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AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities Conclude Consultation in Cotonou, Benin on Draft Continental Strategy on Climate-Induced Mobility, 19-20 May 2026



Cotonou, Benin — The African Union Commission (AUC), through its Labour, Employment and Migration Division (LEMD) under the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, organized a two-day consultation meeting on 19 and 20 May 2026 in Cotonou, Benin. The meeting brought together representatives from AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as GIZ and IOM to review the Draft Continental Strategy on Climate-Induced Mobility, gather technical inputs, and agree on next steps toward its finalization.

Opening the meeting on behalf of H.E. Ambassador Amma A. Twum-Amoah, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, Dr. Sabelo Mbokazi, Head of the Labour, Employment and Migration Division, outlined the institutional basis for the strategy. "The Assembly mandates the Commission to lead the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative, coordinate the continental agenda on migration and climate change, and support Member States and RECs in addressing climate-induced mobility and displacement," Dr. Mbokazi stated. He described the strategy as reflecting a collective commitment to addressing the complex connections among migration, climate change, and development across the continent, with specific aims to strengthen data on climate-migration linkages, protect climate

migrants and displaced persons, promote resilience and adaptation, and deepen regional cooperation.

The strategy does not seek to duplicate existing frameworks but rather to build coherence across them. Dr. Mbokazi noted that the strategy draws on Agenda 2063, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the AU Climate Resilience and Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032), the outcomes of the 7th Pan-African Forum on Migration, and the Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change. "This consultation meeting provides an opportunity to interrogate the draft strategy and to ensure that it reflects Africa's priorities and our shared vision," he said, adding that the expertise and recommendations of participants would be essential in strengthening the draft and guiding its finalization.

The path to Cotonou has itself been a consultative one. A situation analysis conducted through desk reviews and expert consultations laid the initial groundwork. This was followed by a multi-stakeholder meeting in Pretoria in September 2025 and a series of regional online consultations between December 2025 and February 2026, through which AU Member States and RECs submitted inputs that shaped the current draft. Participants in those earlier rounds consistently called for a clear, inclusive approach to climate-induced mobility, with attention to gender- and child-sensitive considerations, national ownership, and alignment with broader continental processes.

The Government of Benin, represented by Professor Constant Houndenou, Technical Adviser to the Minister of Living Environment and Sustainable Development, welcomed delegates to Cotonou and underscored that the issues under discussion are not distant concerns for the host country. Benin's economy depends heavily on agriculture, and several of its regions are already experiencing the effects of coastal erosion, seasonal flooding, and ecosystem degradation. Prof. Houndenou highlighted national efforts to respond to these challenges, including investments in climate-resilient agriculture, coastal protection infrastructure, and early warning systems, and expressed the Government's hope that the two days of deliberations would produce proposals grounded in the realities of African populations.

The call for practical, action-oriented outcomes was shared by other opening speakers. Mr. Felix Kress, Cooperation Attaché at the German Embassy in Cotonou, noted that climate change is already reshaping livelihoods, governance systems, and mobility patterns across Africa, and that these dynamics call for stronger regional cooperation and forward-looking policy frameworks. He commended the AU's leadership in advancing the continental agenda and underscored the importance of the strategy in building coherence across climate, migration, disaster risk reduction, and development frameworks.

The meeting was convened with the support of GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

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