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The First Meeting of the AU-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Program on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP priority) Steering Committee

**29-30 January 2019
Capital Hotel and SPA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

DRAFT OUTCOME STATEMENT

Introduction

1. The first Meeting of the Steering Committee of the AU-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Program on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP priority) took place from 29-30 January 2019, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. The objectives of the meeting were to: (i) increase RECs and social partner's awareness on the JLMP objectives and the Three Year Priority in particular; (ii) Share updates on the implementation of the Three year project (2018 to 2021); (iii) align the implementation work plan of the JLMP Three Year Priority Project (2018 to 2021) with the RECs priorities; (iv) Adopt the JLMP 2019 consolidated work plan; (v) Approve the disbursement and execution of funding requests submitted by implementing agencies; (vi) Rationalize the governance of the JLMP for optimized and coordinated implementation; (vii) Develop Terms of References for the JLMP Steering Committee; and (viii) Identify JLMP focal points and their deputies from the RECs and selected social partners.
3. On behalf of Ms. Maureen Achieng, IOM Ethiopia Chief of Mission and Representative to the AU/UNECA/IGAD, Ms. Naomi Shiferaw, commenced her remarks by commending the AUC who, with the support of its international partners (IOM, ILO and UNECA) has taken on the challenge of leading the implementation of this Programme with the generous financial support of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). She further commended the Programme as a timely intervention at a time when the African Union, in recognition of the importance and inevitability of migration, has adopted the following key policy documents: (i) the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment (adopted in January 2018); (ii) the African Continental Free Trade Area (adopted in March 2018); and (iii) the Single African Air Transport Market (launched in January 2018). IOM envisioned that at the end of the Steering Committee Meeting, there will be enhanced understanding of the Programme by the delegates and the Programme will be aligned with the priorities of the RECs and other Partners.
4. Ms. Michelle Leighton, Chief of the Labour Migration Branch at the International Labour Organization (ILO) lauded the Programme as a concrete example of Partners joining hands to build capacities and advocate for labour migration governance on the continent. Ms. Leighton also appreciated SIDA's financial support to the Programme. She further informed the delegates that ILO views the Programme, whose priorities are in line with the African position on the Migration Policy Framework as well as the African Common Position on the Global Compact on Migration, as an opportunity to change the migration narrative in Africa. The ILO reiterated its commitment to ensure the success of the JLMP as well as the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration as ILO is counted among the members of the Executive Steering Committee of the Global Migration Network.

5. Mr. Sabelo, Head of Division, Labour, Employment and Migration at the African Union Commission (AUC) commended the technical and financial support of the Programme partners and SIDA, respectively. Mr. Sabelo emphasized that the strategic focus during the three years will be on the Regional Economic communities (RECs) with a particular focus on EAC, SADC and ECOWAS. The other RECs will be engaged to exchange knowledge/experience via the inter-RECs events that will be convened as necessary. This meeting looked at the Programme workplan, Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee, The Technical Committee, the Programme Support Unit, the Labour Migration Advisory Committee and the capacity building and JLMP communication strategy - all of which are crucial elements to be discussed by stakeholders prior to the implementation of the Programme. Mr. Sabelo encouraged Partners to be aware of possible negative setbacks that will impede the implementation of the JLMP and urged the Partners to reach a consensus on any plan that will set the tone for a prosperous Africa based on Inclusive growth and integration.

Deliberations on agendas of the JLMP Steering Committee

6. Following the opening remarks from the IOM, the ILO and the AUC, representatives of each REC and the AUC made presentations on the legal and policy framework governing labour migration and ongoing projects and synergies. One of the key challenges highlighted during these presentations was the challenge to: (i) ratify regional and continental instruments, such as free movement protocols; and (ii) the lack of available skilled and knowledgeable human resources to support the RECs engagement on labour migration matters.
7. The perceived lack of involvement of the RECs (excluding EAC, ECOWAS and SADC) in the JLMP was raised by several RECs, notably IGAD, ECCAS and COMESA. Nevertheless, it was explained that the RECs are covered by activities at the AUC level on capacity building, labour migration statistics, etc. However, there was consensus among the delegates that communication between the AUC and the RECs ought to be enhanced, and that RECs may also play a part in resource mobilization to further extend the scope of the project beyond the three years priority implementation.
8. Participants agreed throughout the whole discussion that without a coordinator at REC level (particularly EAC, ECOWAS and SADC), it will be a challenge to implement the JLMP's activities.

Recommendations:

Following in-depth deliberations, the subsequent recommendations were reached:

1. The steering committee noted that there has been commendable progress in terms of launching the Programme. The AUC must work with RECs to develop a resource mobilization strategy and platform including domestic resources in support to the progressive extension of the project to all RECs.
2. Policy and project intervention must be based on evidence and data. The JLMP should take note of this and strengthen its component on labour migration data and statistics.
3. Enhanced communication between the AUC, RECs and social partners on planned activities and initiatives.
4. A JLMP Coordinator with expertise on labour migration should be appointed at the RECs level (EAC, ECOWAS and SADC) to facilitate the implementation of the JLMP.
5. Conduct a mapping of labour migration programmes and funding mechanism to harmonise and realign programs, frameworks and activities among the different JLMP stakeholders.
6. In collaboration with the RECs, social partners and private employment agencies, the AUC must conduct an assessment of the capacity needs and requirements to coordinate and implement JLMP activities with a view to strengthen, among other areas, human resource capacity on labour migration governance at the RECs and social partners level.
7. Enhance mechanisms for sharing experiences on protection of migrants and social protection frameworks.
8. The AUC to expedite the operationalization of the LMAC.
9. Reinforce accelerated efforts towards increased ratification of legal instrument by applying a strategy that considers the political realities.
10. The JLMP Communication Strategy should, among others, include raising awareness to potential migrants on the risks of irregular migration and encourage regular migration pathways, promote ratification of relevant legal instruments, and promote a positive image of migrants. In addition, take advantage of continental-wide sports events (CAF, All African Games, FIFA Pro). In addition, it was agreed that IOM will take the lead in developing the JLMP website and logo.

11. Engage already existing structures in governments, social partners, networks, civil society organisations and NGOs in all stages of the process of labour migration governance across the continent.
12. Rationalise the high-level governance structure of the JLMP in accordance with the AUC policies and commitments made during the 2015 AU Summit adopting the JLMP. Explore the possibility of setting up One Steering Committee for the Programme, to be supported by different Technical Committees as necessary.