



**Priorities for future cooperation in the area of Migration and Mobility
in the framework of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership**

Senior Officials Meeting

27 and 28 November 2013

Brussels

MEETING REPORT

1. Introduction

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) has strongly consolidated the relations between both continents in various domains. In this framework, the Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME) is a milestone in the development of European and African migration policy. The 2011-2013 MME Second Action Plan of the MME Partnership has provided a comprehensive and balanced framework with a set of initiatives related not only to migration but also to employment and higher education. These are all priority issues for the European Commission as reflected in the Agenda for Change but also in the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. Within the MME Partnership, dialogue between the different stakeholders has been facilitated and has helped build mutual responsibility around common goals.

The Senior Officials Meeting held in Brussels on 27 and 28 November 2013 gathered government officials from African and European states along with representatives from the African Union Commission and the European Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), International Organisations, and experts on migration to identify lessons learnt and best practices from the past three years and define the priorities for the future. The meeting was structured around six working groups: Mobility and Labour Migration, Trafficking in Human Beings, Remittances, Diaspora, International Protection and Irregular Migration. In the framework of those working groups, participants took part in extensive discussions and elaborated recommendations for future action in these areas. The draft concept paper which served as a basis for the discussions was complemented by the concrete proposals elaborated in the working groups and should become the basis for the Action Plan on priorities for future cooperation to be submitted to the Africa-EU Summit in April 2014.



The meeting took place at a time where structures and modalities of cooperation between Africa and the EU for the future are being discussed. In order to ensure the success of the Partnership, it should focus on areas of genuine shared interests from both sides and find a particular angle from which the continental dimension is more effective and of added value. Taking into account the importance of the continental dimension, rationalisation of the partnership must be envisioned to avoid putting in place parallel processes to the MME partnership. Objectives and activities should be both feasible and realistic and the right stakeholders should be targeted.

The first step was to discuss the organisational structure of the Partnership and how it could be improved in the future. One of the options would be to establish a core group of a selected amount of African and European countries along with representatives from the African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Commission (EC) which would ensure continuity, political trust, reciprocity and mutual respect. Commitment of African and European states, as well as RECs is essential to ensuring the success of the dialogue and further efforts to ensure their commitment should be undertaken.

In terms of thematic areas, mobility within Africa and between Africa and the EU has not been sufficiently addressed in the past and has been stressed as a priority for the future. In addition, further action should also be undertaken to address the challenges posed by irregular migration, taking into account the multidisciplinary nature of the phenomenon. Indeed, the recent tragic events of Lampedusa have revealed the failures of migration management between both continents. It is therefore crucial to question the policies in place and discuss ways to improve them. While destination countries need to recognise their responsibilities with regard to the protection of the rights of migrants, source countries should actively prevent irregular migration and facilitate reintegration and return. Active efforts should also be undertaken to match employment policies to professional mobility processes.

2. The second MME Action Plan

In order to better understand the context in which the MME 2nd Action Plan has emerged, it is important to go back to the key dates that have led to its adoption. The Partnership has been built on the 2006 Tripoli Declaration on Migration and Development and the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Action Plan on Employment and Poverty alleviation in Africa. Commitment to the EU-Africa Action Plan on trafficking in human beings, especially women and children adopted at the 2006 Tripoli Ministerial Conference has also helped frame the second MME Action Plan. Following the Lisbon Summit in December 2007, dialogue and cooperation between Africa and the EU on migration, mobility and employment issues have intensified with the adoption of the Joint Africa-EU



Strategy. The 2010 Senior Officials Meeting launched the MME Partnership and helped frame the priority areas of action.

The second MME Action Plan aimed at strengthening intercontinental cooperation by enhancing dialogue and implementing concrete initiatives. The Action Plan consisted in 12 initiatives among which a political dialogue, 4 migration initiatives, 4 employment initiatives and 3 higher education initiatives. In terms of migration, the focus was set on migration and development, with the development of the African Institute for Remittances (AIR) and the Diaspora Outreach Initiative, as well as on regular migration and irregular migration, with the Human Trafficking Initiative and the creation of the ACP Observatory on Migration. For employment and higher education, actions were targeted to areas of synergies with migration, namely job creation, sustainable growth, decent work as well as the mobility of students. The facilitation of dialogue led to extensive research and the organisation of numerous meetings which contributed to sharing experiences and shaping a common understanding of the issues at stake. Areas such as mobility, migrant rights, international protection as well as the role of the private sector have received little attention in the initiatives but have been addressed in the dialogue.

