

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

African Regional Economic Communities move to formalize and consolidate closer cooperation on labour migration policies

Twenty-nine (29) participants drawn from the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Business Africa, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), Diaspora African Forum and Organization of African Trade Union Unity. The meeting was convened with the understanding that different RECs are at different levels of progress in labour migration governance, hence the need to facilitate experience sharing and capacity building.

Speaking during the event, the AUC Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP) Coordinator, Mr Oumar Diop noted that Regional Economic Communities as the building blocks of the African Union have a pivotal role to play including on facilitating management of labour migration, through developing and implementing relevant legal and policy frameworks, providing guidance and capacity building to their Member States. The need to formalize, consolidate and promote closer cooperation among the RECs and the African Union including on harmonization of policies, measures and programmes has been articulated in the Draft Revised Protocol between AUC and RECs.

The IOM JLMP Programme Coordinator, Mr Edwin Righa said that 'labour migration has become very important for development and integration of the African continent as highlighted in some of the flagship programmes and policy frameworks like the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), the African Union Free Movement Protocol and the Global Compact for Migration'. He highlighted that political will to facilitate trade in the continent must be matched with facilitation of the Rights of Movement, Residence and Establishment as articulated in AU and RECs Protocols and frameworks.

It was clearly noted that the AU Free Movement Protocol was the bedrock of facilitating labour migration in the continent, hence all hands should be on deck to facilitate ratifications among AU Member States. The labour migration provisions of the Protocol were highlighted. The Programme Officer for Free Movement, Dr. Oluwafemi Solomon informed participants about some initiatives involving ECOWAS and EAC to facilitate the ratification of the Protocol at their respective Member States, capitalizing on free movement regimes already in place in both regions.

Representatives from the East African Community (EAC), The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) shared their experiences on tracking implementation of commitments at the regional and continental levels; strengthening partnerships on

labour migration and capacity and institutional reforms for labour migration management respectively.

A follow up meeting will be organized to enable other RECs share their experiences as well. It is envisaged that the Forum will evolve into a continuous learning platform among RECs and capacity building on labour migration, building on and complementing the ongoing work of the Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC). Also, RECs will be expected to identify opportunities for joint undertakings on labour migration issues of common interest.

The virtual workshop was organized under the auspices of the AUC-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Labour Migration Programme for Africa (JLMP).

Notes to the Editor:

About JLMP

The JLMP seeks 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. These include 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.

More information about JLMP @ <https://au.int/en/jlmp>

Read more about AU Free Movement Protocol @ <https://au.int/en/treaties/protocol-treaty-establishing-african-economic-community-relating-free-movement-persons>

For more information related JLMP program please contact:

1. Mr. Oumar Diop | JLMP Support Unit Coordinator, African Union Commission | Email: DiopO@africa-union.org
2. Ms. Aadaeze Emily Molokwu | Programme Office | Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development Department | Email: MolokwuA@africa-union.org

For further media inquiries, please contact:

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

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