



ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE:
Levers for Building the Africa we Want

STATEMENT BY

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**AT THE VIRTUAL OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
CONTINENTAL REVIEW MEETING OF THE GLOBAL
COMPACT MIGRATION (GCM) IN AFRICA AGENCY**

**1ST SEPTEMBER 2021
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

- ✓ **H.E. Vera Songwe, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary, ECA**
- ✓ **H.E. António Vitorino, Director General, IOM,**
- ✓ **Felipe González Morales, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants**
- ✓ **H.E Mrs. Tsion Teklu, State Minister for Economic Diplomacy and consular services**
- ✓ **H.E. Nasser Bourita, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Residing Abroad, Government of Morocco**
- ✓ **Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my pleasure to join you to this important meeting to review the implementation of the Global Compact on Safe, orderly and regular migration in Africa.

I also wish to thank the Government of Morocco for accepting to host this meeting in the continent. It was our wish to physically attend this important meeting in Morocco but due to the prevailing Covid 19, this could not happen as earlier envisaged.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to His Majesty the King of Morocco, who is also our Champion for Morocco, for his leadership not only on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration but also on migration issues in the continent.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The African Union Commission has been very active from the on start of the of the GCM process. We worked with all partners, including ECA and IOM, to support our Member States to actively engage in their contributions to the development of the initial texts to the draft GCM. Through the Common African Position on the Global Compact on Migration, we consistently supported our African Group in New York to actively engage in the International negotiations sessions of the final text of the GCM.

We are very glad that through these efforts, the final text reflected most of the issues that are close to our continent's migration agenda and aspirations.

To further show our commitment and interest in the GCM, the Chairperson of the AU Commission H.E Moussa Faki, was personally present in the opening session of the International Conference on Migration that adopted the GCM in Marrakesh, Morocco in 2018. This was a clear sign that the Commission underscores the importance of the GCM in supporting our Member States in strengthening migration governance in Africa from the highest level.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to inform this meeting that the continent has made very commendable progress in the implementation of the GCM in Africa since its adoption in Morocco. Key among these efforts is the establishment and operationalization of 3 Migration centers in Morocco, Sudan and Mali to address various objectives of the GCM. I am happy to inform this meeting that The African Observatory Centre in Morocco is now operational and has started its work to support AU Member States and RECs to collect, and utilize disintegrated migration data to inform policy development and implementation in Africa as per Objective 1 of the GCM.

Additionally, the African Centre for the Study and Research in Migration in Mali has also been operationalized as well. This Centre will be critical in promoting research and capacity building to AU Member States on migration Governance and by extension the implementation of various objectives of the GCM. On its part, the Continental Operation Centre in Sudan is in the final process of being operationalized to support our Member States in addressing irregular migration, particularly the prevention of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in the continent.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Commission, working closely with our partners, has also developed a draft Plan of Action on the implementation of the GCM in Africa for our Member States during the upcoming STC on Migration, Refugees and IDPs in November, 2021. It is our hope that once adopted by the STC, this plan of Action will provide clear priorities and coordination framework on the implementation of the GCM in Africa in the coming years. This will also

Further, in addressing Objectives 9 and 10 of the GCM, the Commission has also drafted policy documents on the prevention of trafficking in persons and Smuggling of migrants, particularly women and children in Africa. These policy documents, inspired by the rich policy text of the GCM, will support our Member States in addressing the challenges associated with irregular migration in the Africa, through harmonization of policy framework, coordinated approach; among other measures.

Other efforts include the implementation of the Joint Labor Migration Program that will go a long way in promoting decent work, including the promotion of other measures as captured in 18 and 19 of the GCM. Our African Institute for Remittances in Nairobi Kenya is also at forefront in supporting our Member States in promoting sound policies in issues of remittances and fostering financial inclusion of African Migrants and diaspora in their host countries and countries of origin.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Besides these efforts mentioned above, we still have a lot to do to effectively implement the GCM in the continent. We also have to appreciate the fact that the implementation of the GCM in Africa continues to face numerous challenges. For example, the lack of predictable resources by relevant States implementation agencies and the lack of capacity in these institutions has posed a huge challenge in the implementation process.

On the other hand, the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic in the continent, that has not only claimed many lives in the continent but also shrunk the much available resources; has posed a challenge in the implementation efforts of the GCM as well.

Additionally, in some other instances, the lack of coordinated approach to support Member States and RECs in the implementation process at national regional and continental levels; has provided a lacuna in harmonization of reporting tools of the GCM. However, despite these challenges, it is encouraging to note that there are a number of AU Member States that innovatively devised ways of implementing the GCM within its national framework, based on their national and regional priorities and specificities.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

This forum therefore provides a unique opportunity for the continent to reflect on how best we can implement the Compact, despite numerous challenges we are facing, including the Covid 19 pandemic. Since the GCM is a living document, there is need for all stakeholders to join efforts with Member States and RECs; in mobilizing necessary resources to build the capacity of relevant national institutions in effectively implement the GCM in the continent. Member States should also ensure that they leave no one behind in the planning and implementation process of the Compact since we all have a role to play.

On our part, the AU Commission will continue prioritizing the implementation of the GCM in the continent in all its migration governance initiatives and programs. The Commission further intends to mobilize necessary political support by all AU Member States to prioritize GCM implementation within their national planning framework.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

In conclusion, we are looking forward to receiving the outcome report of this forum that will go a long way in supporting our necessary interventions in the implementation of the GCM in the continent.

Once again, I wish to thank our partners, especially ECA and IOM for their continuous collaboration in supporting our Member States and RECs in the implementation of the GCM in the continent. I call upon our technical team to continue working together to implement the outcome report of this meeting.

Lastly, my sincere gratitude to the Kingdom of Morocco, led by His Majesty the King, for accepting to host this meeting. I wish you all a fruitful discussion and deliberations as we start this meeting.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and sincerely express my gratitude to Ms Thokodzile Ruvizvo, the Director for Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division of the ECA who is now proceeding for her retirement after this meeting for her wonderful support and collaboration with us on migration governance in Africa. I have personally worked with her in several issues of mutual concern to both the ECA and AUC; including the GCM and the High Level Panel on Migration where she is exhibited passion, technical knowledge and exemplary leadership to our technical team of both the ECA and AUC. As she proceeds for her retirement, I wish her the very best in her next life and I hope she will continue doing great work even after exiting ECA.

Thank you.