In addition to the implementation of the dialogue, the MME Support Project has recently undertaken a review of the 2nd MME Action Plan as well as an external evaluation of the MME Support Project. The Review consisted in extensive desk research and one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders of the MME Partnership as well as the Focus Group Meeting which took place on 17 and 18 June 2013 in Brussels, and gave an overview of the state of play, evolution and future outlook of the MME Partnership. The evaluation undertook an extensive analysis of outcomes of the support project and its contributions to the initial objectives set. It also provided a set of recommendations on the outcomes of the support project, the project management structure and the engagement of stakeholders.

Priorities for future collaboration should be focused on areas that bring a clear added value to the Partnership and in this sense the set up of the MME Partnership should be revisited. The dialogue should be maintained and reinforced in order to strengthen the synergies and support the actions. The role of the key stakeholders should be strengthened in order to ensure ownership and relevance of the topics addressed. Monitoring mechanisms to assess outcomes and identify priorities need to be developed. Finally, it is essential to create stronger synergies between the thematic areas and broader links between the actions in order to maximise the outcomes. In terms of thematic areas which have already been addressed in the 2nd Action Plan but which would need further attention in the future, we can state the impact of Diaspora's remittances on the economic development of countries, as well as Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) and mobility. Irregular migration and international protection



are both areas which have received little attention so far but which should be strengthened in the future taking into account the needs of victims of THB and other category of migrants.

3. The future structure and modalities of the Partnership

Formal preparation processes in view of the Africa-EU Summit of the Heads of States which is to take place in April 2014 have not been launched yet as African counterparts are still in the process of adopting a common position paper. A core group composed of African and European stakeholders is being set up in order to define the content and agenda for the Summit. It is proposed for the Africa-EU Summit to focus on three major areas, which capture the essential issues for Africa in the last 3 years: Investing in Peace, Prosperity and People. The outcomes of the Summit would include two documents: a short communiqué and a follow-up document which will identify priorities and deliverables. Since the preparations for the Summit are still at a very early stage, the outcomes of the Senior Officials Meeting have the potential of substantially influencing the agenda for this event.

The Senior Officials Meeting should focus on the identification of clear priorities and the development of a follow-up document which will feed into the discussions taking place at the Summit. The added value of the continental dimension should be clearly featured in the priorities for action in order to avoid duplications with other dialogue processes. Recommendations elaborated in this meeting should focus on both the operational and political dimensions of the Partnership and develop ideas on how to further deepen Africa-EU cooperation in the future. The actions of the Partnership should reflect the expectations and needs of citizens on both continents and deliver concrete results on the ground. In this sense, it is essential that priorities remain realistic and achievable.

The active involvement of member states is essential to achieving the objectives of the Partnership. In this sense, undertaking further actions to increase ownership of the Partnership initiatives is essential to its sustainability. Since the AUC has established a clear working framework with the RECs, their active involvement were one of the key achievements of the 2nd Action Plan yet a strategy on how the different institutional levels will interact should be further defined. Precise information on the outcomes of the initiatives is needed to assess the results and better target the future activities. Developing a monitoring and evaluation framework is thus also a key priority for the future of the Partnership.

On the thematic priorities, remittances, diaspora, mobility, labour migration, international protection and irregular migration remain high on the agenda for the future of the Partnership. Key issues related to mobility of students, visa delivery and the mutual recognition of academic certificates



should be addressed and policies to promote youth employment and training should be implemented. The fight against irregular migration should focus on the prosecution of criminal organisations which support these irregular flows but also on addressing the root causes of those flows, notably through the promotion of good governance in countries of origin and destination.

4. Thematic priority areas

a) Remittances

In 2012, an estimated 30 million African migrant workers sent at least US\$60 billion in remittances to support more than 120 million family members back home. However, the very high transaction costs to and within Africa compared to other regions of the world has generated strong incentives to resort to informal flows. Informality has several drawbacks; consumer protection is weakened in terms of speed and safety and the prospects for financial inclusion are diminished. It is thus crucial to attract political attention to this issue, stressing the potential development impact of remittances.

