The Chief of Mission of IOM Ethiopia Ms. Maureen Achieng pointed out that the Second Edition of the Labor Migration Statistics Report has been created with the goal of being used as a single reference database for quantitative data and statistics on international labour migration in Africa that would assist in the formulation of migration policies by the AUC, RECs and Member states. She acknowledged that great strides have achieved in the production of quality statistics to inform public decisions with support from national programs, continent-wide statistical development frameworks and other pan-African initiatives but absence of reliable, accurate and comprehensive data on labour migration, on migrant workers continue to exist particularly the disaggregation of migrants by skills and employment profiles, labour market participation, conditions of work, or social protection coverage.

Further, she expressed IOM's continued support to governments through the organization's continental strategy for Africa, which prioritizes strong, disaggregated African migration data collection and dissemination, statistics, research, and knowledge management. She also indicated that the AUC, MS and RECs will address the challenges related to the paucity of disaggregated data required for policy formulation in migration, economic, labour, climate action, enterprise development, investment, education and other policies that will ultimately contribute to a prosperous Africa.

Mrs Ulla Andren, on behalf of the SIDA, she recalled the long term development partnership with the Africa Union Commission and said that labour migration, including its importance for the African Continental free Trade Area (AfCFTA), is high in the SIDA agenda. She recalled that the use of harmonized statistics is essential for monitoring the implementation of the integration process in the continent. She further, acknowledged that migration is an important area of collaboration for Sweden as it creates better opportunities and tools that enable the poor and vulnerable people improve their living conditions. She called for an effective utilization of the data contained in the report and for better coordination at all levels as well as strengthen the capacity for Africa and regional actors to develop sustainable solutions to embrace the positive effects of migration. She also called for the actors to acknowledge the importance of labour migration statistics usage, address the challenges and gaps as well as improve the coordination mechanisms for improved dissemination and monitoring of labour migration governance in the continent.

His Excellence, Professor Séni Mahamdou Ouédraogo, the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social protection of Burkina Faso, in his capacity of the Chair of the 3rd ordinary Session of the Social Development, Labour and Employment Specialized Technical Committee, thanked ILO, IOM, SIDA and GIZ for their fruitful cooperation. He stressed the leadership of the Commission in the implementation of the AU policies of labour migration, ensuring effective participation of 48 Member States in the production of the second edition of the Labour Migration Statistics Report in Africa, despite the constraints posed by the COVID-10 pandemic. He launched the second edition of the report and also announced the third edition.

The new report on labour migration statistics in Africa reveals that over the ten years covered by the report, the African population increased from 944,433,089 in 2008 to 1,215,953,341 in 2017, with an average annual growth rate of 2.8 per cent. The working-age population in Africa increased from 509.4 million to 662.8 million during the same period. It also revealed that international migrants in the continent almost doubled in the decade from 13.3 million to 25.4 million international migrants in Africa, out of which 14.4 million are migrant workers. Majority of these migrant workers 24.9% are working in the agricultural sector.

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