

**Communique**  
**First Africa Labour Migration Conference #ALMC23 20**  
**October 2023, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.**

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**Guided** by the continental, regional and global policy frameworks including Africa Union Agenda 2063, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and its Plan of Action (2018-2030), the AU Declaration on Protection and Promotion of Rights of Migrant Workers (2021), the Abidjan Declaration Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the Future of Work in Africa (2019), the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and International Labour Standards and guidelines relevant to labour migration;



*Group photo at the opening of the Africa Labour Migration Conference*

**Noting** that labour migration and mobility within and from the Africa continent is dynamic, rising and shaped by a combination of push and pull factors – such as demographic structures, economic and labour market realities, perceived and actual opportunities for employment, migrants’ aspirations, and capabilities as well as social, cultural, environmental, and political factors.

**Underlining** that migration and mobility, particularly labour migration is not a panacea for unemployment and recalling the need for addressing root causes and structural drivers of migration and making migration a choice rather than a necessity.



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**Acknowledging** that most African migrant workers are concentrated in low and semiskilled jobs in the informal economy, often characterized by poor working conditions and decent work deficits.

**Noting with concern** the significant human rights violations, protection risks, decent work deficits and injustices experienced by migrant workers, particularly women migrant workers, in the continent and beyond.

**Reaffirming** the relevance of continental, regional and national frameworks, policies, and interventions put in place by African Union Commission (AUC), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Members States to effectively govern labour migration and mobility to overcome the challenges and optimise the benefits of migration.

**Appreciating** the various initiatives, good practices and approaches, tools and methodologies developed by the AUC, International Trade Union Confederation Africa (ITUC-Africa), International Organization of Employers (IOE), RECs, International Labour Organization (ILO) International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other stakeholders working on labour migration governance.

**Noting**, however, the need to address gaps in the implementation of continental, regional and national policy frameworks and creation of opportunities and pathways for regular labour mobility while expanding on good practices and lessons.

**Convinced that** the AUC, RECs, Member States, social partners and other stakeholders can unlock the full potential of labour migration and mobility for development and optimize the positive outcomes of labour migration for individuals, families, and societies alike, while ensuring the protection of migrant workers;

We, the participants of the first Africa Labour Migration Conference are, deeply convinced on the urgent need to:

- Move from dialogue and pledges to actions more than ever before.
- Devise common solutions to the common challenges experienced by African migrant workers in the African continent and beyond and,
- Fast track ratification and implementation of AU protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (AU Free Movement Protocol) and all Regional Free Movement Protocols.



*Fanfan Rwanyindo Kayirangwa, Regional Director, Africa (ROAF) in her address at the opening of the Conference, calling for respect for the rights of migrant domestic workers.*

## And recommend:

### On Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs)

1. Member States to make use of the AU Guidelines on Developing Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) and regional level guidelines such as the IGAD Regional Guidelines on Rights Based Bilateral Labour Agreements in drafting, negotiating, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating bilateral labour agreements.
2. AUC to develop a repository of BLAs which will be publicly accessible to all stakeholders including migrant workers.
3. Member States to ensure the process of drafting, negotiating, implementing, and monitoring BLAs include the participation of social partners and other relevant stakeholders.
4. AUC in collaboration with Member States, ILO, and social partners to develop Standard Employment Contracts for selected sectors/sub sectors to be annexed to BLAs.
5. AUC and IGAD with the support of ILO to disseminate and popularize the continental and regional guidelines on BLAs.



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6. AUC, RECs, and social partners to spearhead the development of common positions and minimum denominators on the content of BLAs and avoid “race to the bottom”.
7. AUC, RECs, and ILO to organize regular dialogues including continental ministerial conference of Ministers of Labour of concerned African countries, as relevant to deliberate and endorse common positions and minimum denominators on BLAs.

### **On Fair and Ethical Recruitment**

8. AUC to fast-track finalization of the AU Fair and Ethical Recruitment Strategy and mobilize resources for implementation of the Fair Recruitment Initiative in Africa, including organization of a donor roundtable to mobilise resources.
9. AUC, as part of the implementation of the AU Fair and Ethical Recruitment Strategy, stimulate an enabling environment for the recruitment agencies, private and public, to institute fair and ethical recruitment practices in their businesses.
10. AUC to support RECs and Member States to build capacities of private employment agencies to comply with the ILO General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and relevant International Labour Standards.
11. AUC, RECs, Social Partners, ILO, and other partners to launch a regional campaign to advocate for the elimination of recruitment fees to migrant workers.

### **Gender Dimension of Labour Migration**

12. AUC, RECs, ILO, Social Partners, and other partners working on labour migration to develop a continental flagship programme to promote gender responsive and transformative labour migration governance.
13. Member States and social partners to take proactive measures to ensure equal opportunities and diversify labour market opportunities for women migrant workers beyond traditional sectors such as domestic and care work.
14. Member States to take vigorous actions to eliminate gender-based violence and harassment at the workplace, including the ratification and implementation of Convention Nos. 190 and 189.