The statistical measurement of remittances must improve in order to fully appreciate their impact on national accounts and their potential for economic development. Furthermore, the regulatory framework for remittances in receiving countries should be modified in order to promote competition, upgrade payments infrastructure and authorise access-promoting technologies. In addition, special attention must be given to regulatory aspects in the originating countries which may impede the flows of remittances and create incentives for informality. A proportionate balance must be struck between the desire to combat unlawful use of financial infrastructure and to facilitate legitimate humanitarian needs. The financial inclusion potential of remittances must be fully exploited by encouraging banks and beneficiaries to use the disbursement of remittances as an opportunity to provide access to a basic financial services package. Furthermore, financial education and literacy as well as microenterprise credit should be provided.

While some actions have been supported at country level, a regional approach would be very effective in creating general awareness on the need to act in the area of remittances. In other regions, peer pressure and the sharing of successful experiences have been strong elements in spurring individual countries to take action in the field of remittances. In this context, special attention should be given to the proposed African Institute for Remittances (AIR), launched in June 2010 with a grant from the European Commission and implemented by the World Bank, with collaboration from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). It will be a specialised institute of the African Union, located in an AU member state. The major roles for the Institute are visualised in the areas of applied research, technical assistance and capacity-building, private sector engagement and advocacy towards the policy makers and authorities of AU



Member States. Its short term goals will focus on improving the quality of data on remittances in the region and enabling regulatory reform of the framework for remittances and payment systems. Its longer term objectives will aim at promoting financial inclusion by improving the access of remittance beneficiaries to financial products and financial literacy, as well as extending the geographical coverage of remittance delivery channels.

The final decision on its location will be taken in January 2014, just before the closing by April 2014 of the joint project which will have financed its design and creation. During the interim period which will follow, the AUC and the host country will negotiate a hosting agreement and budget and the Institute will be staffed and set up to be fully operational by 2015. Another important part of AIR transition period activities will be to set up a peer group of African countries interested in taking a pioneer role through their central banks, ministries of finance or other official agencies. The creation of AIR is not an end in itself, on the contrary, it is just the beginning of a program of activities designed to impact the capacity of countries to manage their own remittances agenda. In the longer term therefore, support mechanisms will also be required.

Key points raised during the discussion session:

- Measures should be put in place to reduce the cost of remittances within Africa and between Africa and the EU by 5 percentage points
- Efforts should be undertaken to increase the volume of formal remittances by 20%. However, diminishing informal flows is a difficult task as it involves issues of trust and privacy. Enabling additional places (such as post offices) to transfer money would make formal remittances channels more accessible to the population.
- Financial inclusion should be advanced in view of economic and social development. In this regard, financial literacy programmes as well as regional awareness campaigns on efficient use of remittances should be supported.
- The quality and amount of data available remains low and several countries do not produce reliable data on remittances. Also, the means of data collection on remittances vary between countries, making comparability difficult. Data on remittances is essential to capture the importance and role of the flows for the development of the country and therefore to give incentives to governments to put the issue on the top of their agenda.
- The Send Money Africa Database is a good source of information, but is not being widely consulted. It covers 26 corridors and includes information on exchange rates and costs. There are 7 websites like this one around the world which are certified by the World Bank and which offer comparative information on remittances companies thus pushing them to offer competitive prices.



- There is a need to strengthen the legal framework governing remittances transfers as well as the general payment systems infrastructures in order to increase competition and transparency of markets. One of the major challenges to improving transparency and reducing costs of remittances is the exclusivity agreements existing between remittances transfers companies and African countries.
- Supporting establishment of the AIR for which the main tasks should be to produce applied research, and to undertake capacity building and advocacy activities, should be a priority. The potential hosting countries for the AIR include Egypt, Djibouti, Kenya and Mauritius in which fact finding missions and meetings with government officials were undertaken. The location of the Institute is still to be decided and it should become fully operational by 2015.

b) Mobility and Labour Migration

‘MME on the Move’, produced by the EU funded MME Partnership Support Project, takes stock of the migration, mobility, employment and higher education strategies, policies, programmes and projects of 6 African RECs, namely: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The information gathered for this report consists in extensive desk research as well as interviews with key stakeholders conducted between December 2010 and January 2013.

