

COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



ECOWAS COMMISSION

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Migration Dialogue For West Africa (MIDWA)

Experts Meeting

Abidjan, 23rd and 24th August 2016

Final Report

INTRODUCTION

1. The 2016 MIDWA Experts Meeting was held at Novotel Hotel in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, on 23 and 24 August, 2016. The meeting aimed at identifying challenges and solutions to migration related issues.
2. The following member States were represented at the Meeting:
 - Republic of Benin
 - Burkina Faso
 - Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
 - Republic of Cabo Verde
 - Republic of Ghana
 - The Gambia
 - Republic of Guinea
 - Republic of Guinea-Bissau
 - Republic of Liberia
 - Republic of Mali
 - Republic of Niger
 - Federal Republic of Nigeria
 - Republic of Senegal
 - Republic of Sierra-Leone
 - Togolese Republic

Also represented was:

- The Islamic Republic of Mauritania

3. The list of participants is attached as an appendix to this report.

I. OPENING CEREMONY

4. In his address, Mr. Laouali CHAIBOU, ECOWAS Commissioner for Trade, Customs, Free Movement of Persons and Tourism warmly welcomed all participants to this significant Experts meeting on the Dialogue on Migration for West Africa. He expressed his gratitude to the people and Government of Cote d'Ivoire and fairly appreciated the quality of reception and facilities provided to the delegations as well as accommodation services provided towards a successful meeting.

He furthermore commended the commitment of the International Migration Organisation (IOM), a technical partner of the ECOWAS Commission.

Commissioner CHAIBOU urged participants to engage in reflecting on migration related key issues as a real source of concern, specifically security issues, the impact of free movement of persons, climate change, the return and reintegration of migrants and the strengthening of cooperation and partnership.

Since migration cannot exist without security, Commissioner CHAIBOU indicated that he expected the experts to come up with innovative solutions to liaise security requirements and the need to improve movement of persons and goods, as migration must, under no circumstance, jeopardize the States' internal security.

5. While improving the management framework of migration in our region, it is necessary perhaps essential to collect statistical data on migration flows as a key to our success. This will help identify policies and strategies most suitable for the maximization of positive achievements from migration and thus foster economic and social development of our countries. That is the reason why the statistics departments of the ECOWAS Member States shall from now on be at the center stage of the Dialogue on Migration for West Africa (MIDWA). The implementation of a Focus group on migration data comes as a result of this approach.
6. The 2nd speech delivered by Mrs. Audrey-Anne ROCHELLE MAGNE, Officer in Charge of International Aid and Cooperation from the European Union Delegation, placed an emphasis on the new migration partnership framework agreed by the countries of origin, transit and destination of the migration, following the Valetta Summit in November 2015.

Mrs. ROCHELLE MAGNE, thus, reaffirmed that all policies, instruments and resources of the EU will contribute to support that partnership framework. This is a crucial point because, although several instruments are at the disposal of the UE, a strong coordination is needed before they can be implemented.

To that end, funding allocated to fighting against the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacements will be upgraded and the implementation of programmes will be more flexible.

7. The third speech was given by Mr. Markus REISLE, Migration expert, Chief of the World Programme on Migration and Development from the Department of Development and Cooperation of the Swiss Confederation. He reiterated the full commitment of Switzerland to work alongside the West African region in its global migration management strategy, while rejecting the statement that the West African region is mainly the region of origin for most migrants to Europe. According to Mr. REISLE, 80 to 90% of West Africa mobility takes place in the West African region. Migration, then, should be understood and captured as a world phenomenon experienced locally, and it must constitute an opportunity for sustainable development, and be a source of innovation and inspiration.
8. The 4th speaker, Mr. Charles KWENIN, IOM Senior Regional Adviser for sub-Saharan Africa suggested a holistic solution to migration related issues stating among others: the dismantling of irregular migration networks and the issue of travel and national identity documents.
He closed his address by commending the major progress of ECOWAS with regards to free movement of persons and by giving specific reference to the launching of the biometric identity card.

9. Mr. Moses KAI DOZ YEBLEH, Director for Migration Management in Liberia, also insisted on the significance of security within the strategy of migration management and wished all 15 ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania delegates fruitful deliberations.
10. In turn, Mr. Issiaka KONATE, General Manager for the Ivoirian Diaspora, representing the Minister for African Integration and the Ivoirian Diaspora, welcomed, on his behalf, the delegates in Cote d'Ivoire.

According to Mr. Konate, while migration answers to any citizen's basic right to mobility, it also comes with crucial challenges, particularly when it takes place in an irregular context.

He seized the meeting platform to underline the commitment of Cote d'Ivoire with respect to migrants' rights, noting that the country deploys impressive means for the implementation of care measures for the migrants upon their return to Cote d'Ivoire and the tightening of legislation in relation to human trafficking.

