



SIDE EVENT - AFRICA REGIONAL FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – PARTNERSHIPS FOR A FREE AND REGULATED MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

25 February 2021 – 10.00-11.30 am (Nairobi time)

CONTEXT

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) is a compelling and effective call for regional integration. It is directed towards the social and economic sustainable development of the continent, aiming at placing Africa in the pole position of regional and global value-chains; aiming at making of Africa an active partner for business, mainly within its own powerful market of consumption. On the other hand, the AfCFTA will mainly affect people's lives, the way people trade, consume and mainly – move. Creating a sustainable development environment where African citizens can move inside the continent, both in a free but regulated way will have two positive effects: the first one is linked to the creation of jobs inside of the continent – jobs to be performed by qualified professionals, attracted by the high levels of trade and development in each subregion; the second, strongly linked to migration: the more global and regional partnerships contribute to a well regulated environment for people's movement, the more Africa will be in place of championing herself towards an effective global framework that addresses the very well-known phenomenon of unregulated movement of people: illegal migration from outside the continent.

Taking into account the alignment of the theme of the Forum with that of the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development - *Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development* – one can foresee that the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemics might create a new flow of illegal migration – one of the immediate social effects of a post-crisis scenario. The most affected people will turn into leaving the continent or move inside the continent as a short-term solution to address a crisis that is directly affecting their households, some of them heavily dependent on remittances , according the UN Economic Commission for Africa's recent report on *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and migrant remittances: Protecting an economic lifeline by the Economic Commission for Africa* (September, 2020).¹ The AfCFTA matters for regional integration and regional integration is, on its

¹ "At the microeconomic level, remittances play a critical role as a social stabilizer and social safety net by reducing poverty and making education and healthcare more affordable, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population, including women, children and persons with disabilities. Regrettably, many households in both rural and urban areas that rely heavily on remittances will be significantly affected by the sharp decline in remittance inflows resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic". UNECA (2020), *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and migrant remittances: Protecting an economic lifeline by the Economic Commission for Africa*



turn, a strong call to ensure that the same people who will benefit from it, can also move inside the continent in a safe and regulated environment, preempting the flow of illegal migration outside the African borders.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the achievement of SDG 17 – “Partnerships for the Goals” – in relation to SDG 8 “Decent work and economic growth”; SDG 1 “End Poverty in all its forms everywhere”
- To promote a discussion on possible global partnerships towards preempting and regulating the new migration flows inside and outside the continent. This last objective is linked to creating mitigation measures towards the economic shock of COVID-19 on the social welfare of African households.

FORMAT

Roundtable