Mobility is closely linked to regional economic integration, which is a fundamental objective of the 6 RECs, due to the positive development impacts it should hold. All RECs targeted by this report have free movement agreements and are working on rolling them out. ECOWAS was the first REC to adopt its free movement Protocol in 1979. The first 2 phases of the free movement regime, namely the right of entry, the abolition of visa requirements and the right of residence are in the process of being implemented but face low and uneven domestication. Implementation of the third phase, the right of establishment, is yet to start. Harassment and corruption at borders, the lack of cooperation between operatives at the border post level and extortion at road security checkpoints are significant obstacles to mobility. The EAC’s 2010 Common Market Protocol and its Annex on the Free Movement of Persons calls for the establishment of a common system of national identification and travel documents. The EAC stands out as the REC most actively pursuing free movement and benefits from a relatively strong commitment from its five partner states. However, reports show that the implementation of the Protocol was lagging behind schedule and that its implementation is fragmented. ECCAS’ free movement regime hinges on its 1983 ECCAS Treaty. Yet it is only effectively implemented between four ECCAS Member States which are in fact applying an



Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa Protocol. COMESA's 2001 Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence and SADC's 2005 Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons in SADC are not yet in force, as they have not been ratified by a sufficient number of Member States. Security concerns, as well as economic disparities between Member States are regarded as barriers to scaling up mobility. IGAD plans to introduce a free movement regime as part of its efforts to accelerate regional integration. However, given the precarious peace and security landscape and scarce national socio-economic resources in parts of the region, it is hard to imagine that it will take off any time soon.

As overlapping memberships of RECs in Africa add to the challenge of scaling up mobility, Inter-REC cooperation has emerged as an important mechanism to address these obstacles. COMESA, EAC and SADC's plans to establish the Tripartite Free Trade Area were launched in 2011 and are an example of such inter-REC cooperation. Several regional initiatives related to border management have also spurred mobility. These include the establishment of one stop border posts, the introduction of simplified trade regimes as well as the harmonisation and mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications. Overall, more evidence of the potential development results of mobility, as well as the socio-economic loss if mobility is not intensified, may help to convince decision makers to put their political weight behind mobility commitments. In order to facilitate their implementation, mobility frameworks need to be translated into feasible, prioritised and well-sequenced actions.

Key points raised during the discussion session:

- In order to advance continental integration in Africa, a common framework to promote mobility should be developed. In the EU experience, free movement was first implemented at a limited scale and extended little by little. The same approach should be followed in Africa, starting first by implementation of free movement protocols at REC level and then building on these achievements to reach the continental level. Further information on the lessons learnt from the ECOWAS and EU experience could help advance intra-African mobility.
- Security concerns are often cited as one of the main impediments to labour mobility, yet experience of countries which have liberalised their migration policies has proven them to be generally unfounded. Security concerns should be addressed through effective border management and the strengthening of capacities for border agencies. In addition, initiatives to facilitate trade at borders and enforce procedure to reduce corruption were also mentioned as priorities for action.
- Coordination of professional services between African countries is a priority to establish well managed labour migration mechanisms. This could be supported by the development of labour market information systems at regional and continental levels.



In this regard, good practices such as the TOTKEN Programme, the *Repertoire Opérationnel Africain des Métiers et Emplois* (ROAME) and the TVET system should be further promoted.

- Further efforts to encourage mobility between Africa and the EU should also be undertaken. Priorities for action in this regard should be related to visa facilitation as well as facilitation of mobility for students and business persons. The issue of the mutual recognition of academic certificates and the portability of pension and other social benefits should also be tackled. Policy dialogue between the EU and Africa on further advancing mobility through circular migration and labour migration should be strengthened.
- Technical cooperation between labour market institutions in Africa and in Europe could greatly facilitate labour migration between continents. In this regard, capacity building activities for public employment services to better deal with labour migration should be a priority. Furthermore, legal frameworks on labour and social security should be harmonised and systems for the recognition of skills and qualifications should be set up.
- By their cross-cutting nature, employment and economic development are crucial nexus topics of migration governance. Thus, the development and implementation of comprehensive employment and migration policies could contribute to reducing the risks of international labour migration and benefit the economies of countries of origin and destination.

c) Trafficking in Human Beings

The EU approach to trafficking in human beings focuses on prevention, prosecution, protection and assistance, repatriation and reintegration of victims and is reflected in a comprehensive legislative and policy framework. The EU also developed a strong external dimension to addressing trafficking in human beings (THB) based on the 2009 Action Oriented Paper on strengthening the EU external dimension on action against trafficking in human beings. In this framework, priority countries and regions outside the EU with which stronger cooperation should be developed have been identified, focusing on a better coordination of activities and programming as well as awareness raising among government officials, NGOs and citizens.