The General Manager concluded by solemnly announcing the proposal of the Head of State of Cote d'Ivoire to welcome MIDWA's headquarters in Abidjan.

He finally declared the MIDWAY 2016 Meeting open on behalf of the Minister for African Integration and the Ivoirian Diaspora.

II. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

11. The following bureau was established:
Chair : Liberia
Rapporteurs: - Ghana
- Guinea
- Cabo Verde

III. ADOPTION OF THE WORK AGENDA

12. The meeting adopted the following work Agenda:
 - a) **Opening Ceremony**
 - ✓ Mr Laouali CHAIBOU, ECOWAS Commissioner in charge of Trade, Customs, Free Movement of Persons and Tourism;
 - ✓ Audrey-Anne Rochelle, International Aid and Cooperation Officer, Delegation of the European Union in Cote d'Ivoire;
 - ✓ Mr. Markus REISLE, Migration expert, Chief of the World Programme on Migration and Development from the Department of Development and Cooperation of the Swiss Confederation.

- ✓ Mr. Charles Kwenin, IOM Senior Regional Adviser for sub-Saharan Africa;
- ✓ Mr. Moses Kai-Doz YEBLEH , Migration Management Officer;
- ✓ Mr. Issiaka KONATE, General Manager for Ivoirians Abroad, representing the Minister for African Integration and the Ivoirian Diaspora.

Election of the Bureau

- b) Review and adoption of the draft agenda**
- c) Review and adoption of the final report**
- d) Miscellaneous**

IV. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING

13. As an opening to the panels, two (02) introductory presentations were given.
14. The Project for the Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa was introduced by Mr. Frantz CELESTIN, FMM/IOM Programme Manager.
The project funded by the European Union within the framework of 10th EDF is aimed at strengthening capacities of the ECOWAS Commission, of member States and of the Civil Society.
15. Touching on MIDWA 2016 objectives: Mr. N’Faly SANOH, ECOWAS Director of Free Movement of Persons and Tourism shared the origin of this Dialogue inaugurated by ECOWAS in December 2005, as well as the main issues and concerns relative to migration management discussed consecutively in 2012 in Dakar, in 2014 in Accra and in 2015 in Nouakchott.
16. He then presented the Final Report of the Steering Committee Meeting held in Dakar, in February 2016. He focused on its institutional reorganization as well as its implementation towards a more sustainable and concerted action.
17. Following discussions, the meeting adopted the report of the Steering Committee held in February 2016 in Dakar and addressed recommendations to be approved by the ECOWAS Ministers of Security Meeting. They relate to :
- ❖ The implementation of the Steering Committee of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA)
 - ❖ The implementation of National Secretariats in Member States
 - ❖ The creation of seven (07) Thematic groups in relation with migration :
 - Group 1 : Border Management, trafficking, cross-border crime
 - Group 2 : Diaspora, West African Communities and/or Nationals
 - Group 3 : Professional Mobility and Student Exchange
 - Group 4 : Climate Change, Land Degradation, Desertification, Environment and Migration
 - Group 5 : Migration Statistics Data
 - Group 6 : Return, Readmission and Reintegration
 - Group 7 : Cooperation and partnership

- ❖ The Creation of a MIDWA Permanent Secretariat. Cote d'Ivoire expressed the desire to host MIDWA's headquarters in Abidjan.

Panel 1: Analyzing the link between free movement of persons and the upsurge of security related issues including terrorist attacks: How to maintain the balance and safeguard the community achievements?

18. Panel 1 was represented by the following speakers:

- **Moderator:** Mr. N'Faly SANOI, ECOWAS Director of Free Movement of Persons and Tourism
- **Burkina Faso :** Dr. Kassem Salam SOURWEMA, Free Movement Programme, Laboratory Citizenships
- **Cote d'Ivoire :** None
- **Liberia :** Moses K. YEBLEH, Manager Migration Management
- **Mali :** Division Commissioner Diakaridia DIALLO, Technical Adviser for the Ministry for Security
- **Niger :** None
- **Nigeria :** Stella B.TOLUWASE, Director , Ministry of Interior
- **Sierra Leone :** Mohamed U. KOROMA, Programme Officer, National Commission for Social Action

19. All of them took turn to underline the main causes to security threat, challenges and possible responses. The main points resulting from this panels are:

- Porosity of borders ;
- Reluctance of populations to collaborate with law enforcement officers ;
- Immensity of border areas and issues related to security networking ;
- Lack of materialization of borders ;
- Intra community conflicts and identity claims ;
- New forms of crime : Kidnapping, drug traffic, etc. ;
- Insufficiency of qualified human resources for trans-borders management ;
- Weak intelligence caused among others by a vast number of stakeholders taking part in countries' migration (Land management, Ministry of Security, Ministry in charge of the Diaspora and Ministry for Immigration).

