

AFRICAN UNION



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CONCEPT NOTE

**YOUTH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS POPULARIZATION MEETING ON
THE PROMOTION OF THE PROTOCOL RELATING TO THE TREATY
ESTABLISHING TO THE FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, RIGHT OF
ENTRY, RIGHT OF RESIDENCE AND RIGHT OF ESTABLISHMENT IN
AFRICA**

13 - 15 August 2019

Lagos – Nigeria

I. Introduction:

Free movement of people is embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as fundamental right and that all people are entitled to the recognition of inherent dignity and certain inalienable rights, which are the foundations of freedom and justice in the world. Freedom of movement is part of the “liberty of man” making it one of the most basic human rights. It is composed of two interdependent rights: the right to leave and the right to return. These rights include the right to leave without distinguishing between citizens and non-citizens; an obligation on the state not to impede departure from its territory; an obligation on the state to issue travel documents and an absolute right to return to the country of origin, be it the country of nationality or residence.

Free movement of persons is central to the integration of the Continent and cannot be separated from other regional integration initiatives such as economic integration and common policies on co-operation and security. The implementation roadmap for the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Communities in relation to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Entry, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment is set to bring together African citizens in unity and prosperity and fulfilling African Integration Agenda to further make physical and artificial borders a bridge to accomplish full integration.

The foundation to gradually facilitate Free Movement of People in Africa was set forth by the African Economic Community (AEC) in 1991 (Abuja Treaty). Following this insight, the Executive Council in Decision, EX.CL/Dec.908 (XXVIII) reaffirm greater commitment during Mekele Retreat of the Executive Council on 23 - 28 January 2016. Ever since the adoption of the protocol by Heads of States and governments of African countries in Addis Ababa in 2018, we have seen an increase and shift in visa on arrival by Member States of the African Union that allow citizens of other Member States to be granted visa upon arrival which in a way reduce usual stress of getting visa. This further affirms commitment to free movement of people and goods, and of Africans having free access to all African Union (AU) Member States.

As parts of the groundwork to fully implement the roadmap annex to the protocol on free movement of persons, the AU Commission has decided to bring together Youth led Civil Society Organizations and students from various African higher institutions. The meeting will help to create awareness and serve as a push for speedy implementation of the protocol on free movement.

One will agree that the above-mentioned stakeholders are pivotal to the actualization and implementation of the protocol taking into consideration their relevance in strengthening and making sure various African Government do the needful by signing, ratifying and domesticating of free movement protocol.

II. Justification:

Youth population is estimated between 65 to 70 percent of the African population. Both Agenda 2063 and SDGs emphasized the importance young people play in the socio-economic development of Africa and their contribution towards economic growth. In line with this, the proposed town hall meeting aims at sensitizing the young population of the protocol on free movement of persons in Africa, also to further create a platform that will enable them to make a constructive pressure on AU Member States to domestic the protocol. The popularization is also a forum to create advocacy for popularization of FMP to ensure it comes into force. Presently the Commission requires 15 AU Member States ratification for it to come into force.

Ultimately, improving educational systems in Africa is a key developmental priority, embedded in aspiration **six (6) and one (1)** of the Agenda 2063, which aspire for:

“a developed Africa that is people driven, enhancing the potential of African people, especially women and youth, caring for children, whilst promoting for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development”.

It is therefore under the above auspices that this consultative meeting with the youth lead CSOs and students is planned.

III. Objective:

According to AU/IOM (study on the benefits and challenges of free movement of persons in Africa 2018) 70 percent of migration and mobility occurs within the continent and this is a positive impetus that Africa can capitalise on. Therefore, the purpose of this town hall meeting is to provide the following: -

1. Opportunity for the Youth led CSOs, students and other relevant stakeholders to discuss an enhancing indicator to realise a prosperous

- Africa through a mobile and dynamic young population that contribute immensely to the GDP of Africa;
2. Quick facilitation of movement of students and researcher across the continent;
 3. Push for the realization of youth led initiatives such as higher education programmes in accordance with the higher education institutions and standardisation of the continental education strategy for Africa (CESA) (2016-2025), youths and students exchange programme and other continental and regional frameworks that will benefit young people;

IV. Status of Integration in Africa:

In order to preface the issue of integration in Africa, it is important to recall the vision of the forefathers and the aspirations of the African peoples for greater unity to trade and live together and the experience of the colonial time that divided Africa in different regions and artificial borders created to further create division and the subsequent struggles for liberation and in recent time, efforts towards African unity.

There has therefore been a lot of progress on Africa's integration through the RECs in the areas of development of natural resources, human resources, industrialization, currency and finance, agriculture, energy, natural resources and intra-Africa trade which has borne some notable achievements. Regarding the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, all RECs have achieved this apart from IGAD and CENSAD.

V. Target Audience

- Youth led CSOs, students from Higher Education Institutions in Africa and other relevant stakeholders

VI. Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected from the planned consultative meeting:

- To promote civic education, awareness and information sharing;
- To constitute a constructive pressure group for the promotion and implementation of the protocol;
- To lead and organise campaign and promotion of FMP within member states;
- To promote inter regional advocacy among young people in Africa;

- To lead social media campaign in support for the promotion and implementation of the protocol

VII. References Documents

1. The Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (2018) and its Implementation Plan.

For further Information

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