The ILO estimates that 200 000 to 300 000 children are trafficked and/or smuggled each year in West Africa, and we know that similar figures are also true for other regions of Africa. A large number of victims of human trafficking of African origin are transported to Western Europe and other parts of the world, according to a recent UNODC report on trafficking in persons. The thin line between trafficking and smuggling is disappearing in particular for young men who are exploited for



purposes of drug trafficking. Exploitative labour, organ harvest, child soldiery and forced marriages are all forms of trafficking which can also be observed on the African continent. The numerous consequences of THB on Africa include human capital drain, fuelling organised crime and money laundering. Social unrest is also a consequence of THB in both source and destination countries as well as the denial of basic rights of millions of victims.

Almost all countries in Africa have adopted legal frameworks to strengthen the fight against THB, many have amended existing legislations, others have enacted specific legislations and some countries have established specific institutional frameworks like the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other Related Matters of Nigeria (NAPTIP). Based on the 4 P's approach, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership, most countries have baseline studies on the magnitude, trends and patterns of trafficking and have developed awareness raising campaigns. Many countries and regions in Africa have set up policy frameworks for the protection of victims and the protection of children. National referral mechanisms along with short stay shelters and provision of psychological support have also been set up. In terms of persecution and partnership, stronger cooperation amongst various law enforcement agencies and civil society actors has led to the rescue of more than 1000 victims in the last 5 years across the continent. In terms of international cooperation on law enforcement and victim care, numerous operations have taken place and led to arrests and rescue of victims.

Looking at good practices from Nigeria, NAPTIP is currently implementing a 5 year strategic plan (2012-2017) clustered around 5 main issues: public enlightenment strategies, platforms for victim protection and assistance, law enforcement and prosecutorial responses, partnerships at national, regional and international levels, and organisational development. The measures undertaken for victim support include the establishment of a trafficking trust fund and the strategic partnerships established with Government poverty alleviation and skills development Agencies. Although the national law provides that victims have the right to seek personal relief, it is often the case that they do not have the means to do so. NAPTIP has thus signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government's Legal Aid Council in order to ensure that they can access these services for free. Numerous policy documents supporting victim protection have also been set up in Nigeria, such as the national policy on the protection and assistance to trafficked persons along with its strategic implementation framework.

As THB is a crime, greater synergies between law enforcement and social workers should be sought in order to better identify the victims. It is therefore essential that domestic law enforcement agencies be continuously trained and sensitised to this issue. There is also a need for continuous judicial and legislative reforms to ensure justice for victims and to make judicial processes less cumbersome. The absence of coordination between the legal and institutional frameworks on human trafficking in



many countries and the barriers to law enforcement and social intervention urges for stronger international cooperation. Finally, poor communication and information sharing amongst destination and source countries has highlighted the need for protocols on safe return and repatriation of victims.

Key points raised during the discussion session:

- Further efforts should be undertaken to build operational cooperation between Africa and the EU both at political level and at peer-to-peer level, including through the improvement of information exchange focusing on the various means and methods being used and developing concrete operational protocols. For example, legislative advisory bodies could be set up to promote peer-to-peer cooperation between states. Efforts to strengthen international cooperation include the setting up of AFRIPOL, the development of a model law on THB by the Arab League and the AU-COMMIT campaign working towards implementation at REC level. However, there are challenges due to the different specificities of THB in different regions of Africa. A multidisciplinary approach should be adopted with a focus on the implementation of polices.
- Efforts to increase the level of prosecution of traffickers need to be undertaken both in source countries and in countries of destination. However, challenges such as the high level of corruption and collusion amongst officials and the high economic incentives of THB need to be addressed.
- There is the need to address the root causes of THB notably through awareness raising campaigns aimed at informing potential victims and vulnerable groups along the major trafficking routes. Prevention efforts should focus both on the demand and the supply side.
- There is a clear need to ensure a proper international referral of victims of THB composed of clear terms of reference and standard operating procedures.
- Joint investigation operations should be promoted with specific focus on justice cooperation, Protocols and MoUs. MoUs have been signed between different countries and cover various aspects of the fight against THB, such as rescuing and return, joint investigations, information sharing or victim care, but they should always remain detailed and tackle specific issues.
- Exchange of good practices between the EU and the various RECs should be promoted as well as between individual African states and RECs.
- Awareness-raising among law enforcement agencies is needed along with the promotion of a common understanding.
- Further support for the implementation of existing tools and legislation in close collaboration with civil society actors should be provided.



