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**STATEMENT**

**BY H.E AMIRA ELFADIL,  
COMMISSIONER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS,**

**at the Closing Session of The 2<sup>nd</sup> Specialized Technical Committee  
(STC) On Migration, Refugees And Displaced Persons, Ordinary  
Session Of Ministerial Meeting.**

**20 – 21 OCTOBER 2017  
KIGALI, RWANDA**

## **PROTOCOL**

On behalf of the African Union Commission Chairperson H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat and on behalf of my colleague H.E the Commissioner for Political Affairs, I wish to express my appreciation to the Honorable Ministers for attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the STC, mindful of your busy schedule. Your participation is a demonstration of your commitment towards Africa's integration and recognition of the need to maximize the benefits of migration for development. I also wish to put on record to His Excellency President Paul Kagame, the Government and the People of Rwanda for the warm hospitality accorded to all participants. Rwanda continues to demonstrate that by opening their borders to all Africans that more benefits accrue to the country without undermining its security. Thank you Rwanda and to all countries that issue visas to all Africans upon arrival. The ultimate goal is the abolition of visas requirements for all Africans in Africa.

I also want to express my appreciation to the staff of the Commission for the excellent preparations that has enabled the participation of about 51 Member States of the AU with over 250 Experts and 40 Ministers .This is by no means an achievement, considering the difficulty of bringing together the different Ministers in charge of Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons; and the fact that of recent, there has been a problem in attracting high turnout of Ministers in STCs.

### **Your Excellencies;**

The importance of finalizing Draft Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment as well as its Implementation Road Map cannot be over-emphasized. It is my hope that once adopted by the Heads of State in 2018, the protocol will accelerate the integration of the continent and the Africa we want.

**Your Excellencies,**

You are aware of the suffering and the peril of our people in the Desert and the Mediterranean as they go to Europe in search of greener pastures. How do we tackle the root causes of irregular migration? How do we prevent young people from dying in the desert and in the Mediterranean Sea? We need to refocus the policies and measures to manage migration inside Africa where most of the Migration since most migration takes place in the continent. As such, the revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and its Year Action Plan, as adopted in this session, will facilitate addressing various migration and mobility challenges faced by Member States. It is my hope that we will all align our policies to document so as to enhance effective collaboration and improved information sharing.

**Your Excellencies,**

I am also happy to note that this session has also adopted the African Common Position (CAP) on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. While appreciating the fact that this is a United Nations process; the importance of Africa having a Common Voice and position in the negotiations are critical. I call upon the African Group in New York and Geneva, who will be participating in the negotiations to make use of this Common Position upon adoption by the Assembly in January, 2018. On my part, between now and the commencement of the full negotiations in February, 2018, I shall ensure that my department works closely with the African Group to ensure that Africa speaks and act with one voice at the negotiations.

**Your Excellencies,**

I cannot conclude without mentioning the significance progress we have made in the Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants for the last 3 Years the establishment of the Regional Operation Centre (ROC) in Khartoum is one commendable achievement that will help Member States

tackle organized criminal groups involved in the human trafficking and smuggling. In future, the Initiative will expand its work to cover other regions of the continent as we cannot afford to have any weak link in the fight towards transnational organized crime.

Finally, let me express appreciation to all our partners for their financial and material support. I want to wish you as you travel back home.

I thank you all.

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