20. Following discussions on suggestions made by the panelists to alleviate the challenges to security and to safeguard the community achievements linked to the ECOWAS Treaty on Free Movement of Persons, the MIDWA 2016 Experts Meeting recommends :

- Establishing satellite surveillance systems;
- Strengthening cooperation and mutually beneficial actions among countries;
- Warning Mechanism and collecting reliable information and database;
- Boundary delimitation and demarcation;
- Building of joint border posts;
- Harmonizing control procedures at borders posts;
- Strengthening inter-States dialogue, intelligence sharing and local governance of trans-border management;
- Strengthening capacities of law enforcement officers at borders posts and their collaboration with population;

21. The meeting furthermore agreed on the need to continue working on the implementation of mechanisms for free movement while strengthening and modernizing security devices and travel documents. The follow up mechanism of goods and persons transport vehicles must be replicated in all ECOWAS Member States.

Panel 2: Assessment of political, social and economic impact of Free Movement of persons in the Member States. What are the achievements of your country in the Free Movement field.

22. Panel 2 was represented by the following speakers:

- **Moderator** : Tony Luka ELUMELU, Principal Programme Officer, Free Movement of Persons and Migration;
- **Benin** : Assaba Gisele HONESSOU, Research Officer, INSAE Migration Focal Point;
- **Cabo Verde**: Ernestina Cila' R. RUSSO DE ALMEIDA, General Manager, Ministry of Interior.
- **Cote d'Ivoire** : Louis Philippe Goli KOUAME, Director Trade and Free Movement of Persons;
- **Ghana** : Bonaventure ADJAVOR, Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Guinea** : Camara Mohammed BAMBA, Vice Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- **Guinea-Bissau** : Toumane L. G. Balde, INE Planning and Control Division Manager;
- **Senegal** : Dr. Martin Pascal TINE, Director Legal and Consulate Affairs ;
- **The Gambia**: Foday GASSAMA, Regular Migration Officer;
- **Togo**: Babimle K. LAGNIE, Programme Officer, Ministry of Economy and Finance.

23. **Following discussions on suggestions made by the panelists on the impact of Free Movement of Persons**, an agreement was reached around the following salient points:

- Need to consider migration under its most social aspect (social prevention in the return country, compensations, access to education, etc.);
- Solidarity between Member States;
- Youth Employment ;
- Establishment of borders posts mixed patrols.

24. The meeting recommended:

- the creation of more detailed statistics data on the social and economic impact of the implementation of Protocol on Free Movement of Persons within the ECOWAS space;
- Removal of all levies and fees imposed on community citizens for residence card and stay in territories of Member States;
- The protection of migrants' rights in their host country.
- Compliance by migrants to host country Laws.

Panel 3: Analyze the consequences of interconnections between environment, desertification and the migration in ECOWAS space: How population reacts to the phenomena of desertification, land degradation and the environment?

25. Panel 3 was represented by the following speakers:

- **Moderator** : UNCCD, Barbara BENDANDI, Migration Programme Officer,
- **Burkina Faso** : Soumaila SAWADOGO, Population Statistician, National Institute for Statistics and Population;
- **ECOWAS** : Bernard Koffi Yao, ECOWAS Environnement P.P.O;
- **Mali** : Daouda Aba FANE, Population Statistician, National Institute for Statistics;
- **Niger** : Bouba HEINIKOYE, Director of the Niger Diaspora;
- **Senegal**: Mamadou Abdoulaye MBENGUE, Executive Secretary Enda DIAPOL.

26. Discussions focused on the evolution of biophysical and environmental issues in relation with migration. What mainly resulted from the discussions is:

- Populations in communities derive livelihood from the exploitation of natural resources and agriculture ;
- However, starting from the seventies, the region has gone through worsened climate change linked to consecutive drought. This has had a strong negative impact on harvest and the percentage of rural sector to national economies ;
- In coastal areas , soil erosion threatens the subsistence of cities and villages ;
- Climate change phenomenon, land degradation and coastal erosion lead to the migration of populations which then result in the overcrowding of cities, employment scarcity, insecurity and the surge of land conflicts.

27. **Following discussions on environment related issues and migration by the panelists, the meeting made the following recommendations:**

- To strengthen hydro agricultural infrastructures and the creation of cereal banks;
- To develop early warning systems;
- To promote research on the linkage between climate change, desertification, land degradation and migration ;
- To strengthen rules and procedures on land security and people migration ;
- To strengthen resilience capacities of populations through adaptation of seed diversity to climate change and land degradation ;
- To strengthen trans-boundary natural resources management through involvement and work mastery of local authorities ;
- To improve of management and safeguarding of forest resources.

