

**Opening Remarks by Dr. Sabelo Mbokazi, Head – Labour, Employment and Migration Division**

**During the JLMP Media Engagement on Capacity Building for Journalists & Editors on Building Positive Narratives on Labour Migration Governance in Africa**

**Dakar, Senegal | 05-07 August 2024**

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Mr. Ousseynou Dieng, Director of Communication, Director in the Minister for Communication, Telecommunication and Digitals of the Republic of Senegal

Ms. Valeria Falaschi, Acting Chief of Mission, IOM Senegal,

Mr. Omar Faruk Osman, President of the Federation of the African Journalists

Distinguish members of the Federation of African Journalists,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct honour to welcome you to this capacity-building workshop for journalists and editors, aimed at fostering positive narratives on labour migration in Africa. This initiative, under the auspices of the AU-ILO-IOM Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP), seeks to enhance the discourse surrounding labour migration across our continent.

At the African Union Commission (AUC), we firmly believe in the idiosyncratic role of media in shaping public perception, informing policy agenda, and promoting safe, dignified regular migration. The influence of the media on public opinion and policymaking cannot be overstated.

In today's digital age, there is a pressing need to regulate and uphold ethical standards in the use of digital platforms and social media. These platforms have unfortunately become breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation.

We are also witnessing a paradigm shift where citizen journalism has led to a flood of user-generated content in public spaces, often without thorough fact-checking. While social media has taken over the traditional role of breaking news, conventional media continues to hold a crucial responsibility in providing in-depth analysis and comprehensive explanations to the public. It is within this realm of conventional media that complex issues like labour migration should be thoroughly examined and discussed to advance the discourse on labour migration governance.

One significant challenge we face is that some media houses in Africa publish editorial content sourced from Western media, which often perpetuates a negative portrayal of our continent. Ideally, this flow of information should be reversed, with Western media drawing from African sources to present a more balanced and accurate depiction of Africa.

The under-coverage or negative portrayal of migration issues cannot be entirely blamed on the media. Journalists frequently encounter obstacles in accessing reliable and authoritative

information on development programs in Africa. Today's engagement is designed to address this gap by providing resources that can enhance the quality of reporting on migration, equipping journalists with the information they need to tell the full story.

To demonstrate our commitment to this cause, the African Union novel initiative, the JLMP established several initiatives aimed at enhancing media engagement. Among these was the JLMP Media Awards in 2022, recognizing exemplary coverage of migration issues. At the conclusion of this workshop, we will launch another phase of the media competition focused on human-interest stories about migrant workers. Additionally, we will announce the formation of a network of journalists dedicated to covering labour migration and decent work. Details of these initiatives will be shared later.

Furthermore, the AUC and its partners have developed a training manual on capacity development for the media, underscoring our dedication to cooperating with the media fraternity and leverage its vital role.

As I conclude, I would like to extend my appreciation to our host, the Government of the Republic of Senegal. I would like also to thank our partners – the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) – for their much-needed support in this initiative. Our belief in media engagement is deeply rooted in our mission to promote safe, orderly, and dignified migration. By working together, we can construct narratives that reflect the true spirit of migration – narratives of hope, opportunity, and mutual benefit.

Thank you!  
Merci beaucoup!  
Asanteni Sana!  
Jerejef!