

**ELEVENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
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**EFFORTS OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES IN THE FIELD OF MIGRATION AND
ARAB EXPATRIATES AFFAIRS 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

Since the establishment of the League of Arab states (LAS), it has been focusing on the issue of international migration and Arab Expatriates, in an effort to: develop more effective policies for utilizing migration in favor of Arab regional development, integration and international cooperation, and to communicate with its expatriates, build bridges of dialogue and cooperation with them for the benefit of both parties. This has been reflected in issuing many resolutions at both the summit level and the ministerial level in this regard since 1955.

In the past decade, the Arab summits' declarations and announcements included some paragraphs concerning migration and Arab Expatriates, among them: The declaration issued by Tunis summit in 2004 on the process of development and modernization in the Arab world, Brasilia declaration issued by the Summit of Arab States and the countries of South America in May 2005, Khartoum declaration in 2006 and Doha declaration issued by the second Summit of Arab States and the countries of South America in March 2009.

The Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, held in Kuwait in January 2009, also reflected the interest in the role of Arab Expatriates in the development of their home countries and stressed the importance of promoting it, besides defending migrants' rights, regulating migration of Arab workers abroad, giving attention to skilled Arab migrants, and strengthening their relationship with their home countries.

In the framework of the restructuring of the general secretariat of the League of Arab states, which was put into action since January 2013, Migration and Arab Expatriates affairs were merged together in one department under the name "Migration and Arab Expatriates Department (MAED)". The merging aims at smoothing the work in the field of migration and expatriates and enabling LAS to coordinate its activities in this field more effectively.

B. LAS ACTIVITIES

IN THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 2012 TILL JANUARY 2013

1. Reports and Publications

a. ***A study on the Dynamics of Arab Expatriate Communities: Promoting Positive Contributions to Socioeconomic Development and Political Transitions in the Homelands:***

LAS and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a study focusing on specific aspects of the complex relationships that exist between expatriate communities and their home countries in the Middle East and North Africa, highlighting in particular the various kinds of social, political, and economic engagement that define these relationships. Analyses and recommendations were given to encourage this engagement and how best to harness its developmental impact. A launch event of the study was organized at the general secretariat headquarters on 19 November 2012.

b. ***The "Arab Expatriate" non-periodic newsletter (autumn 2012):***

LAS issued its non-periodic newsletter which includes latest events and activities it has organized in the field of Arab expatriates, as well as the activities it participated in and were organized by other entities, news on Arab communities living abroad, information on Dr. Farouk El-Baz as the Arab expatriate character of the edition, in addition to some information about the Tunisian community living abroad.

c. ***Report of the Global Migration Group GMG 2012 on "Youth and Migration:***

LAS contributed in the GMG 2012 Report by a paper titled: "Arab Youth and Migration", which explains the impact of the Arab Spring on migration, the reasons and motives of migration and youth trends on migration.

2. Conferences, Meetings, Seminars and events

a. ***Conference of Arab Expatriate Scientists 19-20 December 2012:***

LAS in collaboration with the Society for the Advancement of Science and Technology in the Arab World, United States of America, (SASTA), held the Conference of Arab Expatriate Scientists under the theme "When Arab Minds Integrate" at the General Secretariat of LAS on 19 and 20 December 2012. In concluding the work of the conference, an "Initiative of Arab Expatriate Scientists" was launched to implement projects in the fields of: Biomedical and Health Sciences, Information and Communication Technology, Alternative Sources of Energy. A committee will be established to follow-up on the implementation of these projects according to a pre-planned schedule.

b. ***First meeting of the Afro- Arab migration working group April 2012:***

LAS and the permanent delegate of the African Union to the League of Arab States, held the first meeting of the Afro- Arab migration working group, which comes in response to the recommendations of a strategic Afro Arab cooperation emanating from the Sirte Arab

African summit 2010. The meeting was attended by representatives of some organizations concerned with migration; such as: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration. The meeting discussed the priorities of migration in the two regions and the need to Afro Arab cooperation in this area, and it issued a set of recommendations in this regard.

c. ***The Arab Expatriates Day 2012:***

In the occasion of celebrating “The Arab Expatriates Day” on 4th of December, LAS organized three ceremonies in its missions in the capital cities of Brazil, Spain and the United States of America, as an acknowledgement of the Arab League Council of the important role played by Arab immigrants in support of their scientific and practical efforts and achievements and the keenness on establishing channels of communication with them.

3. **Field Visits**

a. ***Syria:***

A delegation from LAS headed by the Assistant Secretary General, Head of the Social Sector, visited Syrian refugee camps in Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan during the period from 24 to 27 January 2013. A report on the mission was prepared and raised to Donors' conference in Kuwait 30/1/2013, and presented to the emergency meeting of LAS council on the permanent delegates level.

A resolution was issued by LAS council on the permanent delegates' level on 11 February 2013 concerning providing the necessary assistance to the Syrian refugees in the neighborhood countries.

b. ***Libya:***

A delegation from LAS and UNHCR visited the Libyan-Egyptian and Libyan-Tunisian borders during the period from 14 to 24 April 2011. The purpose of the mission was to assess the situation of refugees on both sides of the borders and study their needs and the humanitarian organizations (Arab and international) response for those needs.

The mission's work included a series of direct interviews with refugees and officials in humanitarian organizations at the borders and in the refugee camps. The mission has prepared a report on "The Forced Migrants in The Arab States (Case of Libya)"

C. UPCOMING EVENTS

1. *The Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) for the Arab Region in Preparation for the Second United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development:*

LAS is currently preparing to organize, in partnership with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a “Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) for the Arab Region in Preparation for the Second United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development”. The RCM is scheduled to be held at the general secretariat headquarters during the period from 14 to 16 May 2013. The RCM will come out with a statement on “International Migration and Development in the Arab Region”, which will serve as a background document to the High-Level Dialogue, in order to brief participants from the Arab countries on the key international migration and development issues in the region, and will be presented during the plenary session of the second High-Level Dialogue.

2. *Report on Arab Migration*

LAS is preparing a report on Arab Migration with the assistance of Arab experts working in the field of migration, and in partnership with regional and international organizations and academic research centers concerned with migration issues. A committee is working now on determining the theme and contents of the report, which will be distributed in a launch event at the general secretariat headquarters and will be sent to all LAS member states and permanent missions abroad.

3. *International Migration in the Middle East and North Africa after the Arab Uprising: A Long Term Perspective*

LAS in collaboration with the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) - the American University in Cairo (AUC), UKAID, will hold a seminar in Cairo, Egypt on 22-23 April 2013, with the aim to investigate the long term impact of political and economic change in the region after the Arab uprisings and on the migration system.

4. *Meeting of the Members of Parliaments of Arab origins*

LAS and the Arab Parliament are preparing for a meeting for the members of parliaments of Arab origins in the countries of immigration and a group of members of parliaments of Arab States in order to exchange experiences and discuss issues of mutual interests. This meeting is planned to be held during the second half of 2013.