Panel 4: Discuss opportunities and operational modalities of a better collaboration of partners for a better management of migration. What are the strengthening mechanisms of cooperation between partners?

28. Panel 4 was represented by the following speakers:

- **Moderator** : Charles KWENIN, IOM Senior Adviser for Sub-Saharan Africa
- **Switzerland** : Markus REISLE, Expert migration, Chief of Programme Global Migration and Development of the Confederation of Switzerland;
- **UNCCD** : Barbara BENDANDI, Migration Programme Officer ;
- **ICMPD** : Audrey JOLIVEL, Projects Manager;

- **G5 Sahel** : Sid'Ahmed Ely Mohamed ZNAGMI, Expert Defense and Security;
- **GIZ** : Bakary SANOU, GIZ Projects Manager;
- **Cote d'Ivoire**: Louis-Philippe Kouame GOLI, Director Free Movement ;
- **Nigeria**: Vincent Ifeanyichukwu ORIOKPA, Migration Chief Office.

29. Partners' action is based on identifying national and regional priorities, financing opportunities, monitoring activities and measure tools for the assessment of the impact of the implementation of projects.

All Technical partners and Fund Donors agreed to support any initiative that will efficiently monitor migration in West Africa. Their partnership enabled the development of several national policies for the management of migration.

30. Following discussions by the panelists on the subject of cooperation and partnership, the meeting came up with the following recommendations :

To Partners:

- Financial support to Member States for the harmonization of travel documents, training of immigration staff ;
- Financial support for the equipment of land border posts ;
- Financial and technical support for the achievement of trans-border cost-conscious projects;
- Support to the creation of youth and rural borders women employment.

To States :

- Continuous sensitization in specialized media in relation with citizens' rights and obligations on free movement;
- Implementation of the ECOWAS passports by Member States that have not yet complied with it;
- Census and biometric enrollment of citizens and establishment of identity documents ;
- Improvement of livelihood and work conditions of borders posts officers to fight against of borders' users harassments ;
- Adoption at the earliest of the African Union Strategy of Borders Management and adoption by Member States of the AU Convention on trans-border Cooperation;
- Strengthening of synergies between regional economic communities and the AU;
- Political commitment of the African continent through Ministers in charge of Environment/ Climate Change at COP 22 in Marrakesh in November 2016, to propose practical measures to address the impact of climate change and land degradation on migration and to promote green jobs ;
- Encourage the Rabat and Valetta processes to consider land degradation as a root cause of migration in West Africa and promote the development of mitigation measures;
- Involvement of the civil society as warning agents for sensitization in the fight against rackets.

To ECOWAS

- Harmonization of employment legislation, which diversity is a hindrance to free establishment ;
- Signature of preferred Specific agreements between ECOWAS and its immediate environment (Chad, Mauritania, etc.)
- Shared strategies for Security measures

V. MISCELLANEOUS

31. Networks and Civil Society organizations working on migration in West Africa, shared a common position in a statement that commended the ECOWAS Commission and its partners on regular Dialogue on Migration for West Africa (MIDWA) meetings. They join all stakeholders in the desire for its implementation and sustainability.

The Civil Society organizations also noted the persisting corruption habits at borders and once more instructed the political authorities of each ECOWAS country.

Fully committing to MIDWA, Mr. Abi SAMIR, Executive Director of Visions Solidaires, on behalf of Civil Society Networks and Organizations which work on West Africa migration, committed to organize, prior to the next MIDWA, a Civil Society Day. The event shall impulse a better ownership of most stakeholders from the Civil Society.

VI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

32. Following review and amendments, the meeting adopted the final report.

VII. VOTE OF THANKS

33. Participants wished to thank the highest authorities of Cote d'Ivoire for the warm and fraternal welcome extended to them during their stay in Abidjan as well as for the excellent premises provided to them for the proceedings of the meeting.

VIII. CLOSING CEREMONY

34. On behalf of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Laouali CHAIBOU, Commissioner for Trade, Customs, Free Movement of Persons and Tourism, expressed sincere thanks to the delegates for their invaluable contributions to the success of the meeting and wished them a safe return to their respective country.
35. He then expressed his profound gratitude to Technical and Financial Partners for their participation and constant commitment alongside ECOWAS in the management of migration related issues.
36. He furthermore assured them of the commitment of the ECOWAS Commission to work towards the implementation of the recommendations that proceeded from this meeting.

Done in Abidjan, this 24th august 2016

For the Meeting,

The Chair



Moses Kai-Doz YEBLEH

Manager Migration Management