

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Enhancing Free Movement of Persons & Mobility of Labour will spur Africa's Development



The promotion of free movement of persons and mobility of labour are critical in spurring development in Africa. This was the rallying call at a meeting of representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa, the African Union Commission (AUC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and partners held from 9th to 12th November in Djibouti City.

Participants shared experiences and deliberated on how to collectively enhance the governance of labour migration on the continent. It has been emphasized that strengthening inter-bloc dialogue on migration, making the African Union's Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC) - a dialogue platform aimed at improving labour migration governance in Africa - more effective, and honouring commitments enshrined in the [Ouagadougou +10 Declaration and Plan of Action](#) on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development in Africa can be implemented are important.

Delegates reiterated the need to protect migrant workers, to facilitate free movement by removing hurdles on cross-border mobility, to enhance skills development and recognition, improve migration data collection and research, and foster greater engagement with social partners and private sector agencies regarding labour rights and other forms of protection for African migrant workers.

The African Union recognizes regional integration and especially the free movement of workers as critical for development and migrant workers as crucial in the flow of goods, finance, and knowledge between countries of origin and destination and in building networks beneficial to communities of origin. 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 "Given the cross cutting nature of labour migration, a hierarchical arrangement at the RECs involving technical and political actors needs to be mobilized for advocacy, political buy-in, coordination and follow up on various commitments on labour migration".

"We commend all the RECs for the steps they have made in enhancing the integration agenda and labour migration governance across the continent, and the sustained interest for continued collaboration. IOM stands ready to support this agenda and to support the RECs at national and regional levels on the priorities that will be identified during this workshop," Stéphanie Daviot, IOM's Chief of Mission in Djibouti said.

Fathia Alwan, Director for Health & Social Development, IGAD Secretariat said, “Let me indicate the interest and readiness of IGAD to be part of the next JLMP project and to closely work with African Union Commission, IOM and ILO as implementing partners and, of course, with other AU-RECs”.

Regional economic communities are mandated to facilitate regional economic integration by promoting free movement of persons and capital among members of the individual regions and through the wider African Economic Community (AEC) established under the [1991 Abuja Treaty](#). Regional blocs are increasingly engaged in managing migration including immigration and labour, data and statistics, gender concerns, economic and social protection, health, environment, and social dialogue.

[The Migration Policy Framework for Africa \(MPFA\) and Plan of Action \(2018-2030\)](#), developed by the African Union Commission, with the assistance of IOM, notes the increasing importance of migration in Africa and calls on Member States and RECs to invest in comprehensive migration policies and institutional frameworks.

The meeting was organized by the [AU-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa \(JLMP\)](#) and hosted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The JLMP programme has received \$17 million from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) since 2018.

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