



COMESA Presentation to the Global RCPs Meeting, 21-22 October 2015 Cairo, Egypt Background

The formation of the COMESA -RCP is the brainchild of the Fourth Meeting of COMESA of Ministers Responsible for Immigration which was held on 16 to 17th March 2011, in Lusaka, decided inter-alia on; The establishment of a Regional Consultative Process for (RCP) for COMESA region on Migration management that will coordinate the implementation of pilot programs and enhance the inter regional cooperation with other institutions such as the East African Community (EAC) and Southern Africa Development Community. To harmonize their Immigration instruments and policies.



The COMESA Thirty First meeting of the Council of Ministers held in Kampala, Uganda on 19-20 November 2012 endorsed the concept of establishing a COMESA RCP and granted authority to proceed with the launch of the COMESA-RCP in September 2013.

The COMESA-RCP known as, the Migration Dialogue for COMESA Member States (MIDCOM) was officially launched during a meeting co-hosted by the COMESA Secretariat and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on 26 and 27 September 2015, Lusaka Zambia.



Objectives:

The COMESA RCP is one of the RCPs formed as a pillar within a broader framework (OMESA) that includes other complementing pillars. The main objective is to provide:

- A platform for informal and non-binding dialogue on issues and opportunities related to migration management, trade, Labour such as:
- Improving the capacity of the governments to better manage migration, promote trade and investment oriented policies including substantial progress towards ratification and domestication of COMESA Protocols on Free Movement,
- Pursuing harmonized data collection system and promoting harmonized Immigration policy and labour legislation.



Specific areas of focus for MIDCOM include the following:

- i. Migration, trade and development;
- ii. Irregular migration;
- iii. Migration profiles
- iv. Capacity building in migration management;
- v. Forced migration;
- vi. Labour migration;
- vii. Migration policies, legislation and data collection.
- viii. Inter-agencies and inter-institutions cooperation
- ix. Information sharing mechanism



Membership:

Membership of the COMESA-MIDCOM remains open to COMESA member states as shown below:

Burundi, Comoros, D.R. Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Observers

Provisions have been made for Organizations such as Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Union, other RCPs, UN agencies and other Organizations to participate as Observers. Some criteria should, however be considered for granting observer status on adhoc basis



- i. the benefit to be derived by the COMESA-MIDCOM from the relevant experience, expertise and/or perspective on issues of concern to the COMESA-MIDCOM member countries of the prospective Observer(s);
- ii. the ability and readiness of the prospective Observer(s) to conduct complementary activities at national, regional and international levels that are of relevance to the MIDCOM objectives;
- iii. the ability of the prospective Observer to mobilize financial and other resources to support the proposed actions of the MIDCOM and/or their willingness to align their activities with those of the MIDCOM.



Participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and Other Interested Stakeholders

The COMESA-MIDCOM will provide for the participation of CSOs and other interested stakeholders in open sessions of its meetings. CSOs and other interested stakeholders may include the following:

- ☐ Recruitment agencies;
- ☐ Independent experts;
- ☐ Migrant associations;
- ☐ Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- ☐ Diaspora organizations;
- ☐ Trade union representatives;
- ☐ Private sector entities;



The participation of CSOs and other interested stakeholders will be determined

by the following:

1) Formal request for participation will be submitted to the Chair-in-Office,

2) The consideration for CSO and other interested stakeholder participation will be based on the following criteria:

i. Relevance, competence and operational interest on migration in general, and on labour migration issues more specifically;

ii. Regional, national, gender and thematic balance in the representations



3. The Chair-in-Office may, with due regard to the requirements of the agenda, invite relevant CSOs and other interested stakeholders to participate in open sessions of the meeting. The Chair-in-Office will duly inform the MIDCOM Member States of such invitation

Chairing arrangements – Bureau

The chair in office takes the responsibility to chair all sessions related to the Dialogue assisted by a co-chair, the country that organized the previous dialogue. Once a third country has been identified to host the following meeting, the three countries concerned will form the Bureau that includes: the outgoing Chair, the Chair-in-Office, and the forthcoming Chair.



Chairmanship

The Chairmanship of the Process will be held within parameters that provide for the following:

- 1) A voluntary rotational system;
- 2) Chairmanship should be aligned with that of the cycle of COMESA
- 3) The term of office will generally be for a two-year period;
- 4) The country that is the Chair-in-Office of the Process will play the role of host country for the Senior Officials Meetings.
- 5) The Chair-in-Office will lay out a written agenda for distribution to the entire membership covering the priority issues and/or actions it will consider during the course of its Chairmanship as well as proposed timeframes for meetings and consultations



Support Structure

- A support structure comprising COMESA Secretariat, government staff as well as experts and advisers seconded from other governments and from interested institutions shall be established to assist the Chair-in-Office in preparation of the Dialogue.
- The COMESA Secretariat shall be responsible for maintaining the archives and for other related matters such as ensuring that a webpage dedicated to the COMESA-MIDCOM is kept up-to-date.



Relationship with COMESA

The COMESA-MIDCOM will be one of the RCPs formed with migration as a pillar within a broader framework with other complementing pillars such as Trade and Labour. The COMESA MIDCOM is a process within a regional trade/economic body that has a mission and responsibilities to formulate binding agreements in many areas. The potential for the COMESA MIDCOM to directly influence multilateral agreements will be especially strong given its positioning within a regional common market. When these agreements are difficult to achieve, among member states, alternative solutions such as RCP can prove to be effective tool for interstate cooperation due to non-binding nature.



Format and Hosting of Meetings

The COMESA-MIDCOM will hold a Ministerial Meeting every two years hosted by the Chair-in-Office.

Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) will be convened once every year and will generally precede Ministerial-level consultations, when applicable.

At the end of each Meeting, the COMESA Secretariat will prepare a report on the proceedings of the Meeting.



The Ministerial Meetings and SOMs will be managed as follows:

- 1) The Chair-in-Office, in consultation with the membership, will determine according to the established agenda, which sessions will be open and which will be closed;
- 2) Observer entities to the MIDCOM may participate only in open sessions of the Ministerial Meetings at which they may be invited to take the floor as determined by the Chair-in-Office;



Operational and Technical Support

The COMESA Secretariat, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other development partners will provide operational as well as technical support to the COMESA MIDCOM. The IOM will provide additional administrative support to the Chair-in-Office, and will perform the following tasks:

- 1) Provide operational and technical support with the preparations, including the thematic discussions, agenda, reports, MIDCOM studies as well as any other substantive matters, particularly in relation to the Dialogue ;
- 2) Provide support for fundraising, follow-up activities and projects;



Funding

- 1) The Chair-in-Office will undertake to make the necessary material contributions, including the provision of equipment; meeting space for the meetings that take place in the course of its Chairmanship;
- 2) Encourage member states to fully fund their participants to participate in meetings.



Achievements:

- The MIDCOM process is fairly recent since it was just launched in September 2013. COMESA with the help of IOM is currently working to organize the first meeting of the meeting of MIDCOM probably towards end of this years
- However, since, it was launched, the MIDCOM has been commonly referenced as building trust among member states and increasing common understanding of migrations, trade and labour Migration element.



I thank you for your kind attention