



Statement from the Labour Migration Advisory Committee on the Occasion of the  
Commemoration of International Migrants Day

18 December, 2020

Today, on 18 December 2020, the world is celebrating International Migrants Day, adopted to mark the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant workers and Members of their Families. The year, 2020, has been a challenging one for migrant workers, thus we mark the contributions migrants are making, and virus' impact on their lives. The COVID-19 pandemic brought more threats and violations of the rights and protection of migrant workers, having particularly impacted women as they are significantly represented in health industry and care economy. In general, they are disproportionately affected by job losses, resulting in reduction of remittances to support their family members and communities.

In particular, African migrant workers experienced difficult times within the continent and key destination regions such as the Middle East and Asia as a result of the pandemic which hit domestic work and the construction industry. We witnessed the return of huge number of African migrants from this region of the world, mainly female migrant workers, the majority of whom are from East African countries and the Horn of Africa. This added to the heavy burden on the government and societies in Africa who deployed all efforts to contain the pandemic and limit its socio-economic impacts.

The AU Labour Migration Advisory Committee praises African Governments for their leadership and collaboration towards maintaining the health, well-being, and living standards of the people including vulnerable populations during the pandemic. They have lived up to their commitment for safe, orderly and regular labour migration in line with the Global Compact on Migration endorsed by AU Member States.

The Committee endeavored to implement its mandate in the context of the global health crisis. It is worth mentioning the series of virtual meetings held on key issues affecting migrant workers during this period, namely, migrant workers in the informal economy, migration and mobility of health workers and professionals, and labour migration outlook post COVID-19.

Subsequently, policy briefs were developed as a contribution to the reflection and policy measures taken by the governments and non-state actors. Conscious of the risk of increased outflows of health professionals to Europe and the USA prompted by the pandemic, the Committee reiterated the recommendation for a thorough study in order to prepare African countries with the necessary tools and systems to confront the brain drain of health professionals, and to sustain an effective health system.

The Migration of African doctors and other health professionals is an important phenomenon in the context of migration and socio-economic development. They participated in the fight against the COVID-19 and were involved in the development of the vaccine as well. The Committee advocates for a skills partnership on the health sector to establish a win-win outcome between the continent and other regions of destination, particularly Europe, the Middle East, and the USA.

The Committee stresses the importance of reliable and accurate information and data, as well of capacity building of labour institutions on labour migration governance. The

Committee praises the African Union Commission and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for the launch of the African Migration Observatory on International Migration Day, 18 December 2020.

As we commemorate the International Migrants Day, we call upon African leaders to strengthen migrant-inclusive measures in the fight and prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in their post-COVID 19 recovery plans. Migrant workers will continue contributing to the socio-economic development of their host and origin countries, and this will require coordination to guarantee respect of their dignity and rights which are fundamental. Critical to a quick recovery for Africa is the need for vaccination. We, therefore, encourage African governments to make pragmatic efforts to develop, procure and deploy vaccines for its people. LMAC will continue to advocate for vaccine access for migrants and members of their families.

The Committee wishes that 2021 witnesses a quick recovery from the impact of the pandemic and a better built back of the economies and societies where migrant workers will have their right place and consider how human mobility will be reimagined.



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**Chair of the African Union Labour Migration Advisory Committee  
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