African Parliamentary Conference on

The contribution of African migrants to the development of countries of origin and destination
(Djibouti, 15 and 16 February 2016)

DECLARATION

Recent developments in human mobility, with their considerable sociopolitical impacts, have immediately reopened the debate on appropriate measures to implement to improve the management of this issue. The stereotypes that are often developed for political ends and widely disseminated in relation to this problem tend to overshadow the numerous advantages of migration, especially in terms of the economic development of both the countries of origin and destination. This contribution is all the more determining as four of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals deal with migration, whose consolidated efforts for better consideration can only leverage the catalytic effect for which it is increasingly being recognized.

It is in the context of these efforts to be made that, on the invitation of the National Assembly of Djibouti, **we**, parliamentarians representing the national parliaments of the following countries: Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Togo,

meeting on 15 and 16 February 2016 in Djibouti **on the occasion of the Second African Parliamentary Conference on "***The contribution of African migrants to the development of countries of origin and destination***"**, organized by the African Parliamentary Union (APU), with the contribution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the technical support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL MIGRATION

1. Note that one billion people out of a world population of seven billion, according to International Organization for Migration statistics, are migrants and that this figure, according to forecasts, is expected to grow, propelled by certain factors such as rapid demographic changes, growing demand for labour, disparities between the North and the South, wars and sociopolitical crises leading to the massive displacement of people, the digital revolution, natural disasters, climate change and the trend to seek a better life;

2. Note that some issues such as xenophobia and discrimination, human rights, human trafficking, forced migration, terrorism and national security are linked to migration, thereby making its management more complex;

3. Feel that as migration is an inevitable historical phenomenon and an integral part of human nature, it is not a problem to solve but rather a reality to manage holistically through human rights-based governance ;

4. Have to ensure that the rights of migrants are fully respected, by examining our laws and policies on immigration from a human rights lens. Migrants are not "products" of international trade. Yet, business interests and market forces that create jobs for migrants are often indifferent to the legal or ethical aspects of labour;

5. Denounce human trafficking and forced labour in particular, as they represent widespread risks to workers who are not protected by law;

6. Recommend the following actions:

    -   Protect the basic rights of migrants and remove barriers to human mobility to promote human development;
    -   Safeguard the rights of migrants abroad;
    -   Take and/or strengthen measures aimed at combating all forms of discrimination, intolerance and racism towards migrants ;
    -   Find lasting solutions for victims of forced migration;
    -   Implement the African Union's roadmap on disaster risk reduction, one of whose effects would be that of preventing displacement due to forced migration;
    -   Optimize resources to deal with natural disasters;
    -   Develop a system for the exchange of information and develop cooperation for combating human trafficking effectively;
    -   Implement existing policies and legal instruments at regional and international levels for addressing the multifaceted aspects of migration;
    -   Refer to the instruments and mechanisms of the African Union on migration issues to create synergies and improve regional cooperation in Africa;
    -   Educate the population on good practices and migration risks.

AFRICAN MIGRATION: CURRENT SITUATION

7. Note the main routes of irregular migration from the various regions of Africa towards the Gulf countries, North Africa, Southern Africa and Europe, as well as the existence of a mixed migration and the different migrant profiles, thus making it complicated to identify certain migratory flows;

8. Deplore the fact that most international policies in place are not enforced and that certain measures are taken only when a migration crisis occurs; hence the need to review certain rules and analyse the difficulties encountered in implementing and enforcing them;

9. Observe that the difficulties linked to solving the migration issue in Europe foster the rise of far-right parties known for their racist and xenophobic ideas and their expeditious responses to migration management;

10. Underscore that peace, security, good governance, the rule of law and the possibility of offering a decent job in the countries of origin are factors that curb international migration, hence the need for these factors to be taken into account in national development strategies;

11. Remain concerned by the magnitude of this migration phenomenon, including brain drain, and the consequences of the absence of a concerted management of this issue that is generating abuses contrary to human rights, loss of life among migrant populations, as well as xenophobic and racist behaviours.

