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**WORKSHOP ON THE JOINT PROGRAM “LABOUR MIGRATION  
GOVERNANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION IN AFRICA”**

**OPENING REMARKS  
BY**

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**18 February 2015**

## **PROTOCOL**

1. On behalf of the African Union Commission, I would like to express my appreciation for your presence at this Sensitization Workshop on “Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa” This is an initiative jointly developed by AUC, ILO, IOM and UNECA.

2. Labour migration is a fundamental feature of national and regional migration policy and a key factor in achieving African economic integration. It is a powerful driver of sustainable economic and social development including boosting intra-Africa trade with the potential to contribute significantly to the transformational African Union Agenda 2063 towards Regional Economic Integration. Facilitating labour mobility within Africa has the potential to unlock opportunities to deepen regional integration and economic cooperation for inclusive growth and sustainable development, while reducing the negative social and human impacts of irregular migration.

3. Africa is faced with an increasing shortage of skilled workers coupled with high unemployment rate amongst the low-skilled. At the same time, the continent loses some 70,000 skilled workers annually due to outward migration, resulting in a huge human capacity deficit in the continent. This, according to the African Development Bank, has resulted in the continent expending some 4 billion dollars (about 35 percent of Official Development Assistance) to recruit some 100,000 “expatriates”.

4. The migration of labour is typically associated with allocative, distributive and external effects. Migrants are especially useful in rapidly reducing imbalances brought on by the inability of native production factors to quickly

adjust. Since many parameters are changing globally, sustained growth, prosperity, employment and social security can only be safeguarded through a flexible market and the promotion of mobility. Labor migration thus leads to better deployment of economic resources and increases production

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

**5.** In April 2014, the Special Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission in Windhoek (April 2014) endorsed) the Labour Migration Initiative. Building on that endorsement, the 24th Summit of the African Union held in January 2015 adopted **THIS AUC/ILO/IOM/ECA JOINT LABOUR MIGRATION PROGRAMME (JLMP)**, a strategic and flagship initiative in support of the implementation of the labour migration priority of the Ouaga + 10 process.

**6.** Despite the endorsement of several policy instruments prior to the JLMP, such as the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), we continue to face several impediments, including the lack of effective domestication and implementation, lack of mutual recognition of credentials and qualifications and inappropriate social protection mechanisms. Additionally, labor mobility is hampered by the absence of implementation of protocol on free movement of persons as well as the prevalence of rigid border formalities. While the region is now well equipped with a strategy (MPFA) and a politically validated programme of action (JLMP) spearheaded by the AUC with coordinated support from the ILO, IOM and UNECA, it now needs to concentrate its efforts on working towards an operational roadmap. This is what this meeting and others to follow will offer to begin thorough inclusive awareness raising of key-stakeholders.

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

7. In as much as our governments and Member States may have valid concerns and genuine fears about the consequences of free movement of persons or Labour mobility, there is no empirical evidence to suggest or to support such concerns.

8. With more than half of African migrants seeking decent job opportunities, one of the expected outcomes of the AU / IOM joint initiative is to facilitate free movement of persons within Africa that has the potential to reduce the pressure and consequently the number of African migrants likely to use irregular and dangerous migration channels. It is also expected to unlock opportunities to deepen regional integration and economic cooperation for inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa.

9. In Conclusion, the JLMP has many constructive ideas to address the challenges of labour mobility. However, the AUC has limited leeway due to limited capacity. That is why the importance of this sensitization workshop cannot be overstated. I am hopeful that our partners would leave this workshop fully cognizant of the importance of this initiative as well as the need to provide strategic assistance for effective implementation. I also hope that your contributions will inform discussions to lead us to the Roundtable Conference on Migration and Intra-Regional integration that is planned to take place in March in Kigali Rwanda

I wish you fruitful deliberations and I look forward to a positive outcome of this meeting.

**Thank you.**