

**FOURTEENTH ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING
ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
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**CONTRIBUTION
TO THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

League of Arab States (LAS)

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

QUESTION 1.

Please describe briefly the initiatives and activities your entity has undertaken in 2015, or is planning to undertake in 2016, to monitor and implement migration-related commitments related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1) and the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (A/RES/68/4).

League of Arab States (LAS) and its specialized organizations offered a framework for the Arab countries to cooperate on issues related to migration and human mobility within the region, and with sending and receiving regions since the 1950s. Undertaking to continue intensive regional cooperation in the field of migration, LAS assists its Member States to establish a fruitful dialogue and cooperation in the field of international migration between them and with other regions. It focuses on supporting them to develop more effective policies for utilizing migration in favor of Arab regional development, integrating expatriates in national development plans and building bridges of dialogue. To achieve this, further progress was required to coordinate dialogue and action amongst LAS Member States, related international agencies and institutions working in the region and other receiving and sending regions.

As an implementation of the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, LAS has put many programmes to maximize the benefits of migration and minimize its negative aspects, protect the human rights of all migrants, integrate migration into the development planning, strengthen the migration evidence base and enhance migration partnerships and cooperation. Among LAS' most important programmes are the capacity building programmes aiming to improve the migration management capacity of the Arab governments, the cultural programme for Arab expatriates second and third generations to engage them with their home countries and the programme on crime prevention and human trafficking. In the implementation of these programmes, LAS organized cultural trips, conducted studies and reports, organized conferences, meetings, seminars, training workshops and field visits.

LAS also worked on establishing new mechanisms for cooperation in the field of Migration in the Arab Region, among the most important established mechanisms are the following:

a. Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP):

LAS established an Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP), as a State-driven, non-binding, flexible and informal forum to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between LAS member States on migration issues of common concern. The ARCP Terms of Reference (ToRs) were adopted in its first meeting held on 27-28 April 2015. According to the ToRs, LAS (Population Policies, Expatriates and Migration Department) is the Secretariat of the ARCP, chairs its meetings and represents it in international forums.

The aim of the ARCP is to establish an Arab platform to discuss issues of international migration, and work on: strengthening cooperation between the participating countries and working towards a more profound understanding of migration issues in the Arab region, promoting a common understanding about the causes, dimensions, patterns and effects of migration and its future trends in the Arab region, as well as helping governments to participate with a unified vision in the global events related to migration such as the Global Forum on migration and Development and the high-level Dialogue on Migration and Development and others.

The ARCP was formally launched at the Fifth Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) hosted by LAS in October 2015 and organized in collaboration with IOM. The second meeting of the ARCP will take place in May 2016 and "the migration related targets of the SDGs" is one of the topics to be discussed on the agenda of this meeting. The meeting will also discuss means of future coordination and collaboration with different stakeholders to address the migration related targets in the SDGs.

Formulating a comprehensive and integrated strategy is one of the ARCP's targets, in an effort to maximize the benefits of migration and minimize its hazards, strengthen the position of Arab states in negotiating migration issues regionally and globally, and open new horizons for cooperation and partnership between sending and receiving countries. And as the SDGs are the base now for all the related stakeholders working in the field of migration, this will be reflected in the ARCP's strategy and work plans.

b. Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region (RWG)

An Arab Regional Working Group on International Migration (RWG) was established and is co-chaired by LAS, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in order to promote coordinated normative and technical work on international migration in the region prevent duplication of efforts and ensure a consistent, system-wide message and strategy for migration.

Besides the 12 UN member agencies (ILO, UN-Habitat, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC, UN-Women, WHO), more UN agencies have recently expressed their willingness to join the RWG (WFP and FAO).

The third meeting of the RWG took place in Beirut on 14 January 2016. It discussed points of weakness and strength in the implementation of 2014-2015 work plan, modalities of engagement and working methods, as well as possible topics/areas of focus for future projects and initiatives. The meeting had an initial agreement on the components of 2016-2017 work plan, which includes: 2017 Situation report, capacity-building workshop, update of the mapping report and joint policy briefs.