12. Recommend the following measures:

   - Include migration as an integral part of public policy;
   - Redefine coherent, fair and enforceable migration policies; listen to migrants and take into account their experiences in defining these policies;
   - Initiate consultations on this issue at the regional level before taking the debate to the international level;
   - Develop reintegration programmes for migrants who have returned to their countries;
   - Develop cooperation in the fight against organized crime, terrorism and all ill-intentioned organizations bent on taking advantage of migration flows;
   - Place the youth at the centre of the mechanism aimed at reversing the trends of illegal migration ;
   - Promote good governance and accountability at all levels of responsibility.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES GOVERNING MIGRATION

13. Assert the sovereign right of States to develop their own migration management policies, especially labour policies, in accordance with international labour norms and international instruments for the protection of migrants' rights;

14. Underscore that the absence of a bilateral, community or multilateral approach in the area of migration policy, as well as the restriction of regular migration, result in particular, apart from illegal behaviours, in the development of mafia networks of human trafficking and organized crime;

15. Feel that the flow of migrants should be protected by all States while respecting fundamental human rights in order to take full advantage of the benefits provided by international migration; women and children, as vulnerable persons, should be given special protection.

16. **Recommend that parliaments:**

    - Ratify and implement, in addition to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Organization of African Unity convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969) and the African Union Convention for the Protection and assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2013), human rights conventions, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and other international instruments relating to migrant workers, including the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Family, and those on combating human trafficking, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols Thereto;

    - Create synergies with regional mechanisms to strengthen intra-African cooperation on migration issues;

    - Adopt regular labour migration policies, taking into account labour market needs, through bilateral, regional or multilateral agreements;

    - Conclude bilateral agreements aimed at protecting the rights of foreign workers ;

    - Promote labour mobility within the framework of regional integration mechanisms ;

    - Exchange information, develop migration management policies and promote dialogue, cooperation and partnership at the national, subregional, regional, continental and international levels.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: LINKAGES AND IMPACTS

17. Express our willingness to contribute to the implementation of the sustainable development agenda by 2030, in particular its goals and targets on migrants, such as access to regular migration channels, the fight against all abusive forms of migration, improvement of health for all and the reduction of the cost of remittances;

18. Insist on the linkage between migration and development and the opportunities available to countries of origin and destination in terms of co-development aimed at improving in a concerted manner socio-economic conditions in the countries and

enabling Africans to enjoy decent living and working conditions in their own countries;

19. Recognize that migrants can contribute to economic growth as a work force and potential consumers in the countries of destination and contribute to food security and poverty reduction through their remittances to their countries of origin;

20. Emphasize the importance of respecting the human rights of migrants in order to improve their socioeconomic conditions and for them to be considered as potential actors of economic growth and development;

21. Assert that while filling the void in some areas of employment, migration contributes to growth in the countries of destination and that contribution to development in the countries of origin is seen through remittances of the diasporas, the transfer of experience and the acquisition of skills, especially in the case of circular migration;

22. Call upon States to promote policies and mechanisms geared towards increasing remittances from migrants to their countries of origin, particularly through the reduction of transfer costs;

23. **Call upon States to take incentives to:**

   - Encourage productive investment by facilitating the transfer of capital, skills and technology by migrant workers;
   - Create an enabling environment for the investment of migrant and diasporas remittances while organizing existing informal structures for the investment of these funds and encouraging the return of skilled labour to the countries of origin;
   - Involve the diasporas throughout the decision-making process related to the management of the funds transferred and encourage them to invest in their country;
   - Strengthen strategic dialogue and coordination between the key sectors and stakeholders;
   - Contribute systematically to international cooperation mechanisms, such as the Global Migration Group.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION ON MIGRATION, IN PARTICULAR ITS DEVELOPMENT ASPECT

24. Consider that as representatives of the people, we must get involved in the management of the migration issue, which is an integral part of public policy affecting the lives of our people, particularly via its development aspect;

25. Call upon our parliaments to take ownership of the migration issue and make it a concern that should be integrated into national development strategies;

26. Propose that the migration issue be handled within the parliament by an existing body or by one to be set up and charged with collecting all updated and reliable data on migration;

27. Must also ensure that our legislative framework is in line with the international and regional norms on migration ; to this end, we must develop or redevelop this framework and ensure that it is implemented;

28. Call on our parliaments to make provision, in drafting laws on the protection of migrants, for an implementation mechanism and adequate resources for their effective implementation.

29. **Recommend that parliaments**:

    - Ensure that there is an adequate legislative framework for migration;
    - Determine budgetary needs in relation to migration management;
    - Create cross-border parliamentary bodies to monitor migration problems in the countries concerned;
    - Use the community leadership role of parliamentarians to discuss with migrants who invest in their countries that such investments are not only to their benefit but also to that of the entire community;
    - Strengthen strategic dialogue and coordination between the key sectors and stakeholders;
    - Put parliamentary diplomacy at the service of bilateral and multilateral cooperation , particularly as concerns migration;
    - Establish African parliamentarian networks for migration.