



MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH FOR THE OFFICIAL HANDOVER OF THE
REGIONAL MINISTERIAL FORUM ON MIGRATION (RMFM) FROM
THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA TO THE
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

BY

HON. ESTHER ANYAKUN DAVINIA

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

DELIVERED

AT THE

**2ND REGIONAL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR
MIGRATION IN AFRICA**

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

9TH OCTOBER 2024

- Hon. Muferihat Kamil Ahmed, Minister of Labour and Skills, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia who is also our host.
- Ms. Amy Pope, Director General of the International Organisation for Migration and Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration.
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Esther Anyakun Davinia, Minister of State for Labour, Employment, and Industrial Relations in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development of the Republic of Uganda.

Today, Uganda is 62 years old. So allow me begin by wishing all of us a Happy Independence day.

I bring you all warm greetings from Uganda, the Pearl of Africa. Let me begin by conveying to you sincere apologies from Hon. Betty Amongi Ongom, the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development who was supposed to be here in person but because of other competing schedules, she asked me to represent her at this 2nd Regional Review meeting of the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Africa as well as at the official and technical hand over of the Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration – the RMFM - to Uganda.

Excellencies,

You will recall that Uganda took over as chair of the RMFM during the 5th RMFM that was convened here in Addis Ababa, on the 29th of February 2024.

My colleague Minister Hon. Sarah Mateke, who was then the Minister of State for Children and Youth Affairs and represented

the Senior Minister at the Ceremonial handover passed away in August this year. May we honour and remember her for the great work she did for our country and the region.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Allow me thank the Federal Republic of Ethiopia for successfully chairing the 4th and 5th RMFM sessions on harmonizing labour Migration policies in the East and Horn of Africa. As incoming chair for 2024 and 2025, Uganda will welcome all of you to the 6th RMFM meeting in our beloved Pearl of Africa scheduled for 10th -13th February 2025.

I thank the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for having chaired the RMFM for the last two years. But I cannot forget to thank the Republic of Kenya where it all began in 2020.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- This is to first thank IOM Director General, Amy Pope for her leadership and the entire IOM team for support this great initiative that promotes migration mobility that is safe and orderly.
- I am deeply honoured to accept the Chairmanship of the Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration (RMFM) on behalf of the Government of Uganda.
- I extend my sincerest gratitude to our predecessors for their exceptional work in guiding the RMFM, particularly our colleagues from Ethiopia. Today, as Uganda steps into this role, we do so with a strong commitment to build upon this foundation, advancing regional collaboration in migration governance.

- Our vision for this chairmanship centres on the belief that safe, orderly, and regular migration can serve as a cornerstone for sustainable development.
- Uganda is committed to expanding migration pathways, especially for our youth, who represent both our greatest asset and our greatest responsibility.
- With the Skills Mobility Partnership, we will work to equip our youth with the skills necessary to thrive in global Labor markets.
- By doing so, we aim to address the challenges of unemployment, underemployment, and irregular migration that affect our region, aligning our efforts with the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.
- As the Chair, Uganda will champion initiatives to harmonize Labor migration policies across our region, particularly within the framework of the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).
- We are committed to fostering the AU framework that promotes free movement and employment opportunities for workers within our region. Together, we can advance a vision where Labor migration not only supports individual livelihoods but strengthens our collective economic resilience.
- Our chairmanship will also prioritize the protection and welfare of migrant workers. We are aware of the significant contributions our migrant workers make to their families and communities through Remittances and other aspects.

