



**Information Session for Development Partners on the joint
AUC/ILO/ECA/IOM initiative on
“Labor Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa”**

Statement by:

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- Your Excellency, Dr Mustapha Kaloko, African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs
- Ms Takyiwaa Manuh, Director of the Social Development Policy Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;
- Mr Josiah Ogina, Head of IOM's mission in Ethiopia and IOM Representative to the African Union, the UNECA and IGAD;
- Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Community;
- My Esteemed Colleagues from the United Nations Family;
- Distinguished Guests.

It is a privilege for me as ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa to join you today and share a few thoughts on the subject of “Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa”.

Indeed, migration is one of the key global – and African – challenges for economic development, social cohesion and governance. The dearth of employment opportunities and decent work, combined with widening disparities in incomes and human security, as well as demographic trends, have led to increased migration pressures in Africa.

Estimates suggest that between 8 and 9 million Africans are living and working outside their countries of birth, mostly in Africa but many in Europe, the Gulf States and other continents. While low- or semi-skilled non-professional occupations predominate, there are also significant numbers of skilled workers and professionals among African migrants. The resulting skills drain is a major concern.

However, labour migration also generates valuable remittances for families in the origin countries. Such remittances can support the creation of SMEs and development of social programmes for marginalized communities in cooperation with the authorities. This promotes economic and social development.

Increased mobility of working women and men across borders is set to become a permanent feature of the African and global economy. However, the treatment accorded to migrants often leads to social exclusion. In particular, many migrants and their families have inadequate protection and are exploited.

This brings me to the importance of social protection. Social protection extends social security to the labour force, enabling them to safeguard and build their human and physical capital in times of unemployment. Efforts to create a more enabling environment for sustainable and inclusive economic growth require investment in the human capital of the population throughout the life cycle, through access to health, education and other social services, as well as at least a minimum level of income security that empowers people to engage in productive employment and income-generating investments.

Limited access to social protection remains one of the main policy challenges in achieving sustainable growth, productive employment and Decent Work in Africa. I believe that investing in social protection in Africa, particularly migrants and their families' social protection, will help African countries develop their full productive potential, contribute to the formalization of employment, support economic and social change, foster sustainable and equitable growth, reduce vulnerability and boost economic and social development.

Achieving this requires establishing effective labour migration governance arrangements which are translated into explicit legislation, policy and administrative measures.

I am excited that the ILO has entered into a partnership with the African Union Commission, the International Organisation for Migration and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to develop a programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa. It gives me tremendous pleasure that African Heads of State and Government endorsed this initiative during the recently-held 24th Summit of the African Union. This is indeed the first time when a formal Summit of Heads of State and Government has adopted a comprehensive programme on migration governance. It is my firm belief that the implementation of the joint programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa is the most effective line of international action to protect labour migrants and their families.

The ILO stands ready to commit its full technical and other support to the successful implementation of this initiative, which can only be realized with the full commitment from our development partners. I firmly believe that our priorities converge on this initiative and your vote of confidence strengthens our resolve to make the programme a success together.

I thank you for your kind attention.