*Sabelo Mbokazi, Head of the Employment, Labour, and Migration, Division African Union Commission, explaining the stakes of the Conference.*

### **On Extending Social Protection for Migrant Workers**

15. AUC, ILO, and other partners to support Member States and RECs to implement existing instruments and policy frameworks on extending social protection for migrant workers, including provisions under free movement protocols, multilateral or bilateral social security agreements.
16. AUC, RECs, ILO, and other partners to encourage and support Member States to conclude bilateral or multilateral social security agreements to ensure access to and portability of social security benefits.
17. AUC, RECs, and ILO to organize a south-south exchange between the RECs with a view to promote or extend social protection to all workers including Migrant Workers
18. Member States to devise inclusive social protection systems to extend social protection to all, including migrant workers and their families and especially those in the informal economy and working in sectors not covered by labour and social security laws.
19. Member States, social partners, ILO, and other partners to work towards addressing administrative obstacles and practical challenges to extend social protection for migrant workers, including awareness raising, sensitization and continuous capacity building initiatives.



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### On Skills Development and Recognition

20. Member States together with social partners to evaluate and assess market needs, undertake skills assessments, and build efficient mechanisms for skills development, anticipation, and matching.
21. AUC, ILO, and other stakeholders to support RECs and Member States to conclude and/or implement existing bilateral and multilateral frameworks and agreements on harmonization of curriculums, recognition of qualifications and prior learning by migrant workers and returnees.
22. AUC and RECs to support Member States and Social Partners to launch skills mobility partnership programmes within and beyond, based on skills anticipation mechanisms.
23. Member States to invest in skills development, soft skills, and hard skills, for potential migrants and returnees.
24. The AUC, with the support of the ILO and the social partners, must help member states formulate migration policies with a view to establishing predictable and transparent legal frameworks to facilitate skills mobility."



*Ndeye Coumba Diop, Regional Labour Migration and Mobility Specialist, RO-Africa*



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## **On Strengthening Intra-Regional and Inter-Regional Dialogue and Cooperation**

25. AUC and RECs to conduct research and cost benefit analysis of impact of free movement of persons on the Member states to increase ratification of the AU Free Movement Protocol by Member States.
26. AUC, RECs and ILO to launch a campaign for the ratification of the AU Free Movement Protocol in collaboration with Social Partners, ILO and Partners working on the subject such as UNECA and IOM
27. AUC and RECs to form and launch a continental Member States Experts Taskforce towards the speedy ratification and domestication of the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, consisting of three (03) high level subject experts drawn from Ministries of Labour, Interior (Immigration) and Finance from each of the RECs and seconded to the AU office in charge of Ratification effort for the Protocol for a maximum period of 12 working months.
28. AUC and RECs to ensure regional, continental and inter regional dialogues and cooperation are tripartite and inclusive in line with the principles of whole of government and whole of society approaches.
29. AUC and RECs with the support of ILO to create a platform for African countries of origin at the highest level / ministerial level to meet every two years and deliberate to forge common solutions and positions to common problems related to labour migration.
30. AUC in collaboration with RECs, Members States, social partners, and other relevant stakeholders to lead and consolidate a process to operationalise the Africa-GCC dialogue on labour migration.
31. AUC and RECs in collaboration with the ILO and other partners to launch a study to examine existing practices, opportunities, and challenges on sharing diplomatic and consular services in countries of destination and widely share recommendations in various platforms to initiate policy dialogue and facilitate implementation of recommendations,
32. ITUC-Africa and Business Africa to enhance their collaboration on labour migration.
33. ILO to support union to union dialogues and agreements within and beyond Africa, including sharing and use of administrative data of migrant workers issuing "Trade Union Passport" building on the experience between Cote d'Ivoire – Tunisia and Somalia - Ethiopia.





*The great ILO team that worked hard for the success of the Africa Labour Migration Conference*

### Cross Cutting Issues

34. All stakeholders and Partners to work towards strengthening the capacities of labour migration policymakers, private employment agencies, labour migration institutions and social partners through a comprehensive capacity building initiatives (training, study visits, and experience sharing)
35. All stakeholders and Partners to work towards developing and expanding innovative tools, products, and services such as labour migration advisory services, Migrant Resource Centres, and shelter houses to enhance the protection of migrant workers.
36. All stakeholders to collect analyse and disseminate data and evidence on the positive impact of labour migration on development.
37. AUC, African Observatory Centres, RECs, and STATAFRIC to strengthen and support member states to collect, analyse, and produce quality, up-to-date, internationally comparable and gender-disaggregated data and statistics on labour migration.





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38. AUC and RECs develop knowledge and experience sharing platform to disseminate good practices tools and products on labour migration for wider use.
39. AUC, RECs, and Member States design and implement interventions, including regular labour migration and mobility options, to overcome the impact of climate change on labour markets, enterprises, jobs, and livelihoods.
40. AUC and RECs to develop a results-based monitoring and evaluation systems to assess progress made on the action points of this Communiqué.

The participants recommended regular organisation of the Tripartite ALMC preceded by a bipartite social partner meeting and followed by a Ministerial conference, every two years and develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to assess implementation of decisions and actions points of the conference.

The Participants call for the maintenance and expansion of the ongoing partnership between AUC, RECs and the Donor communities to support the implementation of the actions points in this Communiqué.

### **Recommendations made this day, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**At the City of Abidjan,  
Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.**