The RWG is planning to add more components to the upcoming work plan including the monitoring and implementation of migration-related commitments related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

c. Africa-Arab Technical and Coordination Committee on Migration (TCCM)

According to the resolution adopted by the Africa Arab Summit held in Kuwait in November 2013, a Technical and Coordination Committee on Migration (TCCM) co-chaired by LAS and the African Union (AU) was established with the aim to help to strengthen their cooperation in migration management, and to promote and protect migrants rights, especially in the provision of sound advice to Member States on issues related to migration in both regions, in conformity with regional and international instruments.

The first TCCM meeting was held in the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa on 26-27 October 2015. The meeting discussed the work modalities of the TCCM and the suggested programmes and activities to be implemented as well as the 2016 work plan to enhance the Arab African cooperation in the field of migration. The TCCM agreed to have among its areas of cooperation “The follow up on the implementation of the SDGs as they relate to migration”

QUESTION 2.

Where relevant, please provide a schematic overview of your organization's contribution to the follow-up and review of the migration-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

LAS, as the secretariat of the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP) and through its different mechanisms (like the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, Africa-Arab Technical and Coordination Committee on Migration and LAS-EU Strategic Dialogue), is planning to address the migration related targets in the SDGs in partnership with different related stakeholders.

Realizing the importance of finding monitoring tools to guarantee effective implementation, follow-up and review of migration-related targets, the ARCP is aiming to act as a regional platform to encourage Member States to share information, knowledge and experiences, and strengthen their respective capabilities. This will create transparency and promote mutual learning among Member States. In order to implement this, the ARCP will work on facilitating the exchange of best practices, prepare reports on the achievements of the Member States, assess the progress and national policies, define coherent regional policies and approaches, and give the adequate support to the related bodies on the national level.

The ARCP should also work as a link between the national and the global levels inputs and perspectives from the national level should be considered and analyzed at the regional level and feed into the global process. It can also help countries to translate global goals into policies, norms, standards, and guidelines that can be implemented at the national level, as well as mobilize partnerships and South-South cooperation.

The ARCP, through its developing strategy, can play an important role in this field through raising awareness, improving knowledge base on migration related targets, advocating for establishing good indicators, coordinating policies of the Arab states in the field of migration and providing policy guidance through enhancing regional dialogue, implementing training programs and sharing information, experiences and best practices. The ARCP should focus on supporting the governments of its member states to develop more effective policies for utilizing migration in favor of Arab regional development, integrating expatriates in national development plans and building bridges of dialogue. This role should take into consideration the current crises in the Arab region and joint response to existing challenges should be one of our targets.

QUESTION 3.

Where relevant, please indicate any activities and initiatives your organization is planning to undertake in preparation for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, scheduled on 19 September 2016.

As the current dramatic increase in forced displacement and mixed migration flows happens in the Arab region, which has its considerable effects on different policy areas, from refugee and human rights, smuggling and trafficking to sustainable development and migration, LAS is working to coordinate with its Member States and its different partners to prepare for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants.

Being aware of the importance of building effective cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination to govern the migration and refugee movements in an efficient and principled way, LAS established durable mechanisms of cooperation with other sending and receiving regions.

The second Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration (ARCP) meeting, to take place in LAS headquarters in May 2016, will discuss on its agenda the participation of the Arab Member States in the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. In order to guarantee a unified Arab vision towards the topics to be discussed in the high-level plenary meeting and to take the most benefit of this important opportunity to discuss the challenges, responsibilities, as well as the opportunities, that large migrant and refugee movements bring, a position paper is supposed to be issued by the ARCP meeting on these topics.

A consultation process can also be done between LAS and the African Union through the Africa-Arab Technical and Coordination Committee on Migration (TCCM), and LAS and the European Union in their joint strategic dialogue and the proposed LAS-EU working group on international migration.

The co-chairs and the member agencies of the Arab Regional Working Group on International Migration (RWG) will coordinate together and share their efforts undertaken to prepare for the high-level plenary meeting.