- And to Honor their efforts, Uganda will continue to advocate for ethical recruitment practices and support measures that ensure the rights and welfare of our migrant workers.
- In Uganda we have Championed and strides in ethical recruitment, particularly through our work with private recruitment agencies to implement fair and transparent processes.
- We have progressed towards an inclusive, rights-based approach to Labor migration that protects the rights and dignity of our migrant workers.
- As Chair, we will continue to support ethical recruitment, capacity building for our Labor attachés, and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms within recruitment practices.
- In today's evolving migration landscape, it is essential to base our policies on accurate and timely data.
- Uganda as the Chair will prioritize the development and harmonization of data collection and sharing mechanisms across our region, ensuring that our migration policies are responsive and informed by emerging trends.
- We believe that a data-driven approach will enhance transparency and effectiveness in migration governance, benefiting both sending and receiving countries.
- Uganda takes pride in its long-standing commitment to hosting refugees, with over 1.7 million refugees currently finding shelter within our borders.
- This commitment reflects our values of inclusion, resilience, and compassion. As the incoming RMFM Chair, Uganda will work to foster policies that support not only durable solutions

for refugees but also comprehensive frameworks for the integration and protection of all migrants.

- Ladies and gentlemen, our collective vision for migration governance must be one that prioritizes the dignity, safety, and aspirations of our people.
- Uganda is ready to work collaboratively with IOM and all member states to advance a migration agenda that aligns with our shared development goals, supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and ensures a more prosperous, inclusive future for all.
- Thank you for the Honor to serve as Chair of the RMFM. We look forward to a year of impactful collaboration and meaningful progress.

The national secretariat of the RMFM both in Uganda and at the IOM Regional Office in Nairobi is already composed and started preparations for the 6th RMFM. We have indeed hit the road running, and my Ministry will convene a meeting of the Regional Technical Advisory Committee of the RMFM to come up with a comprehensive work plan of how the RMFM will operate during our chairmanship and this work plan will be shared with all relevant stakeholders.

Suffice to say, the RMFM operates at four levels:-

1. The 5 technical working groups of the RMFM which are:-

- i. Consular/ Labour Attaché / Diaspora Collaboration for protection of migrant workers

- ii. Bilateral Labour Agreements, Ethical Recruitment and International Migration Law and Migrant Workers Rights
 - iii. Skills, Youth, Employment and Job creation
 - iv. Return and Reintegration, Skills and Youth Employment
 - v. Gender and Diaspora/private sector Engagement
2. **The Regional Technical Advisory Committee (RTAC)** This committee is chaired by the Permanent Secretary or Directors and is responsible for developing the work plan of the RMFM.
3. **The High Level Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration.** This is a high level forum that convenes all Ministers of Labour and Senior officials in the East and Horn of Africa for the annual high level RMFM meeting and the 6th RMFM will be held in February 2025 in Uganda as I had mentioned earlier.
4. **The operationalization of the RMFM Secretariat** – As you are aware, the IOM Regional Office hosts the RMFM secretariat with the participation of collaborating Regional Economic Communities.
5. Let me add another agenda, but which is closely related to the above, and that is self-financing of the RMFM. We all know that the IOM has almost single-handedly shouldered the financial obligations in so far as the running of the RMFM is concerned. This has been most appreciated. However, there comes a time when a baby must be weaned of their mother's

milk, and be able to start fending for themselves. As chair of the RMFM, this is an agenda that we would like to seriously take up, and see to it that there is a roadmap toward financial independence for our Regional Consultative Process. I look forward to working the 11 Member States as well as the IOM RO and HQ in this regard.

Excellencies, delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I thank member states for their continued commitment and dedication to the cause of safe, regular and humane migration in the East and Horn of Africa Region.

Thank you IOM for the technical and financial support. We acknowledge the contribution of IOM Country Office Uganda led by the Chief of Mission H. E. Sanusi Tejan Savaje who is also here with us for always supporting my Ministry in Uganda in the implementation of all the activities under IOM since we started partnering together.

Above all, allow me to welcome Her Excellency Amy Pope to the leadership of the IOM. I call upon everybody especially women to work closely with her to ensure that she properly steers IOM as Director General for the greatness of the institution and the continent at large.

I thank you all and welcome you to Uganda to the 6th and 7th RMFM.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

