

**TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN THE ARAB REGION ¹

League of Arab States (LAS)

¹ The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

A. INTRODUCTION

The Arab Observatory for International Migration (AOIM) was launched since 2004 by (PPMD/LAS), and during this period of time it has carried out many important activities within the framework of the following objectives:

- Filling the gap in Arab migration data, and working on developing the migration policies in the Arab countries.
- Sustaining the technical capabilities of the concerned bodies in the Arab countries.
- Contributing in transfer and boarding of knowledge in the international migration field.
- Finding mechanisms to maximize the benefits from migration and expatriates' experiences to into development and Arab-Regional integration.

Following, the Arab League significant decisions and resolutions related to the International Migration:

1. **The Arab Expatriates and Migration Ministers meeting, Cairo, November 2009** Held by the League of Arab States. Called for:
 - A. Strengthening the coordination between the Arab governments and the Arab expatriates and communities in the diaspora and exchanging experiences,
 - B. Supporting the rights of the immigrants and the Arab communities abroad,
 - C. Working on correcting misconceptions about Arabs abroad and to defend their issues,
 - D. Benefit from the potential Arab competencies in abroad to support sustainable development programs.
2. **The League of Arab States Council's resolution no. 7411 dated 13/9/2011 during the regular session no. (136)** that called for celebrating the annual day of the Arab Expatriate on 4th of December instead of 22 November.



3. **The Doha declaration on Population and development 2009** developed the following recommendations related to "international migration":
 - A) Develops and supports systems and mechanisms providing quantitative and qualitative data on the various international migration issues to help fill the information gap, and develops regional and national policies, identifies monitoring and evaluation indicators to observe and document emerging issues in migration trends.
 - B) Revitalize the role of institutions in the Arab world working in the area of international migration research and studies, especially those focusing on maximization of the benefits and reducing negative impact of the migration in order to strengthen its role in integration of Arab labor markets.
 - C) Enhance national multi-sectoral policies and partnership with all concerned government bodies and national expatriates provide technical support to institutions concerned with policy development and coordination of implementation, enact national and regional policies aiming at maximizing migration returns and investment of revenues and increase migrants' competitive skills in Arab and international labor markets.

- D) Intensify dialogue and partnership, facilitate labor mobility in accordance with the needs of both sending and receiving countries, to limit illegal migration and human trafficking networks and maximize the benefits of labor migration in light of the emerging economic and demographic transformations.
- E) Develop appropriate policies and strategies to strengthen linkages among Arab migrants and with their home countries which will benefit all and increase the contribution of technical knowledge and investments in the Arab countries.
- F) Call on the League of Arab States (LAS) to coordinate efforts and form an experts and decision-making task force representing international and regional organizations to develop labor migration policies to be adopted by LAS to enhance the developmental dimension of migration at national and regional level.
- G) Work on structural imbalances of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) population through enhancement of development of national human resources through education, Training and rehabilitation, increasing woman participation in labor force, lift restrictions of inter-GCC labor migration, and give priority to Arab Labor force.
- H) Develop policies and strategies to limit internal migration from rural to urban areas, especially among young people.
- I) Urge Arab Countries, international and regional organizations to deal with and resolve problems emerging from forced migration, and provide protection and services to forced migrants.

B. MEETINGS AND PUBLICATIONS

1. **League of Arab States and UNHCR cooperation agreement April 2011:** The league of Arab States – Social Sector, (Population Policies and Migration Department, the Human Rights Department and the Health and Humanitarian Aids Department) held series of meeting with UNHCR officials to discuss the reactivation of the cooperation agreement signed between LAS and UNHCR on year 2000, this concludes a joint 2 years working plan, including cooperation projects include number of activities and scientific reports on Migration and Refugees in the Arab states.
2. **League of Arab States' Experts field visit to the Libyan Borders (Tunisian and Egyptian sides) April 2011:** The mission organized by the League of Arab States – Social Sector (Population policies and Migration Department) in cooperation and coordination with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees Regional office in Cairo, the mission started at the Egyptian-Libyan borders during the period of (14-17) April 2011, to Tunisian-Libyan borders during the period of (20-24) April 2011. The League of Arab States experts conducted a report entitled "Assessment of migrants and refugees conditions on time of crises and the humanitarian organizations response to their needs (The Case of Libya), the report was based on direct interviews with the Third Country Nationals, Persons of Concerns and Asylum seekers, as well as returned migrants and Libyan displaced people and refugees, interviews were conducted as well with number of heads of humanitarian agencies, local and international on both sides of Libyan borders. The report concluded a set of recommendations, including: (1) Call the League of Arab States to coordinate with Arab donors to help the refugees and to support for international organizations as a part of the Arab States contribution, (2) Accelerate the activation of the establishment of Crises and Disasters department benefiting from the experiences of United Nations organizations contingency Plan for emergency planning, (3) Call the Arab League to help the operations on borders through a coordination initiative with embassies of Arab countries to provide the necessary assistance for their nationals on borders in cases of emergencies.

