



Opening Remarks

By

H.E Mrs Minata SAMATE CESSOUMA

Commissioner for Political Affairs

African Union Commission

At the Occasion of

**The Second Ministerial Meeting of the Specialized Technical
Committee on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons**

Kigali, 20 October 2017

**HON. Johnston BUSINGYE, Minister of Justice and Attorney
General of the Republic of Rwanda;**

Hon. Mohamed Salem Ouid Minister of Foreign affairs of Sharawi Arab Democratic Republic

Honorable Ministers;

H. E Mrs. Amira El-Fadil Commissioner for social Affairs

Distinguished Ambassadors and members of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa;

Members of Diplomatic Corp;

Distinguished Representatives of Regional Economic Communities;

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of His Excellency Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I am pleased to be here in Kigali on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the Second Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.

From the onset, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Rwandan authorities for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to all the delegations participating in this meeting. The facilities made available by the Government of the Republic of Rwanda to ensure the success of our meeting are all the more worthy of commendation.

I recognize all the honorable Ministers in this meeting despite their busy schedules back home. Your presence is an affirmation of the importance that African Union Member States attach to the reforms that we have embarked on at the continental level within the framework of the Agenda 2063-The Africa We Want.

Our Ministerial Meeting comes on the heels of a very successful meeting of experts from 51 out of 55 Member States of our Union. It must also go on record that we have about 35 Ministers attending this session. I commend our experts for the job well done. The experts have made adequate technical preparations for us to achieve the intended goals of our meeting today and tomorrow.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This session will consider four main issues in order to facilitate continental unity and integration. These are (a) free movement of

persons; (b) the AU Migration Policy Framework; (c) the Common African Position on the Global Compact on Migration; and (d) the Horn of Africa Initiative.

Free movement of persons and the African Passport in Africa is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063-The Africa We Want. Free movement of persons forms an integral part of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 over the period 2014-2023.

Free movement and the African passport emanate from the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights as well as the 1991 Treaty on the Establishment of the African Economic Community, as a key integration issue. However, the momentum towards free movement of persons has accelerated since the recent past. The Heads of State and Government Assembly held in Johannesburg, in July 2015, called for the development of this protocol.

The ministerial retreat of Mekele in Ethiopia in January 2016 reinforced the 2015 Summit Decision. The Kigali's Assembly in July 2016 reinforced the urgency for the development of the protocol on free movement of persons.

The African Passport was launched and issued to heads of state and government at the same occasion. A decision was also made urging AU Member States to begin issuing the African Passport to all African citizens.

The draft protocol and its implementation plan submitted for consideration today are the result of a long and difficult process of consultation and negotiations held in various regions of Africa involving all the stakeholders on our continent engaged in lengthy negotiations of the current text during their meetings in Accra, Ghana; Kigali, Rwanda and in Mauritius. The draft protocol and its implementation plan outline a gradual approach toward achieving three categories of rights for African citizens namely (a) right of entry, (b) right of residence and (c) right of establishment.

Mesdames, Messieurs,

La réunion des experts a examiné un projet de cadre révisé de politiques migratoires ainsi que son plan d'action 2017/2030. Je me félicite de la recommandation de soumettre ce projet aux Ministres pour adoption.

La présente session du CTS se tient dans un contexte mondial caractérisé par d'importants défis. Les migrations irrégulières font partie des sujets de préoccupation majeure sur le continent africain. La déclaration de New York de 2016 sur les réfugiés et les migrants recommande l'élaboration de compacts dont le Pacte mondial sur les

migrations sûres, ordonnées et régulières. La session nous donne l'occasion d'échanger et d'élaborer une position africaine relative au pacte. Cette position commune constituera notre feuille de route dans les consultations futures au niveau international. Les Etats membres de l'Union africaine se doivent d'assurer une participation active et parler d'une seule voix lors des consultations. Ils pourront compter sur l'engagement et l'accompagnement de la Commission.

L'initiative de l'Union africaine pour la Corne de l'Afrique est un exemple salubre d'actions de lutte sur la traite des êtres humains et le trafic illicite de migrants. Elle mérite le soutien de tous pour sa mise en œuvre.

I thank you for your kind attention.