Concept Note

High-Level Expert Group Meeting:

“Conflict-Induced Migration in Africa: Maximizing New Opportunities to Address its Peace, Security and Inclusive Development Dimensions”

23-24 November 2015
Coastlands Umhlanga Hotel, Durban, South Africa
1. Introduction

The United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) in collaboration with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is convening a High-Level Expert Group Meeting on the theme, “Conflict-Induced Migration in Africa: Maximizing New Opportunities to Address its Peace, Security and Inclusive Development Dimensions”. The meeting will be organised in partnership with the African Union and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Durban, South Africa, from 23 to 24 November 2015.

The main objective of the meeting is to provide a platform for key African regional and sub-regional organizations and their international partners as well as civil society organizations to: (i) assess the current trends and challenges of conflict-induced migration, and (ii) discuss new opportunities to prevent and address its root causes, as well as mitigate its negative impacts within the context of implementation of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Africa’s Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan. Given this focus on the prevention and management of the root causes of conflicts that induce forced migration, the meeting will *inter alia* draw on recommendations from the reviews of the United Nations Peace Operations, United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture and the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as well as on any peace and security outcomes of the recent Valletta Summit on migration to highlight urgent actions for preventing and addressing the root causes of conflict-induced migration in Africa.

The meeting will bring together senior officials from Member States, African Union and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms. Senior officials from the United Nations system, European Union, development partners, diaspora and leading specialists, academics and civil society organisations working in the area of African peace and security, particularly on issues relating to conflict and migration, will also participate in the meeting.

2. Background

Conflicts and insecurity are major causes or drivers of forced migration in Africa. Across the continent, including in Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, violent conflict and insecurity have resulted in forced displacement, both within and across borders, with dire consequences for vulnerable populations, including women, children, the aged and disabled. More recently, internal and international forced migration in Africa has been exacerbated by the growing threats of terrorism, fundamentalism, radicalization and violent extremism. Overall, the causes and consequences of forced migration are multifaceted and have political, peace and security, economic, social and environmental dimensions, with implications for sustainable development in Africa. Human rights violations, economic deprivation, lack of governance and climate change can also induce involuntary or forced migration, either directly or indirectly in situations of high inequalities and exclusion. Furthermore, conflict-induced or forced migration also has differing impacts on countries of origin, transit and destination. This differential effect or impact of forced migration on countries of origin, transit and destination warrant attention especially as the distinction between them is increasingly becoming blurred due to the fact that most countries experience and are fulfilling all three roles.

In recognition of the multidimensional aspects of migration, several efforts and initiatives have been undertaken at both the regional and global level to address the multiple causes of involuntary migration and to enhance the benefits of labour migration for regional integration
and economic development. For instance, the African Union has adopted a range of policy instruments on migration, displacement and development, including its Constitutive Act that aims to foster socio-economic integration, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the African Common Position on Migration and Development, the Joint Africa-European Union Declaration on Migration and Development, the African Union Framework on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, and the Joint Africa-European Union Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings especially women and Children. Recently, the African Union adopted Agenda 2063, its 50-Year blueprint for structural transformation and Agenda 2063’s First 10-Year Implementation Plan, which *inter alia* aims to “eliminate all forms of illegal migration, address rural-urban migration and improve labour migration governance on the continent, including through initiatives such as the African passport and free movement of people”. Furthermore, the 25th African Union Summit adopted a “Declaration on Migration”, which reaffirmed commitments to promote migration in development as a means of accelerating mobility and regional economic integration on the continent. In essence, the African Union is particularly seeking to enhance the economic benefits of migration for development, including in the implementation of Agenda 2063.

At the global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes migration as a key enabler for inclusive growth and sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination. The 2030 Agenda calls for coherent and comprehensive responses to the challenges and opportunities of migration for ensuring the full respect for the human rights of migrants and for enhanced cooperation in strengthening resilience of communities hosting refugees.

The regional and global agendas provide comprehensive and complementary frameworks to address the multidimensional causes and consequences of migration, including conflict-induced or forced migration. These agendas must now be effectively implemented in order to prevent and tackle the root causes of forced migration, notably armed conflicts and insecurity.

