



**THE AFRICAN UNION AT EXPO2020 DUBAI
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**IOM Statement
at the Launch of the 2021 African Integration Report**

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Your Excellency, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Outgoing CEO of the AU Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD),

Your Excellency, Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining of the AUC,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you today, albeit virtually, for the launching of the 2021 African Integration Report.

For our team of the International Organization for Migration, we are pleased to have collaborated with the African Union Commission to develop this report which reflects sustained commitment to the 1991 Abuja Treaty, with an emphasis on political consensus and cooperation on harmonized approaches by AU Member States, and regional integration for the continent's development.

The free movement of people, capital, goods and services is an important aspiration underlining continental and regional integration agendas. It is for this reason that the AU's Agenda 2063 identifies free movement of persons as a key ingredient for achieving other development aspirations in Africa.

Today, we see an increasing recognition of initiatives such as:



1. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);
2. The Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment;
3. The Single African Air Transport Market project.

These are just a few of many initiatives in the continental level, not to mention growing progresses within many Regional Economic Communities in Africa.

The increased movement of people, goods and services across borders inevitably acts as an important incentive for better infrastructural linkages and connections among African countries. As more recognition of the benefits of greater flows of trade and labour mobility and fair business competitiveness, that will promote African countries for further improving cross-border infrastructure, links and connectivity.

The free movement of economically active migrants will both boost employment and lower unemployment rates. It will further enhance productivity and income (including via remittances), and have a positive impact on taxes and social contributions. If well managed and embraced, free movement for sure will help African economies and societies offset intra-African and global structural disadvantages.

Some challenges might arise along the way when implementing the agenda on free movement of persons, but that does not mean the goal is unattainable. There has been already good experience in EU regarding regional integration. Africa would be well served by addressing the obstacles to free movement of persons, which in our view are not insurmountable.

Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

We encourage an accelerated ratification of the protocol on free movement of persons, goods and services. Such a free movement has the potential to boost trade; promote labour mobility, skills transfer and employment opportunities; and also further stimulate the improvement of air transportation and trans-border route infrastructure.

To achieve this goal, we must give emphasis to Member State commitment, resources mobilization, improved travel documentation, and setting up Integrated Border Management systems including a relaxed visa regime that will foster regional integration.



Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

IOM, as the UN Migration Agency, promotes humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. We are committed to supporting your efforts for better regional integration and realizing the aspirations of the Agenda 2063.

Thank you very much.