



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
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MIGRATION DIALOGUE FOR WEST AFRICA (MIDWA)

AN OVERVIEW



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FMM West Africa
Support to Free Movement of Persons & Migration in West Africa



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Why do we have Regional Dialogue?

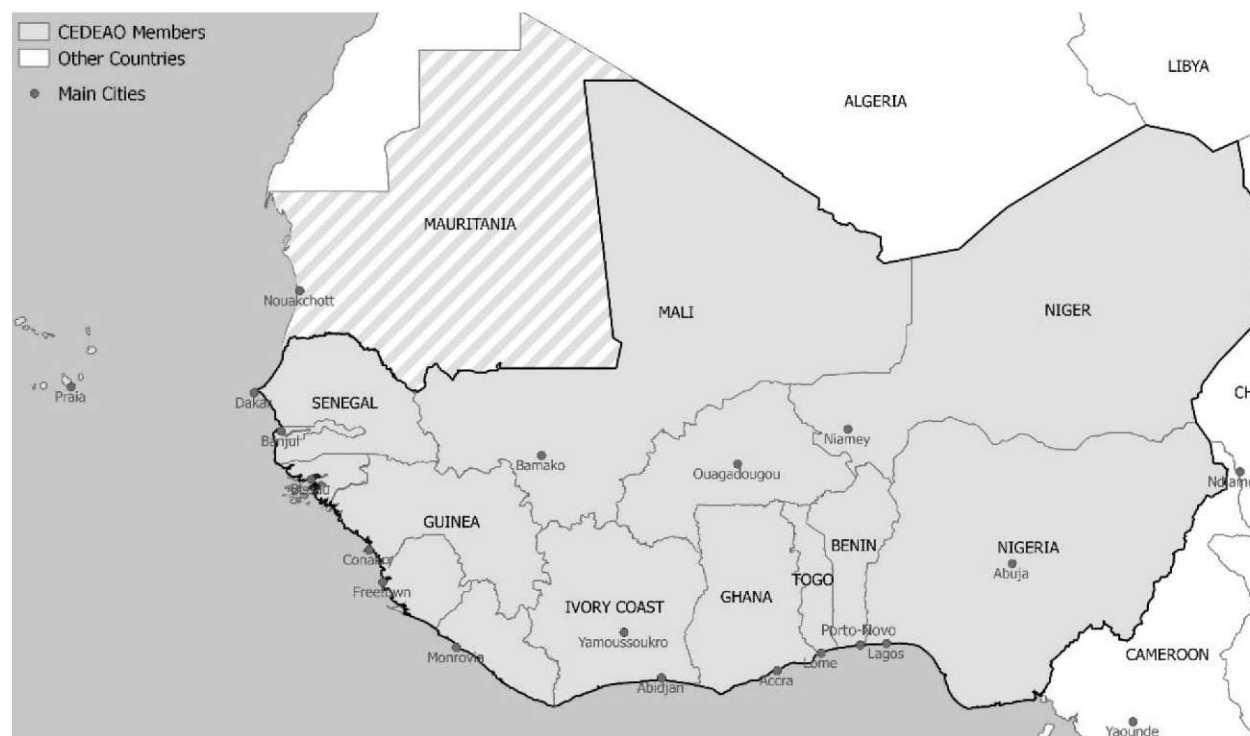
Since its establishment in 1975, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has embraced the notion of regional economic and cultural integration in order to uphold peace, stability, security and promote free movement of people, goods and capital. In the era of unprecedented human mobility, the need to manage cross-border movement has gained increasing prevalence on the national and international levels.

44 years later, the ECOWAS Member States continue to experience diverse types of migration leading to various challenges such as transnational crime, irregular migration, terrorism, demographic pressure poverty, poor economic stability and endemic conflicts. This has prompted Member States to come together and rethink their approach to migration management as there is a need to understand modern migration systems and current policies, review the current migration situation and debate on the lessons learned to identify challenges throughout ECOWAS in order to better manage migration. This was the basis for the creation of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA)

Regional Dialogues on migration such as MIDWA have paved the way for a global approach on migration such as most notably the Berne Initiative, the report by the Global Commission on International Migration, and the first United Nations High Level Dialogue Migration and Development (UNHLD) of 2006.