- Further efforts should be undertaken to identify victims of trafficking as distinct from smuggled migrants and irregular migrants. In order to do so, leading victims to collaborate in the judicial processes by accepting to speak openly is a priority.

d) Diaspora

There is no framework on how the EU and Africa should cooperate on Diaspora issues, but there is an Africa-Europe platform aimed at improving the capacities and impact of Diaspora organisations actively working on development in Africa. In terms of policies on diaspora for development, there are enough ideas and understanding to move away from generalities and into more specific practicalities. Challenges and future steps should focus on capacity building for African individuals and Diaspora organisations, strengthen collaboration with African countries and with the pan-African instruments that can bring added value.

On the first point, the priorities are to multiply structures, augment formality and boost professionalism of Diaspora organisations engaged in development. The legal and governance structures of these organisations need to be enhanced and professional capacity building activities need to be undertaken in order for them to become more competitive. Furthermore, Diasporas tend to have thematic expertise but require further capacity building on development issues.

Several African countries have set up specific institutions working on Diaspora issues, but there still is a clear need to strengthen the structures of these institutions and set them up in countries that have not established them yet. It is also essential that the specific needs of the country are identified and communicated to the Diaspora in order to match the demand and supply of Diaspora expertise. Finally, capacity building activities between Diaspora organisations and civil society organisations in countries of origin on how to operate in countries of origin as well as on monitoring and evaluation is crucial to ensuring the success of Diaspora involvement in development.

At the pan-African level, action is to be targeted at policy rather than at practical level. A pan-African position on the creation of Diaspora ministries or similar institutions could serve as a guideline for countries that wish to develop or reinforce the structures in place. Many African countries have recognised dual citizenship but several countries still need to do so and this could be advocated for at the pan-African level. Finally, a mapping of Diaspora initiatives could be undertaken at pan-African level in order to share information on what has already been done and what are the good practices.



Key points raised during the discussion session:

- Diaspora for development actions need to be more strongly linked to the AU-EU Partnership. While some results have been achieved, there is room to do more and pick up the pace; in doing so we should build on what already exists. Diaspora engagement for development calls for a holistic approach that does not distinguish between integration – participation and inclusion in host countries – and development policies. For the Diaspora who wants to be engaged in the development of Africa, these two areas are married and the policy responses, including access to funding, need to take this into account.
- Notwithstanding the basic element of connectedness that exists between the African Diaspora and their country of origin, the African Diaspora should be seen as development actors in their own right.
- The institutional capacities of governments to effectively engage with Diaspora communities should be supported. Annual meetings of African Diaspora officials to exchange experiences, ideas and practices and monitoring progress could for example be convened. The AUC could further encourage African states to develop effective Diaspora engagement policies and programmes.
- The capacities of Diaspora organisations involved in development should be strengthened in order to increase their development impact in Africa. A mapping of existing Diaspora initiatives would help raise awareness and inform Diaspora communities.
- Efforts to link up diaspora organisations with their counterparts in countries of origin, such as governments, municipality, private sector and civil society organisations should be undertaken.
- Diaspora engagement in policy development both in Europe and Africa should be strengthened. In particular, policy actions on integration and dual citizenship should be undertaken, against the background of political participation, rights and development opportunities.
- Further information is needed on the African Diaspora communities and joint research between Europe and Africa could be undertaken in this regard.
- Targeted actions could be supported such as the establishment of an African Diaspora volunteering programme or thematic Diaspora-development actions linked to specific expertise.



e) International Protection

The past two years have been characterised by a number of unrests in a number of regions on the continent. In the Great Lakes region, widespread violence has led to extensive displacements. In July 2013 only, 66 000 people fled Kivu to neighbouring countries. In the Central African Republic, there has been an estimated 206 000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and nearly 63 000 refugees that fled into Cameroon, Chad, DRC and Congo. In Darfur, since the beginning of the year, more than 300 000 IDPs were recorded in addition to 30 000 refugees that fled to south eastern Chad. Conflict between North and South Sudan led to the displacement of 228 000 Sudanese who fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia. In Somalia, the situation has not evolved much; 1.1 million IDPs and nearly 1 million refugees remain in the region. There have also been some positive developments including the peaceful elections in Mali in July and in August this year which have raised hope for the return and reintegration of about 340 000 IDPs and more than 175 000 refugees, who had been forced to flee their country since January 2012.

