

Memorial Service for Migrant Victims

Draft Concept note

1) Context

The recent tragedies in the Mediterranean with the death of nearly two thousand migrants in the month of April as well as the preventable attacks on migrants in South Africa and inhumane and senseless killings of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians in Libya have drawn renewed attention to the plight of migrants – including refugees, asylum-seekers, migrant workers, victims of trafficking and unaccompanied children – both within and outside the continent as they attempt to seek safety and better opportunities elsewhere. Since the tragic event in Lampedusa in October 2013, more than 5,000 migrants have perished in the Mediterranean including some 900 on 19 April 2015 alone, while mixed migration flows continue to rise dramatically across the continent. The xenophobic attacks against mostly African migrants in South Africa also demonstrate the challenges faced by migrants in the continent.

Deteriorating political, socio-economic, environmental and in particular armed conflicts, the threats to peace and security and poverty coupled with external factors have combined to trigger both voluntary and forced population movements within and outside Africa. This increasingly severe situation requires a comprehensive and holistic response to address irregular migration, address and eliminate the abuse, violence and exploitation experienced by migrants. Thus, the African Union Commission and partners, notably the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Labour Organization (ILO) and European Commission (EC) have been promoting the need for coordination on migration management, supporting Member States in strengthening responses to irregular migration and transnational organised crime, notably trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and the protection of persons of concern.

Memorial Service for Victims

In memory of the victims in the Mediterranean sea as well those who have perished along other hazardous migratory routes¹, the African Union Commission is organizing a memorial service on Wednesday, 27 May 2015 to celebrate their lives, to recollect and to acknowledge their deaths not just in fact but in feeling. It should be a time to grieve in the presence of a caring community, noting that while these people may not have lived a perfect life, they lived a life full of hope, dreams, aspirations and possibility of better lives and struggled like most of us. The memorial service will also be a time of reflection on how we can collectively address the challenges leading to the preventable loss of the continent's young people who represent Africa's hope and future generation. The memorial service is expected to precede a discussion on the plight of African Migrants at the AU Heads of State and Government Summit in June this year.

¹ According to IOM, at least 40,000 migrants have died globally since the year 2000 while attempting to reach destinations around the world.

Participants:

- African Ambassadors and Embassies accredited to the AU
- Partners
- Local and international organizations
- Civil Society Organizations
- Returned migrants

Venue:

- The service will take place at the AUC Amphi-theatre behind the new complex

Time:

- 10:00 – 11:30hrs on 27 May 2015

Order of service

1. Arrival of AUC staff and guests
2. Call to order: by Staff Association
3. Opening prayers: Muslim and Christian
4. Opening Remarks: Commissioner of Social Affairs
5. Statement by Government of Ethiopia Representative
6. Statement by Dean of African Ambassadors
7. Statement by partners: IOM, ILO, UNHCR, UNODC and EU (3 mins each)
8. Migrants' Voice: A returned migrant
9. Statement by AUC Chairperson
10. Benediction: Muslim and Christian clergies

The End