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STATEMENT

**H.E AMB. MINATA SAMATE CESSOUMA,
COMMISSIONER FOR HEALTH, HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

On the occasion

**For the Launch of the Africa-Gulf Cooperation Council,
Jordan, and Lebanon Dialogue on Labor Mobility**

21-22 May 2024| Doha-Qatar

**The Ritz-Carlton Hotel
Doha, Qatar.**

- ✓ **H.E. Dr. Ali bin Samaikh Al Marri –Minister of Labor State of Qatar**
- ✓ **H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hassan Al-Obaidli, Director-General of the Executive bureau of the Council of Ministers of Labor the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs (GCC)**
- ✓ **Excellencies Ministers of Labor and other related areas from African Union**
- ✓ **Excellencies Ministers of Labor and other related areas from the GCC, Jordan and Lebanon**
- ✓ **Distinguished delegates/ Experts from AU Member States and the GCC, Jordan and Lebanon.**
- ✓ **Representatives from IOM, ILO and other UN Agencies**
- ✓ **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is with great pleasure that I join you in this inaugural meeting of the **Launch of the Africa-Gulf Cooperation Council, Jordan, and Lebanon Dialogue on Labor Mobility** (The Doha Dialogue) between our two regions. This is coming at a time when the global community is undergoing a lot of challenges in migration governance hence the need to come together to address the plight of labor migrants between Africa and this region.

To begin with, I wish to thank the Government of the State of Qatar for the warm welcome and **kind reception accorded** to me and my delegation. I wish to recognize the role the Government of the State of Qatar has played in providing leadership, vision and resources in establishing this very important dialogue Process.

Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

This meeting comes at a very important time when migration governance has been on top of world's agenda, particularly between our two regions. For us in Africa, we believe that migration and human mobility **is an inherent future of humanity**. People move from one place to the other not only as an adaptive strategy while facing life threatening experiences like conflicts and the impact of climate change including drought and floods; but also, to seek better opportunities for themselves and their dependents.

It is therefore imperative for our Governments and other relevant stakeholders to hold such a forum to not only share and learn from each other; but also build partnership in ensuring that migration governance in our regions is safe, orderly and regular. Migrants, irrespective of their origin and legal status; look upon us for support and protection of their rights. This is so important particularly to labor migrants, whether skilled or non-skilled; who have left their families to find a livelihood and support them in return.

Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

According to recent reports, they indicate that **over 80% of migration and human mobility in Africa**, particularly labor migration, occurs within the continent. This is against the belief and common narrative that majority of African migrants move outside the continent. Based on this reality, the AUC has developed programs and initiatives to support intra Africa human mobility within Africa. As a result, we have seen encouraging efforts by our Member States to open up their borders to their brothers and sisters from the continent by removing barriers that hinder mobility within Africa.

With more opportunities provided by **African Continental Free Trade Area and the gradual embracing of the Protocol on Free Movement in Africa**, we will soon witness more of our people moving within the continent for either to do business among themselves, Undertake job opportunities, education or family related reasons.

Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

As such, we have developed policy programs and initiatives that have gone along way in supporting our Member States in

strengthening their migration governance. This is through strengthening collaboration among Member States, capacity building, policy development, among others. The Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) is our cornerstone policy guidance that has provided harmonization on our approaches on migration governance in Africa.

Further, the AUC jointly with other partners, including IOM, ILO and UNECA; have developed and are implementing the **Joint Labor Migration Program (JLMP)** that aims among other issues, to support AU Member States in strengthening their labor migration governance in continent. Through this project, we have jointly initiated efforts harmonization of labor migration policy frameworks in the continent, promoting the use of data and statistics in informing policy development on labor migration governance, among other areas.

Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

This meeting therefore provides a perfect opportunity for us to not only share on our experiences between Africa and this region on labor migration governance but also, **to jointly address challenges faced by African Migrants** in this region. African migrants coming to Gulf Cooperation Council, Jordan, and Lebanon plays an admirable role in contributing to the socio-

economic development of their receiving/destination countries; as much they do contribute to their sending countries as well.

The Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular Migration adopted in 2018 provides us **with a clear global policy guidance and commitment on migration governance**. Specifically, Objectives 6 of the Compact reminds us of our commitments to safe guard labor migrants in terms of addressing issues of fair and ethical recruitment, protection of their rights in their countries of their destination and safeguarding their social protection.

Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

This dialogue framework therefore needs to be results oriented, transformative and forward looking in promoting decent work between our regions. We need to develop modality and initiatives on how to streamline labor mobility flows between our two regions. This can only be possible if we work together to build a strong partnership between our Member States in the two regions on labor migration governance. We further need to include other relevant stakeholders including the UN Agencies, Workers and employers' organizations among others so that we don't leave no one behind.

It is also important to consider other important thematic issues for inclusion in this dialogue framework. These may include issues of joint efforts to combat trafficking and smuggling in persons, promoting evidence-based policy development through data and

statistics; through joint research and training in migration governance between our two regions.

Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

As I conclude, I wish to thank you all once again for attending this meeting. As we deliberate and consider various documents provided to us by our Experts, let us remember this meeting will be remembered in history and generations to come that sought to address real issues that has an impact to the people concerned.

Further I wish to thank **Honorable Ministers and Heads of delegation from African Union and Gulf Cooperation Council, Jordan, and Lebanon** for attending this meeting. This shows how important you have attached to this inaugural meeting. Lastly, I wish to recognize efforts made by the technical team from both my Department at the AUC, led by **Mr. Sabelo Mbokazi, the Head of Labor, Employment and Migration** and his colleagues from the Government of Qatar for their tireless work in the preparation for this meeting and ensuring its successful.

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union **H.E Moussa Faki**, I wish to assure and confirm AUC commitment to this dialogue process. We will not only play our role diligently as **Joint Secretariat** but also support the process in terms of implementation of the outcome report of the Dialogue. I therefore

wish you all the best in our deliberations and congratulate you in launching this Dialogue Framework between our two regions.

I thank you all.