



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY

REMARKS BY MR. SIMON K. CHELUGUI, E.G.H.,
CABINET SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND
SOCIAL PROTECTION DURING THE OFFICIAL
CLOSING OF THE MINISTERIAL FORUM ON
HARMONIZING LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES
IN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA REGION
HELD AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL,
NAIROBI, ON TUESDAY, 21ST JANUARY, 2020

Fellow Ministers in charge of Labour Migration within the East and Horn of Africa Region

Guests from: the International Organization for Migration (IOM); International Labour Organization (ILO); the African Union (AU); East African Community (EAC); and the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), local and regional offices present here

Members of Diplomatic Missions

Development Partners

Staff from various Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) present, both local and from the region

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of this two-day Ministerial Forum on Harmonizing Labour Migration Policies in the East and Horn of Africa Region. I am therefore pleased to take this opportunity to preside over the closing ceremony of the Forum which marks the beginning of a new phase for our governments, development partners and other stakeholders in our joint role of enhancing labour migration management in East and the Horn of Africa.

The Forum has provided participants with an opportunity to share experiences, learn new strategies and deliberate on ways of achieving a common approach in labour migration management in the region. I am pleased to note that all sessions of the Forum were interactive and that delegates were able to engage and share experiences that will go a long way in informing future programmes in our respective countries.

The level of participation in this Forum clearly demonstrates the overwhelming desire and commitment that you have accorded to the

issue of labour migration. I wish to applaud and encourage this close co-operation and interactive consultations between ourselves as we go forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Forum has served two fundamental purposes of which we should not lose sight. Being the first of its kind, the Forum has demonstrated that indeed, it is possible to work towards a united approach to safe, regulated and humane labour migration, within and from the region. In addition, the Forum has set a benchmark for future forums, especially in terms of participation and the agenda. These two fundamental aspects of the Forum can assist in building momentum for more dialogue and concrete agreements which can then help the region to realize clear results in harmonizing labour migration management in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me share some thoughts on the discussions from this Forum which I believe requires to be emphasized. I agree with the observations by representatives from most countries in the region that strengthening the capacities of institutions involved in labour migration management has not been accorded the necessary priority. This is despite the challenges facing the region in labour migration management. Going forward, I urge my fellow ministers from all Member States to prioritize capacity building of institutions dealing with labour migration management in our respective countries. We have a responsibility to do our utmost to sensitize our respective governments and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that adequate resources are budgeted for activities on labour migration. This forum can offer opportunities for inter-country learning on best practices towards achieving this.

Allow me to also emphasize the proposal to establish a Technical Advisory Committee chaired by the Principal Secretary or Director General for Labour, or an official of equivalent status, from the host country. This Committee, with additional membership from Development Partners, will take the lead in driving the implementation of key agreements from the Forum. It will also advise and provide progress reports to the ministers in charge of Labour Migration in the region on the Agenda of this and subsequent forums. I urge the Committee, once established, to schedule and hold follow-up meetings at country and regional levels with the aim of driving the common agenda forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we set the ball rolling on harmonizing labour migration management in the region, I wish to recognize the Communique, Recommendations and Call for Action from this Forum. These are the main outputs which will guide all Member States from the region in charting their respective next steps.

As I pointed out in my remarks during the opening ceremony, it is my wish that this Forum be held bi-annually on a rotational basis. I note that this proposal received a lot of support on the floor with no objection. In future, such forums should not only discuss Labour Migration but also include a host of labour related issues, especially those affecting the region. In view of this, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, join me in congratulating **Ethiopia** for having been selected to host the next Regional Forum. Kenya is willing to support you and share our experiences to assist in hosting a productive and exciting Forum.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During such forums, we often dwell a lot on what we need to achieve in terms of outputs from policies, legislation and programmes. This should

however not make us lose sight of one fundamental thing; migrants are human beings. We are therefore dealing with people whose lives and livelihoods matter. As we embark on the process of planning, budgeting, implementing, monitoring and reporting on labour migration issues, we should place them at the core of it all. We should be aware of the effects of our recommendations on their lives, their statuses and the environments in which they live. I look forward to hearing more positive stories from migrants on how better frameworks for labour migration have improved their lives and those of their loved ones. Ultimately, this is what we seek for them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Regional Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for all the support towards holding the Forum. From financial, logistical, human, technical and even moral support, IOM has been part of the process from the start and ensured that all key requirements necessary for the Forum were covered. It is my hope that the Organization will continue supporting this dialogue and its resulting processes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at this juncture to thank all those involved in planning for this Forum. First and foremost, my gratitude goes to the Principal Secretary for Labour and Principal Secretary for Social Protection of the Republic of Kenya for taking the lead in organizing for the Forum. The strategic guidance they have offered is what has indeed made us to have such a successful Forum. Join me, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, in appreciating the exemplary work done by the two Principal Secretaries.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to the Technical Committee which comprised representation from the Government and Development

Partners for taking the lead in the planning process. You have done a wonderful job and the results have been clear for all of us to see. From all the late nights, the numerous meetings, the back-and-forth consultations and the many drafts of the documents you prepared, we managed to host a very successful Forum which has set a benchmark for successive engagements going forward. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, join me once again in expressing our gratitude to the team.

To my fellow ministers from the region, I want to personally thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to travel and participate in this Forum. You have accorded the Forum the status it deserves and have set a benchmark in terms of participation. I wish to urge you to take the lead in forging a common approach to labour migration in the region.

To the rest of the participants, both local and from abroad, thank you for your invaluable contributions during the Forum. I hope that our participants from abroad in particular have enjoyed their stay in Nairobi, even with the limited time available. I wish you safe journeys as you travel back to your respective countries, and kindly remember to pass our warm regards to your loved ones back home. We hope you will come back soon to visit Magical Kenya.

With these many remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to declare this Regional Ministerial Forum on Harmonizing Labour Migration Policies in the East and Horn of Africa Region officially closed.

Thank You! Kwaheri! Goodbye! Bon Voyage!