Regional dialogue will further help accelerate the ECOWAS integration process by facilitating information exchange, dialogue and cooperation and help address various migration issues in a regional forum

Map of ECOWAS Sub-Region



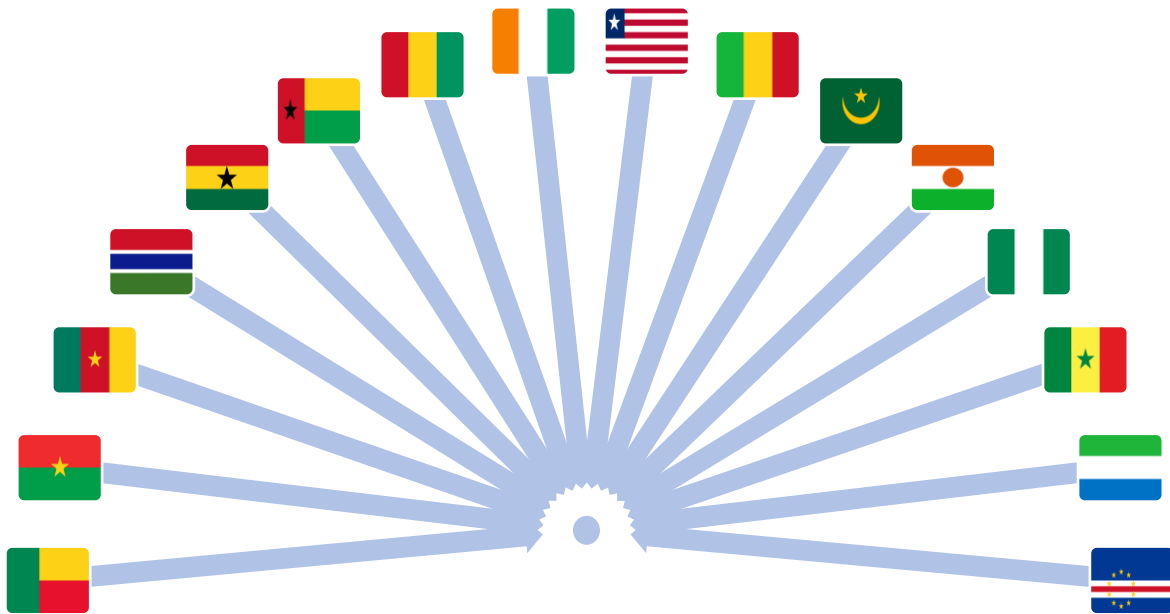
Disclaimer: The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), ILO, EU, ICMPD and ECOWAS. The designations employed and the presentation of maps throughout do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries. IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in the meeting of operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Aim of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA)

To encourage ECOWAS Member States to continuously discuss common migration issues and concerns in a regional context for which immediate solutions may not be achievable at the national level.

Specific Objectives:

- ❖ Strengthen the capacities of ECOWAS Member States to understand the potential of free Movement of persons and migration for regional integration and development;
- ❖ Foster a common understanding by policy makers and civil society organization of the causes, dimensions and impacts of migration in the region;
- ❖ Facilitate mutually benefiting inter-state dialogue and intra-regional cooperation on free movement of persons and migration;
- ❖ Promote coherent, evidence-based and comprehensive migration data and policies at the regional and national levels.



The MIDWA Process

- ❖ In December 2000, the ECOWAS Commission, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), inaugurated a Regional Consultative Process (RCP) for the ECOWAS sub-region to accelerate regional integration and address migration's challenges and opportunities.
- ❖ From 2000 onwards, a series of symposia, seminars, conferences and technical working groups covering migration management, irregular migration (trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants), migration and development and mixed migration were conducted in an effort to actualize a RCP. Prominent amongst these were a series of expert meetings in 2007 to elaborate

the new ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration which was later adopted at the 33rd Meeting of the ECOWAS Heads of States and Governments in January 2008.

- ❖ In order to further strengthen MIDWA as an action-oriented and sustainable RCP, a conference on the institutional capacity of MIDWA was held in Dakar, Senegal in July 2012. The meeting welcomed the ECOWAS initiative to establish an institutional framework for MIDWA. One of the outcomes of the meeting was the establishment of the MIDWA Steering Committee which was endorsed by the Member States.
- ❖ Following the meeting in 2012, the MIDWA had yet to benefit from a formalized institutional framework to support its activities.
- ❖ Due to the strong impact of MIDWA, the European Union proposed to support the ECOWAS Commission through its 10th European Development Fund (EDF) to establish a structured, fact-based and result oriented intra-regional dialogue on migration, supported by effective reporting and monitoring system. The Government of Switzerland had also expressed its interest towards supporting this initiative.
- ❖ To this effect, the first annual formalized MIDWA Expert's and Ministerial was held in Accra, Ghana from 6 to 8 of May 2017 and was supported by IOM, through the EU and ECOWAS Commission jointly funded project "Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa" (FMM West Africa) and the Government of Switzerland through the Swiss Development Cooperation. MIDWA 2014 led to the development and endorsement of the MIDWA Working Modalities to strengthen the operational framework of MIDWA and to ensure its sustainability as an RCP.

