



MEDIA ADVISORY

Launch of the AU Commission Initiative against Trafficking (AU.COMMIT Campaign)

Theme: "Let's Combat Trafficking in Human Beings Especially Women and Children: 2009-2012."

INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

- WHEN:** 16 June 2009
The launch will have two separate events:
a) the morning session of the launch will be dedicated for statements by key personalities and partner organizations supporting the AU.COMMIT Campaign;
b) the afternoon session will be dedicated for exhibitions by the African Union Commission and partner organisations on the campaign.
- WHERE:** Headquarters of the African Union Commission (AUC), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- WHO:** Department of Social Affairs, the African Union Commission
- WHY:** To launch the AU.COMMIT Campaign. The decision to have this launch on the specified date is due to the significance of June 16 which marks the Day of the African Child (DAC). The theme for this year's DAC is : "*Africa Fit for Children: Call for Accelerated Action towards their survival*". The launch will contribute in sending a strong signal on the need to protect children and ensure their survival. This initiative also falls within the framework of the Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children and the Call for Accelerated Action on the implementation of the Plan of Action towards Africa Fit for Children. The launching of the AU.COMMIT Campaign on this day therefore would reinforce the celebration of the DAC and focus on the elimination of trafficking in human beings especially women and children.

General Objectives: - The general objective of the launch of AU.COMMIT Campaign is to set the pace for the fight against trafficking in human beings as a priority on the development agenda of the continent. The launch will also put an AU publicity stamp on the different initiatives being carried out towards the elimination of trafficking in human beings. Moreover, the launch will set the tone for the different stages of AU.COMMIT Campaign and the activities provided in the Programme so that Member States and Regional Economic Communities will put trafficking at the top of national agenda. It also helps to inform policy makers and enforcement officials of Member States about the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children (the Ouagadougou Action Plan).

Specific Objectives: Apart from the above general objectives, the launch will be used to inform the public about AU.COMMIT and the AU's determination to tackle the problem in collaboration with RECs, Member States and partners. The AU will also use this to call the Media and CSOs to popularize and advocate for the implementation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan.

Expected outcomes: It is expected that at the end of the launch, the outcome will be as follows:

- AU.COMMIT Campaign to Combat Trafficking publicized;
- The Ouagadougou Action Plan popularized;
- The public, media and civil society informed of the AU.COMMIT Strategy;
- Media coverage of the launch of AU.COMMIT increased;
- Public awareness of the future activities and programmes of AU on trafficking at the continental, regional and national level increased;
- The other efforts of partners and civil society on combating trafficking supported and reinforced;
- Cooperation among AU Commission, partners and Civil Society Organizations and the Media strengthened; and
- Coordination of the different departments of AU Commission enhanced.

Participants will include:

- The Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
- Permanent Representatives Council (PRC);
- Relevant authorities in the Ethiopian Government;
- Development partners;
- Diplomatic corps;
- International development organizations;
- INTERPOL (Addis Ababa);
- NGOs,
- Economic, Culture and Social Council (ECOSOC);
- Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; and
- Expert Committee on Women, amongst others.

Background:

Recently, the fight against trafficking in human beings has gained more prominent place in the international and regional forums pertaining to global governance. This is particularly true with regard to the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) programme. In addition, the recent Sixth African Development Forum, jointly organized by the UN-Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank, and the African Union calls for the popularization and implementation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan. Similarly, the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership (Lisbon Action Plan) particularly the Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment calls for more action to combat trafficking in persons.

Justification

The Department of Social Affairs (DSA) of the African Union Commission (AUC) in its 2009-2012 Strategic Plan and 2008 Programme of Activities has provided several initiatives with regard to the popularization and implementation of the AU policies on migration and development, one of which is the Ouagadougou Action Plan. The AU Commission Initiative against Trafficking (AU.COMMIT) Campaign is one of the major Programme of Activities of DSA on Migration and Development for 2009-2012.

At the centre of the AU.COMMIT Campaign is the implementation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan. The Ouagadougou Action Plan urges Member States and RECs to utilize the same action plan as a reference to develop and reform their policies and laws on trafficking in persons. It also requests the AUC in consultation with the International Organization for Migration and other relevant partners, to assist Member States and RECs with its implementation and development of a follow-up mechanism. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission is also to report periodically on the implementation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan. It further calls the International Community to continue providing assistance towards the attainment of the objectives contained in the Ouagadougou Action Plan. The AU Commission believes that through the launch of the AU.COMMIT Campaign on prevention of trafficking, protection of victims of trafficking and prosecution of traffickers, it will be able to contribute its share to the global fight against trafficking in persons.

Partners

Partners will include the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Labour Organization (ILO), and UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), EU Delegation to African Union, and US Delegation to the African Union.

CONTACT PERSONS:

Mr. Mehari Taddele Maru
Programme Coordinator for Migration

Department of Social Affairs
African Union Commission
Tel : +251115517700
Fax : +2511 551 7844

Email: Mehari_maru@ksg07.harvard.edu
MehariM@africa-union.org
Mehari_Maru@stcross-oxford.com

Ms. Esther Azaa Tankou

Division of Communication and Information

Tel :+251 115517700

Fax : +251 115511299

Mob. +251 911 3611 85

Email : yamboue@africa-union.org