Across the region, many states have continued to provide asylum and meet their international protection obligations to large numbers of refugees. However, several challenges remain for African states to fully meet their international obligations. These include the lack of capacity, the security challenges, the broad migration issues as well as the socio economic pressures. Delivering protection is first and foremost a state responsibility, yet it is more effective when implemented in partnership and in a spirit of responsibility sharing between states together with international organisations and civil society. In Kenya, with the escalation of security incidents in Dadaab, the Kenyan authorities, donors and UNHCR have reinforced the security partnership project and as a result there has been a reduction of the security incidents since the beginning of the year. A similar security package is under consideration for Uganda to assist governments in overcoming the security challenges. In South Africa, the government attempted to curb asylum applications which resulted in stricter border controls. As a result, UNHCR advocated to reopen regional application offices and to share best practices and minimum standards for establishing reception centres.

Finding durable solutions for refugees is a priority but several challenges remain. The protracted nature of many refugee situations, and the limited number of refugees accessing resettlement and local integration as well as the impact of globalisation on human mobility have led UNHCR and states to develop comprehensive solutions to refugees. A regional comprehensive strategy from the DRC can be cited as a good practice. It foresees the use of resettlement for 50 000 Congolese refugees combined with local integration opportunities and information sharing on safe return to the country of origin. Similar comprehensive approaches have been devised for the Somali refugees as well as for the Malians which include local integration, resettlement and voluntary repatriation. In relation to local solutions for refugees, UNHCR has focused on self reliance and livelihood



opportunities, promoting peaceful coexistence among refugees and host communities and ensuring access to land, housing and basic services. A good experience took place in eastern Sudan with the transitional solution initiative aimed at turning camps into settlements and at supporting the government in allowing access for refugees to public services. In Benin, residence permits have been issued to nearly 4000 refugees who opted for local integration.

In terms of the key challenges faced by IDPs, difficult access to regions has sometimes prevented the provision of assistance. The promotion of accession and implementation of the African Union Convention for the protection and assistance of IDPs in Africa has continued to be a key priority area in the region; 39 Member States have signed the Convention while 19 completed the ratification process. As good practices, Kenya has adopted a legislation and policy framework for the protection of IDPs and Somalia is currently drafting a new law on the same issue.

In conclusion, conflict, violence and human rights abuses continue to uproot an increasing amount of persons and the newly displaced are often simply adding to the unresolved situations and for whom no solution is foreseen. Growing levels of poverty and unemployment have proven to be sources of social and political unrest in addition to climate change, urbanisation, food, water and energy insecurity. Building, strengthening and sustaining protection systems for all displaced persons including refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs is and must remain a common goal.

Key points raised during the discussion session:

- Further efforts should be put in place to implement international and regional instruments for the protection of refugees. The establishment of a joint Africa-EU mechanism supporting the implementation of those instruments could be set up.
- International instruments related to the protection of migrants such as the 1990 Convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families should be ratified by all European and African states.
- Promote the exchange of information and good practices between RECs on the protection of refugees in the framework of mixed migration flows, as well as the sharing and training on the relevant instruments for effective border management. Ensuring the proper implementation of free movement agreements can support international protection of migrants and refugees as people are allowed to move freely within the region and access employment in other countries.
- Encourage the links between emergency reactions and long term solutions focusing on setting up survival means and community resilience for effected populations, including local populations. This is crucial in order to mitigate conflicts arising between refugees and local populations.



- Other migrants such as victims of trafficking or even labour migrants are also in need of protection and international safeguards specifically targeted to them should be put in place. However, it is very important to clearly distinguish them from refugees, in order to ensure the proper protection of their rights.

f) Irregular migration

Irregular migration flows are inter-connected making it difficult to limit their analysis and response to the regional sphere. Especially as smuggling and trafficking networks operate trans-regionally and inter-continently. Practical illustrations of this from the Horn of Africa region include the Eritreans who leave their region through Sudan and into Libya and the Somalis who flee through the Arabian Peninsula. In many regions, displacement and irregular flows are becoming more complex and organised. Flows are increasingly mixed combining regular, irregular and forced migration. In parallel, migration flows are increasingly less tolerated and increasingly restricted and censured. Government and mandated agencies have little understanding of the scale, scope and dynamics of flows which results in weak, misguided, arbitrary or non-existent policies.