Topics of Dialogue for MIDWA

The dialogue of MIDWA is organized based on a multi-year program outlining all relevant activities and lead topics. The topics include but are not limited to the following:

1. Free movement of persons within ECOWAS;
2. Promoting regular migration between ECOWAS and other sub-regions;
3. Labour migration;
4. Border management;
5. Migration and development;
6. Gender and migration;
7. Migration and security;
8. Migration data;
9. Protection of migrations and their families;
10. Mixed migration;
11. Migration and security;
12. Migration and health;
13. Irregular migration and counter-trafficking;
14. Climate change, environment and migration.

Overview of MIDWA Institutions

MIDWA Experts and Ministerial Meeting

The annual MIDWA meeting includes an Experts Meeting to deliberate upon identified thematic areas and development comprehensive recommendations to the ECOWAS Commission to be later submitted to the MIDWA Ministerial Meeting for consideration and validation.

MIDWA Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is chaired by the MIDWA host Member State and is comprised of the ECOWAS Commission, eight Member States (Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea and Cabo Verde) and Mauritania and the Steering Committee provides guidance and impetus to the MIDWA including approving multi-annual action plans, annual work plans and budgets and supervising the work of the MIDWA Secretariat.

MIDWA Secretariat

The ECOWAS Commission serves as MIDWA Secretariat. It is in charge of the overall coordination of the Thematic Working Groups, the programmatic interest on the different sectors of intervention, the creation of synergies between different groups and the representation of the groups during the Steering Committee and MIDWA Experts and Ministerial meetings. The Secretariat is also supported and reinforced by national MIDWA secretariats.

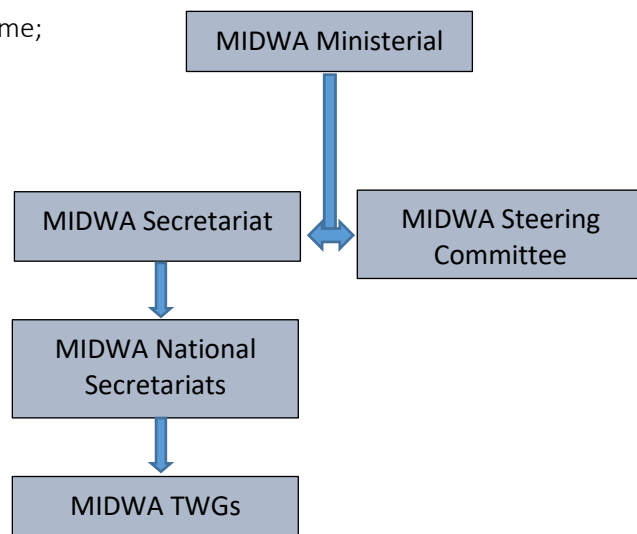
MIDWA Thematic Working Groups

Eight TWGs were established to be in line with the decision to institutionalize the regional dialogue on migration in West Africa and to enhance synergies and promote concrete actions in different sectors of intervention of migration management.

The Eight TWGs:

1. Border management and cross-border crime;
2. Diaspora and West African communities;
3. Labour migration;
4. Mixed migration;
5. Environment and climate change;
6. Migration data and statistics;
7. Return and reintegration;
8. Cooperation and partnership.

Organigram of MIDWA Institutions



PAST MIDWA EXPERT'S AND MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

1st Annual MIDWA Ministerial Meeting
6-8 May 2014 – Accra, Ghana

Chair: The Republic of Ghana

Theme: “Free Movement of Persons for the Regional Integration and Economic Cooperation”

Objective of MIDWA 2014

Discuss the current state of ECOWAS integration as it affects the Free Movement Protocols, and generate valuable insights for improved policy making.

Specific Objectives

1. Raise awareness on the ECOWAS free movement agenda and inform stakeholders about the ongoing revisions of the Free Movement Protocols.
2. Assess the economic benefits of free movement for intra-regional trade and investment.
3. Evaluate opportunities and challenges in the implementation of the Free Movement Protocols in Member States

Key Recommendations

1. Free Movement and Security
 - a. Accelerate the issuance process of the ECOWAS National Biometric Cards;
 - b. ECOWAS Commission to develop training manuals for all Member States to enhance the technical and operational capacities of Security, Immigration and Border Officials for effective migration and border management;
 - c. Member States to accelerate the deployment of traveler identification system at official land borders;
 - d. Member States to develop and strengthen Civic Registration Systems in Member States.
2. The Right of Residence and Establishment
 - a. Member states to exempt ECOWAS Community Citizens from payment of fees for the identification of non-nationals;
 - b. Member States should remove the requirements for Residence Cards for ECOWAS citizens in territories of Member States in compliance with the directives of ECOWAS Heads of States Summit in March 2000.
3. Advocacy, Information and Sensitization in ECOWAS Member States
 - a. ECOWAS Commission to development information strategies and materials to sensitize ECOWAS Community Citizens on ECOWAS Migration instruments;
 - b. Member States to publish, share and disseminate sensitization information at the national level in collaboration with local leaders and civil society organizations (CSOs).

