



**WELCOME REMARKS BY
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ZAMBIA
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MIGRATION, REFUGEES AND IDPs**

AT THE

**BENCHMARKING AND CAPACITY BUILDING MEETING FOR AU
MEMBER STATES AND RECS FOCAL POINTS ON MIGRATION
GOVERNANCE**

FOCUS:

***THE 2018 MIGRATION POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR AFRICA AND
THE AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON MIGRATION AND
DEVELOPMENT***

8 – 10 July 2024

Cotonou, Benin

- Excellency Ambassador Myrina Amoussouga, Director General for Consular Affairs and Beninese Abroad
- Mme Angela Martins, Acting Director for Social Development, Sports and Culture at the African Union Commission (AUC)
- Distinguished Experts from the AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- Esteemed Experts from the AUC Departments and Specialized Offices
- Representatives of International Organizations
- Independent Experts here present
- Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that we are meeting for this crucial Benchmarking and Capacity Building Meeting for the AU Member States and RECs here in Cotonou, Benin, at the Azalai Hotel. We stand at a significant moment in our collective effort to advance migration governance across the African continent. Allow me to start by commending the Republic of Benin for hosting us in this beautiful country full of history, and to appreciate the efforts of the AUC, as well as the support of GIZ in organizing this event. Gathering so many AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities definitely announces a great success.

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Chair of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), one of the statutory bodies of the African Union (AU) that provides policy guidance and oversight

on migration and displacement issues in Africa, I am honored and delighted on behalf of the Republic of Zambia to welcome you to this important meeting on the implementation of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the African Common Position on Migration and Development.

Today, we stand at the crossroads of two critical endeavours as we gather to focus on two pivotal frameworks that guide our collective efforts in migration governance: **the 2018 Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and the African Common Position on Migration and Development**. These 2 policy frameworks represent our unified vision and strategic approach to managing migration in a manner that promotes development, respects human rights, and ensures the dignity of all migrants.

This meeting is a timely and crucial opportunity for us to review our progress and achievements, identify our challenges and gaps, and plan our future actions and strategies on one of the most vital and relevant issues of our time.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Union (AU) recognizes the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach towards addressing the opportunities and challenges of migration, as well as the protection and assistance of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Accordingly, the AU has adopted several frameworks and instruments to guide its Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the formulation and

implementation of migration policies and programs. Some of the key frameworks and instruments include, but are not limited to the following:

- a) The Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (adopted in 2006 and revised in 2016), which provides a comprehensive and holistic roadmap for migration governance on the continent;
- b) The African Common Position on Migration and Development (2006), which provides a comprehensive and coherent framework for addressing the opportunities and challenges of migration in Africa;
- c) The Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which is the first legally binding instrument on IDPs in the world;
- d) The 2018 Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, and;
- e) The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as well as the Global Compact for Refugees.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, migration is a cornerstone of human progress and a positive force for development. It fosters cooperation and partnership among countries and regions, and it enriches our societies with diversity and resilience. Migration is part of our history, our present, and our future. It is indeed part of our identity, our culture, and our values. It is part of who we are as Africans.

However, migration also poses many threats and challenges, such as irregular migration, trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants,

xenophobia, terrorism, drug trafficking and discrimination. These threats and challenges threaten the dignity, the rights, and the well-being of millions of migrants and refugees, as well as the stability, the security, and the prosperity of our countries and regions.

That is why we must work towards creating a continent where migration is a choice, not a necessity. A continent where migrants are treated with dignity and respect, and where their contributions are valued and recognized. A continent where migration is managed safely, orderly, and regularly, and where migration is a catalyst for development and integration.

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates

In this meeting, we will share some progress and achievements made in advancing the MPFA and the African Common Position, as well as the challenges and gaps that we still face. We will also learn some of the good practices from our Member States and Regional Economic Communities, and eviscerate some of the recommendations and action points that we need to follow up on. I hope that this meeting will be a productive and fruitful exchange of views and experiences, and that it will inspire us to take concrete and collective actions to realize our common vision and objectives on migration.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me highlight some of the achievements that we have made in the recent past. We have successfully adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly

and Regular Migration, which is the first intergovernmental agreement on migration that is aligned with the MPFA and the African Common Position. This is a historic and unprecedented achievement that demonstrates our leadership and commitment to addressing migration in a comprehensive and balanced manner and to ensuring that migration works for all. We have also strengthened our coordination and collaboration with our partners, such as the United Nations to ensure that our voices and interests are heard and respected in global migration dialogue. Further, we have launched several initiatives and projects to support our Member States and RECs in implementing the MPFA and the African Common Position, such as the African Migration Observatory, which will provide us with reliable and timely data and analysis on migration trends and impacts; the African Passport, which will facilitate the free movement of people and goods across the continent, and the Free Movement Protocol, which will enhance the integration and development of our regions.

However, we acknowledge that we still have a long way to go to achieve our vision of a prosperous, peaceful, and just Africa that harnesses the potential of migration for development. We still face many challenges and gaps, such as the lack of data and evidence on migration trends and impact; the inadequate legal and institutional frameworks and capacities to manage migration; the insufficient protection and integration of migrants and refugees, and; the negative perceptions and attitudes towards migration and migrants. These challenges and gaps hinder our ability to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of migration, and to ensure that migration contributes to our Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Therefore, we need to address these challenges and gaps. We need to collect and analyze more data, and gather evidence on migration dynamics, and use them to inform our policies and programs. We need to harmonize and update our legal and institutional frameworks and capacities to manage migration in line with the MPFA and the African Common Position. We need to promote and celebrate the positive contributions of migration and migrants to our development and well-being. And we need to engage and cooperate with all stakeholders, such as civil society, the private sector, the media, the academia, and the diaspora, in order to create a culture of dialogue and partnership on migration.

Distinguished Delegates,

As I conclude, I would like to remind you that Migration is an intrinsic part of our continent's history and future. Therefore, migration is not a problem to be solved, but an opportunity to be seized and a driver of sustainable growth. We must work towards creating a continent where the threats that flow with migration are neutralized while we leverage on the positives of the phenomenon to foster socio economic development. This is our vision, and this is our mission. Let us work together to make it a reality.

I wish you very successful deliberations and I am very grateful for your generous attention.