

8-9 February 2017
Valletta, Malta

**SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING
STATEMENT BY AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**

**Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
All Protocol Observed,**

On behalf of African Civil Society and Faith Based Organisations, The “All Africa Conference of Churches” and the “West African Observatory on Migrations” are honoured to be invited to such an important meeting to address the current migration situation. Excellencies, as you all know, the current situation is a complex matter, and this is partly due to the responses to the plight of migrants globally and as well as the lack of emphasis on addressing the root causes of migration.

This migration situation should not be seen as a negative dilemma, but rather as one that provides an opportunity for cooperation and dialogue between the **two key players - Africa and Europe**, in the management of migration, and in the context of development: “Orderly, safe and responsible migration.” (SDG-10)

Civil society shares this commitment and concern. We subscribe to an approach that treats migration as dynamic and mutually beneficial to both sending and host countries.

We therefore urge for the creation of more channels for legal migration and We must not fail to honour our commitments under International Humanitarian Law, by insuring full protection to those who are in need and in particular women and unaccompanied minors.

We as civil society urge for greater involvement in both dialogue and policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of migration discourse and related processes. We thus have an important role to play here, given our footprint and influence on the ground.

Your Excellencies, Africa has one of the youngest populations in the world. It should be noted that without jobs and economic opportunities, social stresses such as unemployment could lead to unrest, which in turn will perpetuate the vicious cycle. It makes sense, therefore, that as a big percentage of the African youth are part of the migration movement.

African youth need to be part of the EU and Africa ongoing discussions, expressing their views and proffering recommendations so that decision-makers can tap into and invest in their energies, address their needs and enhance their skills.

We as CSO's urge for genuine and inclusive dialogue between Africa and Europe, as we believe that this constitutes the basis for equal and enduring partnership. And once again, we urge for the two continents to prioritize addressing the root causes of migration and safe passage of refugees and asylum seekers.

Your Excellencies, I thank you.