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**OPENING STATEMENT
FOR**

**SABELO MBOKAZI
HEAD OF DIVISION, LABOUR EMPLOYMENT & MIGRATION
HEALTH, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT
DURING**

THE LABOUR MIGRATION STATISTICS SIDE EVENT:

**ADDRESSING LABOUR MIGRATION DATA GAPS IN THE 1ST-3RD EDITIONS OF THE LABOUR MIGRATION
STATISTICS REPORTS FOR BETTER POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

**Dakar, Senegal,
September 10, 2021.**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my Privilege and honor to welcome all of you to this side event of labor migration Statistics to address the data gaps identified from the 1st to the 3rd editions of the labor migration statistics reports in Africa. First of all, allow me to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Senegal for allowing us to host this event. Indeed, it is great honor to see many of us here together once again after a long period due to the pandemic, thanks to the efforts of our member states in putting measures to ensure normalcy returns. Secondly, I offer my appreciation to all Member States who participated in the production and validation of labor migration series of reports.

Indeed, it is a big milestone to see an improvement in the availability of labor migration statistics in the continent over the years despite the challenges associated with data collection in our countries. I would like to commend all of you for taking your time to join this side event. It provides us with a good opportunity to interact and share best practices as well as be well-informed on what is happening on labor migration statistics management and integration into various programs at national, regional, and continental levels.

As you are aware, labor migration continues to be an issue of interest to leaders, policy makers and governments not only in Africa, but across the globe. With this urgency, there is need to understand the empirical trends and dynamics of labor migration. In order to show this, there is need to have accurate, reliable and timely data so as to show significant changes resulting from diverse migratory movements.

The little changes on migratory stocks and flows need to be captured in order to understand the current migratory trends and develop informed policies and decisions anchored on evidence. It is in this accurate reporting and analysis, that we can improve the availability of labor migration data on all the indicators for better policy development and decision making.

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Ladies and Gentlemen

The African Union Commission understands the importance accorded to labor migration data. It is because of these data needs, that the Commission developed key policy instruments to govern migration management in the continent. That is the New Migration Policy Framework for Africa (2018-2030), the AU-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Program on Labor Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP), Agenda 2063 and the Protocol on Free Movement. These policies identify migration data and statistics as key pillars for improving migration governance in the continent.

The Commission aims to strengthen labor migration data and research for evidence-based policy development and implementation towards effective migration governance in Africa with the guidance and implementation of these policies. This will ensure that the priorities of our countries are aligned towards the development of evidence-based policies which is in line with Agenda 2063 of the African Union and Agenda 2030 of the global SDGs; which target on getting information on decent work deficits among the resident population and migrant workers.

The collection of accurate, reliable, verifiable, and up to date data on labor migration, ensures that Member States are able to address certain policy gaps on labor migration, diaspora engagement, and remittances at national, regional and continental levels. Besides, the data collected needs to be disaggregated by gender, migratory status, demographic and other key indicators to ensure that useful information is collected.

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The implementation of the Joint Labor Migration Program (JLMP) by AUC-ILO-IOM-ECA will go along away towards poverty eradication, inclusive development, as well as to ensure that people moving in search of better opportunities are well protected.

Through the joint undertaking of the JLMP several achievements have been reached including, production of the First and Second editions of the Labor Migration Statistics Report in Africa, promotion of skills portability and the mutual recognition of qualifications, and the development of an African Qualifications Framework, as well as promotion of critical areas geared towards facilitation of free movement of workers to advance regional integration and development.

Also, through the JLMP the production of the third edition of the Labor Migration Statistics Report in Africa is on its final stages and will be launched soon. Many thanks to all member states who were involved in the process of data collection which requires a lot of effort and determination that has made the exercise a success.

However, from the development of these series of reports, the availability of data on economic activities, education, skills, and occupation remains a major challenge for many of our countries. In fact, only 22% of the 55 AU member states were able to provide information on some of these indicators in 2018. Even those providing this information, the annual reporting remains irregular making it even difficult to intra or extrapolate to obtain a reliable time series trend.

Therefore, there is need for our member states to make more efforts and explore new ways of capturing data from various sources on these indicators. As a matter of fact, there is need to streamline labor migration data collection from administrative sources, border control points, population censuses, labor force and household surveys in order to achieve and produce reliable and high-quality data on labor migration with all potential indicators.

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This event provides us with a good Interstate platform and a great opportunity for Member States to deliberate on best practices and strategies to adopt in order to assist and support the production of quality data on labor migration. It also presents a good opportunity for addressing labor migration data gaps and challenges faced by member states when filling in the labor migration questionnaires.

It is a good platform for deliberating and discussing more on how best we can put better strategies and measures to address the challenges and data gaps identified in the labor migration statistics reports for the development of better reports in the later editions. It also provides a good opportunity for improving national coordination mechanisms with better data sharing and dissemination mechanisms to improve the availability of high quality, reliable and timely labor migration data at national, regional and continental levels.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for supporting us to this end. I also wish to thank our partners IOM, and ILO for the implementation of labor migration projects, including the JLMP priority and Action to improve migration governance and integration in the continent. I also want to thank Statistics Sweden for supporting the implementation of migration projects in the continent. Finally, our sincere gratitude goes to the Swedish and Switzerland Governments for their kind support on labor migration projects in the continent.

I wish you a wonderful deliberation and wish to reiterate AU Commission's willingness to support the implementation of the outcomes of this meeting.

Thank you all.

Asante sana

Obrigado

Merci Beaucoup