3. **New Opportunities for Shared Responsibility and Action to Prevent and Address the Structural Root Causes of Conflict-Induced Migration in Africa**

Both Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscore the imperatives of peace and security as an enabler for sustainable development. Both agendas prioritise the need for inclusive, peaceful and secure societies that create and uphold conditions for people-centred development. These aspirations and priorities are key for preventing and addressing the structural causes of forced migration, in particular conflict and insecurity.

Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan include a flagship project on “Silencing the Guns”, which aim to end all wars and violent conflicts in Africa by 2020. While five years is a very short timeframe, given the current realities on the ground, the realization of this goal will no doubt address one of the major causes of forced migration on the continent. Likewise, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirms the inextricable linkages between sustainable development, peace and security by seeking to “foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies, which are free from fear and violence, provide equal access to justice, based on respect for human rights, on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels, and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions”. The agenda also addresses other factors that “give rise to violence, insecurity and injustice, such as inequality, corruption, poor
governance and illicit financial and arms flows”, as well as prioritise conflict prevention and support to post-conflict countries.

The crucial question is how to implement these new agendas in order to prevent and address the drivers of forced migration in Africa. The role of African regional and sub-regional organizations, including the African Union and its Regional Economic Communities, are critical and the question is how to ensure they effectively integrate and implement measures that address the drivers of forced migration as part of their peace, security and inclusive development considerations and activities. This will *inter alia* necessitate partnerships and synergies, especially at strategic and operational levels, between all key actors working on issues of peace and security and migration in Africa. For instance, the implementation of the Silencing the Guns project and the recommendations of the recent reviews of the United Nations Peace Operations, United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture and United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 can provide useful entry points for building partnerships and strengthening cooperation between peace, security and migration actors, in preventing and addressing forced migration in Africa.

4. **Purpose of the High-Level Expert Group Meeting**

The high-level expert group meeting will provide a platform for Member States, key African regional and sub-regional organizations and mechanisms, as well as their international partners and civil society organizations, to discuss the current causes, trends and challenges of conflict-induced migration in Africa, with a view to exploring strategies to prevent and address the root causes of forced migration within the context of the various African and global agendas.

5. **Specific Objectives**

More specifically, the meeting will:

1. Discuss causes and patterns of conflict-induced migration in Africa.

2. Highlight the consequences and impact of forced migration for peace, security and inclusive development in Africa.

3. Discuss key political, legal and policy frameworks and programmes of African regional and sub-regional organizations/mechanisms pertaining to forced migration, to generate and highlight new opportunities for addressing the root cause of forced migration in Africa, including in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063’s First 10-Year Implementation Plan.

4. Share experiences, good practices and lessons learned in preventing and managing conflict-induced or forced migration, through peace and security cooperation and partnerships.

6. **Expected Outcomes/Output**

1. Increased awareness on the causes, patterns and consequences of conflict-induced or forced migration on inclusive and sustainable development in Africa.
2. Strengthen the work of African regional and sub-regional organizations and mechanisms to integrate peace and security considerations into their activities in order to prevent and address situations of forced migration.

3. A summary of the meeting’s proceedings and recommendations, which would inform the 2016 Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

7. Format

The two-day meeting will consist of an opening session, six plenary/thematic sessions and a closing session. The plenary/thematic sessions will each feature a lead presentation, to be followed by expert panel respondents and interactive discussions/debates.

The plenary/thematic sessions will address the following:

1. Presentation of issue/background paper on “conflict-induced migration in Africa: maximizing new opportunities to address its implications for peace, security and inclusive development dimensions”.


3. Role of regional and sub-regional organizations in preventing and addressing situations of forced migration in Africa.

4. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: new global opportunity for addressing the root causes of conflict-induced migration in Africa.

5. Silencing all Guns in Africa: Agenda 2063’s comprehensive approach to tackling forced migration and inclusive development.


8. Participants

The meeting will target senior officials from Member States, African Union and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms. It will also target senior officials from the United Nations system, European Union, development partners, diaspora and leading specialists, academics and civil society organisations working in the area of African peace and security, particularly on issues relating to migration.