3. **Migration Newsletter (Idafat Sokanya on International Migration) June 2011:** The League of Arab States- Social Sector (Population Policy and Migration Department, and in dedication to the annual tradition of issuing newsletter on LAS/PPMD activities, launched its Migration Newsletter. The issue included the latest activities of the League of Arab states in term of International Migration, highlighting some important publications and reports on international migration briefs, introducing a number of selected events and conferences on the same topic from around the world as well as international migration policies' news focusing on the Arab states priorities. The Newsletter included also some other articles related to the main theme. The newsletter included also a section dedicated to the GFMD 2007-2010 and The Arab Contribution to the GFMD Document 2010, besides other articles on Youth and Migration.
4. **The Thirteenth Arab National Populations Councils and Committees meeting (NPC) 2011, Doha / Qatar, called for :** 1) calling the Arab NPCs to intensify their interest in the international migration issues, as main challenges for Arab population, considering the increasing percentage of migrants and youth desires to migrate. 2) call the Arab states to facilitate the migration among the Arab region, especially the skilled migrants to reduce the unemployment rates of youth and to maximize the benefits from the Arab talents into mutual development. 3) Appreciate the role of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Sciences, and Social Development for "Competencies in Diaspora initiative", that calls for activating the participation of the Arab migrants competencies for the development of the Arab states communities. 4) Calling the League of Arab States and Qatar Foundation to expand this experience and involving the Arab organizations and networks in diasporas with this initiative. The meeting is an annual meeting held by League of Arab States- Social Sector (Population Policy and Migration Department) supported by the UNFPA.
5. **The first Regional Conference on "Roles of health competencies abroad to strengthen the health sector in the Arab States":** The meeting is scheduled to be held in September 2012, according to the decision of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health (36) that assigned the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health in coordination with the Department of Population Policy and Migration of the Arab League to prepare for the convening of this conference at the headquarters of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States , and to form a preparatory scientific committee includes a number of Arab doctors and qualified health abroad and migrant organizations. The Population Policy and Migration Department in the framework of preparation of this meeting assigned a session during the 12th Annual Meeting of the Presidents of National Population Councils and committees (NPC) in the Arab Countries that held in Sharm Shikh 2010. As well as a preparatory meeting has been held 30-31 January 2012, that formed the scientific committee, reviewed and stated the main themes, as well as adopt a road map and a follow up plan for best implementation and coordination of the upcoming event.
6. **League of Arab States is a Part of the MEDSTAT Project "Mediterranean-International Household Migration Survey (MED-HIMS)":** The project to be implemented by the MEDSTAT, and the governmental statistical office in Arab States supported by the European Aid and Euro-stat project, World Bank, UNHCR, UNFPA and League of Arab States. Donors and stakeholders meeting has been held in September 2011 in Cairo, to introduce the project and to estimate the donors allocated budgets for

the phase one of the project that scheduled to start implementation in 2012 in Jordan and Egypt.

7. **The role of German woman from Arab origin in transferring the Micro Project Management skills to the Egyptian woman 2011:** The League of Arab States, the Expatriates department had implemented this project in March 2011 in the framework of the United Nations initiative with the European Union to fund projects on migration and development.

C. UPCOMING EVENTS

1. **The Effects of the Uprisings in the Arab States on Human Mobility Workshop 2012:** The league of Arab States- The social Sector (Population Policies and Migration Department) in coordination with the IOM, and supported by the UNFPA, organize this workshop to discuss the effects of the people uprisings in the Arab States on the Human Mobility and international migration, the increasing of the irregular migration rates, the youth desire to migrate, and the internal displacement, returned migrants, and skilled migrants returns aspirations and their potential roles into development for their countries of origins especially after and during the democratic transition period.
2. **The Second Expatriate Conference 2013:** The League Of Arab States, The Expatriate department organizes this conference under the theme of “Roles of Arab Expatriates into Development”, scheduled to be held during 2013, continuing the efforts of the first Expatriates meeting held on December 2010.
3. **Cooperation Project with the Arab Expatriate Scientists’ Association 2012:** The League of Arab States in Cooperation with the Arab expatriate scientists’ Association organize a meeting that aims to focus on the main scientific and practical problems confronting the Arab Sates especially in term of scientific and academic researches and training, to address these problems through suggested strategies, plans and practical projects to be implemented in collaboration of both sides, and to follow up through committees and networks established for this cause. A preparatory meeting held with the association on 19/12/2011.