There are continued intra and intercontinental irregular migration flows going to Europe via Libya, South Africa and Saudi Arabia and increased labour migration flows are taking place from the Horn of Africa to the Middle East. Key drivers of migration include impoverishment, insecurity, social oppression, political oppression and natural disasters. Other factors such as the globalised possibilities to travel and study abroad, the phenomenon of chain migration, and strong cultures of migration can also explain migration trends. However, as border controls become stricter, alternative migration routes are found. Collusion and corruption of state officials, anti-immigrant sentiments in transit and destination countries as well as the criminalisation of migrants continue to be realities. In addition, there seems to be growing criminality linked to migration, namely through smuggling and trafficking, and an increasing trend to the 'commoditisation of migrants', thereby creating an economy of mixed migration.

Against this background, the human rights of migrants are under threat in a wide variety of ways, notably through aggravated smuggling, detention, serious abuses by border officials, refoulement and deportation, kidnappings, sexual violence, trafficking and deaths at sea. There are numerous national laws, regional agreements and international commitments defending rights of individuals in irregular and mixed migration flows but their application seems arbitrary and contradictory. In the current situation, further reflection should be done on the aspirations of the new generations in a globalised world with growing inequalities and the way to handle people who claim they will repeatedly risk their lives to satisfy those aspirations. Furthermore, destination countries need to reconcile their needs for labour and their desire to control the inflows of migrants.



When discussing alternatives to irregular migration it is essential to recall that irregular migration is a fairly recent phenomenon as people didn't always have the ability, freedom or opportunity to move. Future cooperation should focus on promoting inter-regional dialogue and policy harmonisation as well as the accession and adherence to key international conventions and laws related to migrant rights. The role of corruption and collusion of state officials in facilitating smuggling and trafficking should be recognised and further actions to fight it should be undertaken. Finally, regularisation and circular/temporary migration channels should be promoted at bilateral level.

Key points raised during the discussion session:

- The root causes of migration could be addressed by exploring regional mobility channel, notably through the implementation of international and regional legislations and the harmonisation of national legal instruments. Better information on the push and pull factors of migration should be provided in order to efficiently address the root causes of irregular migration.
- Employment opportunities for the youth should be promoted in countries of origin as well as social protection mechanisms for vulnerable groups. The root causes of migration are often poverty and unemployment or underemployment and these issues should be addressed through education and training as well as encouraging young entrepreneurship.
- Awareness-raising campaigns should be undertaken in origin, transit and destination countries. In countries of destination and transit, campaigns should focus on the dangers of irregular migration and the realities of the situation of irregular migrants in destination countries. In countries of destination, campaigns could aim at changing the perception of the local population on irregular migrants and to depoliticise discourses about migration.
- Stronger cooperation between source, transit and destination countries should take place to improve border management procedures and strengthen document security and improve visa delivery systems. As much as sound border management procedures are needed to manage migration, security oriented approaches to border management tend to encourage irregular flows and push migrants to finding alternative routes. Several good practices of cooperation between African States and the EU Member States already exist in the area of border management and document security. Cooperation should also help enhance circular migration schemes and ensure the human rights of migrants.



- Promoting voluntary return of irregular migrants should be a priority along with the implementation of readmission and reintegration procedures. However, return of migrants needs to be done with a humanist approach as it is perceived as a failure in many cultures.
- Measures to eradicate corruption and collusion of public officials and strengthen the capacities of law enforcement agencies should be sought to address impunity and persecution.

5. Concluding remarks

The objective of this Senior Officials Meeting was to agree on a set of priorities for action in the area of migration for the next three years. The key recommendations which came out of the working group discussions were summarised in a draft concept paper and distributed to the participants for discussion. The document was amended following the discussion which took place during the final plenary session of the meeting and will then be sent out to participants for further comments. The next few months will aim at finalising the document before presenting the results to the Heads of State for endorsement at the Africa-EU Summit in April 2014.

A committee composed of representatives from the European Commission and the African Union Commission as well as representatives from a selected amount of African and European states will be set up to follow-up the process of finalising the document and preparing it for endorsement by the Heads of States. This Committee could then also be tasked with the monitoring of the implementation of the Partnership for the next three years. Representatives present at the Meeting agreed that the finalised document should be called an Action Plan, in accordance with the name of the document agreed upon at the Senior Officials Meeting in Brussels in September 2010. The Heads of State will then decide formally if they wish to name it differently at the Summit in April in 2014.