

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



OPENING REMARKS FOR THE 2nd SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (STC) ON MIGRATION, REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACE PERSONS OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

Kigali, 16th October 2017

Chair of the STC Bureau – Republic of Saharawi,

Chair of the Committee on Free Movement of Persons;

Director, Political Affairs of the African Union Commission;

Director, Social Affairs of the African Union Commission

Distinguished Experts;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

Allow me first to welcome back to Kigali, sisters and brothers who have been here before and take the opportunity to welcome those who have come here for the first time. Rwanda is your second home, feel free and explore the beautiful City of Kigali and beyond.

I wish to start by thanking the African Union Commission (AUC) for having chosen Rwanda to host the second meeting of Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Migration, Refugee and Internally Displace Persons. We are very delighted to host this important meeting and we look forward to fruitful discussions.

Distinguished Experts,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted Decision, Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2009. The Decision took into consideration reconfiguration of the Specialised Technical Committees (STCs) and further decided that each STC should meet at the level of Ministers and Experts once every two (2) years. It is in this spirit that the 2nd STC on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons has been convened.

As you are aware, STCs are AU policy organs in accordance with Article 5 of the Constitutive Act of the continental organ (AU). Article 15 further elaborates the functions of the STC including preparing projects and programmes of the Union to be submitted to the Executive Council.

This STC is crucial to the future of Africa as a continent. It will focus on key framework policies and important legal instruments for the implementation of Agenda 2063 of the AU and its first 10 years implementation plan.

The first STC on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons met in November 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia during which the STC was operationalized and the Common African Position (CAP) on humanitarian effectiveness was considered and adopted. This second STC will consider the following subjects:

- a. Consideration and adoption of the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment;
- b. Consideration and adoption of the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa and its 10- year Plan of Action; and
- c. Consideration and adoption of the Common African Position (CAP) on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

When finalised and adopted by Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Home/Internal Affairs, Justice and Other Ministers responsible for Migration, Refugees and IDPs, these documents will be submitted to the Specialised Technical Committee on Justice and Legal affairs.

It is in this spirit that I call upon experts who are present in this meeting to thoroughly exhaust all the issues at hand to allow smooth deliberations by the Ministers.

**Distinguished Experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

The Member States negotiation on the draft Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment is based on the AU Assembly decision EX.CL/Dec.908 XXVIII to accelerate mobility and integration of the continent. It was on the basis of this decision that AU Commission was mandated to develop a protocol aimed at enabling the free movement by January 2018.

We welcome and congratulate the AUC to have established a framework that has guided drafting and consideration up to the STC level. The first meeting of Member States negotiated, reviewed, provided substantive inputs and considered the draft Protocol starting with the Experts meeting in Accra, Ghana in March 2017, followed by Kigali, Rwanda in May 2017 and finalized in the meeting that took place in Flic en Flac, Mauritius in September 2017. This meeting (Flic en Flac) adopted the draft implementation roadmap which is attached to the draft Protocol waiting to be submitted to Ministers for consideration and adoption.

I therefore took this opportunity, on behalf of my Minister and the Government of Rwanda to congratulate our Experts for the job well done during the previous meetings. This is an indication that, together, we can achieve a lot as a continent.

Our responsibility today as Experts is to review the draft Protocol and its implementation plan; and deliberate on articles that we have not been able to agree on. We also need to tackle proposals that may have been left out to be included in the draft so as to have a consolidated paper for submission to Ministers.

**Distinguished Experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Regarding the second thematic area of the Migration Policy Framework, the last policy adopted in Banjul, The Gambia, in June 2006, has been in existence for the last ten years. This policy is anchored on the Abuja Treaty (1991) and provides guidelines and principles to assist AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to formulate their own national and regional migration policies in accordance with their priorities. Looking at the developing and rapidly changing trends and characteristics of migration on the continent, we can agree that there is need to revise the policy to take into consideration current migration realities on the continent.

This is a non-binding document that provides comprehensive and integrated policy guidelines for consideration by Member States and RECs in their endeavour to promote migration and development, and addressing migration challenges on the Continent.

If we all agree, following recommendations of the Experts meeting last held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, we will review the draft policy and submit our recommendation to Ministers for consideration.

- **Distinguished Experts,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

As we review the 3rd document on draft Common African Position on the Global Compact on Migration, we are required to consider that this is Africa's contribution to this important global process. Global Compact on Migration is a product of UN General Assembly adopted, on 19th September 2016, as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. This was taken as a Resolution that seeks to address the question of large movements of refugees and migrants.

The Common African Position will be anchored on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African solidarity as well as shared values and informed by other existing African Union (AU) frameworks, including the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the African Common Position on Migration and Development of 2006, the Common African Perspective for Valletta Summit on Migration of 2015, and Agenda 2063, as well as guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will also be informed by ongoing AU processes including development of Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in African, and the Continental Free Trade Area negotiations, among others.

I also wish to appeal to the Experts to examine this document with objectivity considering what benefits the entire people of Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

With these remarks, it is my pleasure to declare the AU Member States Experts meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons open.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you fruitful deliberations.