

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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The 8th Pan African Forum on Migration (PAFOM8) kicks off



The African Union (AU) in collaboration with the Republic of Botswana, and support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), organizing the 8th Pan African Forum on Migration Forum (PAFoM8) from the 31st October to 2nd November, 2023 at Royal Aria Conference Centre in Tlokweng, Gaborone. The theme for the conference is “Bolstering Free Movement and Trade Nexus in AfCFTA: Optimizing Benefits of Migration, Labour Migration for Development”.

The meeting was opened officially by Honourable Anna Maria Mokgethi, Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana. In her keynote speech, the Hon. Minister acknowledged all delegates of the meeting and thanked the African Union for the honour and privilege to deliver the keynote speech of PAFOM8. The Hon. Minister underscored the importance to strive for a united and strong Africa for the achievement of the AU Agenda 2063 the “Africa We Want”. She highlighted that the history of Africa tells a story that dates back to time immemorial of a people that move from one part of the Continent to another. This phenomenon speaks of free movement in the context of migration and trade. The Hon. Minister pointed out that theme of PAFOM8 cannot be more relevant as it aligns with the AfCFTA in creating a single African market for goods and services for economic development and integration. She underscored that vast opportunities lie on the Continent that can drive the gains of the AfCFTA and also achieve regular, safe and orderly migration through the advancement of free movement and trade; enhancement of legal identify on the Continent; as well as exploring digital technology and statistic in the context of free movement and labour migration on the Continent.

The Hon. Minister concluded by highlighting the achievements of the Republic of Botswana in promoting free movement in the region – Botswana has established a one stop border post with Zambia and South Africa by facilitating border passes for citizens in the region to enhance free movement and access to services and amenities (for instance, health) for citizens. Botswana and Namibia have also facilitated a facilitated 24-hour border watch at the borders as well as identity cards as passes. With these achievements, the Hon. Minister called on all

Member States to learn and employ best practices as they shape the migration phenomena on the Continent.

Representing H.E. Amb. Minata Samaté Cessouma, Commissioner for the Department of Health Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) of the African Union Commission, Mr. Maemo Machethe, Director of the Khartoum Migration Centre, noted that the Pan African Forum on Migration is a testimony to the commitment of African Union Member States to foster unity, cooperation, and prosperity on our Continent. “The vision of the African Union as articulated in Agenda 2063, revolves around the principles of integration, free movement, and trade. These principles are the cornerstones of our development policy frameworks, and are more vital than ever before,” he said. The AUC representative further emphasized that “The African Union's commitment to foster continental integration, economic growth, and human development has reached a pivotal moment with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) that seeks to create the world's largest single market. This presents unprecedented opportunities for trade, investment, and prosperity for the African continent. However, the full potential of the AfCFTA can only be realized if we harness its nexus with migration and human mobility.”

The AUC representative, Mr. Machethe concluded by reiterating the importance to deliberate on the migration/human mobility-trade nexus, while keeping in mind that Africa's journey towards sustainable development is inextricably linked to how effectively we leverage these interconnections. “By embracing the principles of the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the AU Free Movement Protocol, and fully exploiting the potential of the AfCFTA, we can create a continent where people, ideas, and commerce flow freely,” said Machethe.

The outgoing Chairperson of PAFOM 7, the Director General of the Rwanda Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ms. Lynder Nkuranga gave a summary of the 7th Session of the Pan-African Forum on Migration which was held in Kigali, Rwanda from the 18th - 20th October 2022 under the theme “Addressing the Impact of Climate Change on Migration and Human Mobility in Africa: Building Adaptation Strategies and Resilient Communities”.

ACP Lynder Nkuranga highlighted the key outcomes of the 7th PAFOM which included: The need for the African Union to speak with one voice on the impact of climate change on human mobility, migration, and development; The need for AU Members states to establish sustainable climate change adaptation and resilient frameworks, such as the National Framework for Climate Services (NFCS), to support their Nationality Determined Contributions (NDCs); The need for Member States to work closely with their Cities and Local authorities to provide incentives that encourage citizens and all stakeholders to support transition of cities into green economies; The call for Member States to incorporate youth voices into decision making and implementation; The need for Member States to strengthen solidarity with countries and people most vulnerable to impacts of climate change; and the need to strengthen climate change induced migration and displacement data and research for evidence-based policy development, implementation and enhanced migration governance in Africa.

Furthermore, the outgoing Chair presented updates on the status of key recommendations from PAFOM7 which included follow-up with Member States and other key stakeholders in advocating for several initiatives towards mitigating climate-induced migration. In this respect, the Chair of PAFOM-7 participated in the Tenth Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration (GRCP 10) held in Geneva, Switzerland on 9th June 2023, and leveraged on this platform to advocate for more initiatives to address the impact of climate change in Africa as one of the major drivers of displacement and human mobility on the Continent. Additionally, the Republic of Rwanda developed a detailed Plan of

Action which Rwanda intends to use to continue to advocate for implementation of Migration and Climate Change interventions to support AU Member States.

To conclude her remarks, the outgoing Chair emphasized that climate change possesses a serious challenge to Member States, therefore, there is need to continue to prioritize the issues of climate on the Continent and also ensure that migration is safe, dignified and regular.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Mr. Lawrence Egulu, representing the Chair of the STC on Social Development, Labour and Employment, Hon. Amongi Betty Ongom, noted that there is need to create more jobs and ensure more security at home so that migration becomes a choice and not out of desperation. Mr. Egulu underscored the need for Member States to put in place mechanisms that ensure a visa free Continent where all citizens can freely access all borders.

Mr. Zia Choudhury, UN Resident Coordinator, Botswana said that accelerating African integration and creating one African market will undoubtedly unlock economic and social benefits for the people of Africa. However, alongside the relatively free movement of goods, services, and capital, freer movement of labour and persons needs to be prioritized. "As has been observed, much more can be done to mainstream the 4th AfCFTA pillar focusing on Free Movement of Persons," noted Mr. Zia Choudhury.

The German Ambassador to Botswana Ambassador Margit Hellwig-Bötte addressed the opening ceremony. She noted that this edition of PAFoM offers a wonderful opportunity to deepen the discussions around the interconnections between trade, free movement and labour migration, but also to identify the complementary roles to be played by government structures, regional economic communities, trade unions, civil society organisations and business organisations in achieving the vision of an integrated African Continent. Ambassador Margit Hellwig-Bötte reiterated Germany's strong commitment to support the African Union in harnessing the benefits of trade, free movement and labour migration, in line with AU Agenda 2063, and the SDGs.

During the three-day Forum, the participants including the senior officials from Member States and experts from academia will discuss, among others, the nexus between free movement, migration and trade and the crucial role of national coordination mechanisms in facilitating movement of people that, ultimately, contributes to the expansion of trade within the AfCFTA framework.

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