“Human mobility is also one of the defining features of today’s world affirming the right of freedom of movement. It is a major characteristic of globalization informed by the movement of factors of production across borders in today’s global village.”
– *Honorable Hanna Serwaah Tetteh, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana*

4. Monitoring Mechanism of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols

- a. ECOWAS Commission to set up a Ministerial committee to follow up and evaluate the implementation of the ECOWAS protocols;
- b. ECOWAS Commission to support the establishment of border information and observation centers;
- c. ECOWAS Commission to support the replication of the mechanism deployed by West Africa Transporters;
- d. Member States to eliminate or reduce border check points to reasonable levels to minimize the delays and harassment of travelers.

5. Protection of Rights of Migrants

- a. ECOWAS Commission to establish a regional system for information and protection migrations in West Africa;
- b. Member States to facilitate the access to justice for ECOWAS Community Citizens who are victim of violations of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols.

6. Institutionalization of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA)

- a. Member States to establish national dialogues on migration;
- b. ECOWAS Commission to institutionalize and integrate MIDWA into the ECOWAS structures;
- c. ECOWAS Council of Ministers to adopt the MIDWA working modalities.

Key Achievements

- 1. Endorsement of the MIDWA Steering Committee
- 2. Endorsement of the MIDWA Working Modalities



**2nd Annual MIDWA Ministerial Meeting
6-8 October 2015 – Nouakchott, Mauritania**

Chair: The Republic of Senegal

Theme: “Irregular Migration: Challenged and Solutions”

Objective of MIDWA 2015

Inform and guide regional level policy discussions on the solutions to tackle irregular migration in West Africa.

“Security challenges related to irregular migration must be addressed through combined actions and harmonized approaches by information sharing.” –
H.E. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, Minister of Interior and Decentralization of the Islamic State of Mauritania

Specific Objectives

- Assess the current status of the existing irregular migration routes between West Africa, North Africa and the Mediterranean as well as the factors influencing irregular migration and conditions along the migration routes;
- Analyze existing policy and legal frameworks on the continent and in the region, governing migration issues and relevant to the on-going migration crisis;
- Share best practices as well as discuss and propose policy and operational solutions to addressing irregular migration in the following priority areas:
 - o Strengthening border managements;
 - o Addressing the drivers of irregular migration;
 - o Ensuring the protection of migrants’ rights;
 - o Enhancing support to counter-smuggling efforts;
 - o Improving intra- and inter-regional cooperation.

Key Recommendations

1. To the ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania

- a. Further exploit the possibilities enshrined in the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols
- b. Reinforce the fight against smuggling of migrations (SoM) and networks of smuggles by strengthening cooperation between origin, transit and destination countries;
- c. Ensure the protection of migrants’ rights through the enforcement of relevant international conventions and adoption of national legislation;
- d. Design and implement national migration policies and their operational action plans;
- e. Integrate the notion of community preference in the national legislation on employment to facilitate access to the labour market for ECOWAS citizens;
- f. Create in each member state a national framework for dialogue on migration involving all local actors;
- g. Conduct awareness raising campaigns on the dangers of irregular migration in the Member States;
- h. Provide economic alternatives for the youth by creating opportunities and conducting training in productive sectors such as agriculture, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs);
- i. Establish national fund to finance actions to address irregular migration;
- j. Establish mechanisms to facilitate the return and reintegration of migrations, in coordination between countries of origins and destination;

- k. Strengthen the capacities of border authorities with respect to migrants’ rights and implement systematic sanctions against malpractice, misconduct, corruption and excessive use of force;
 - l. Provide alleviating assistance to migrants in distress, especially the most vulnerable groups.
2. To the ECOWAS Commission
- a. Create an integrated ECOWAS Centre for the reception, registration and professional support for stranded migrants and returnees;
 - b. Create and deploy a team of Immigration Officers in Agadez to fight against networks of smugglers and ensure the protection of migrant’ rights in transit areas;
 - c. Create a cooperation platform with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) for West African nationals in irregular situations in Central Africa;
 - d. Establish a framework for dialogue between the ECOWAS Commission, the European Union (EU) and Switzerland on migration and development;
 - e. Initiate free movement agreements with other African states and Regional Economic Communities;
 - f. Organize a roundtable bringing together ECOWAS Member States and Technical and Financial Partners for the design and implementation of structural development programs;
 - g. Strengthen the harmonization of national migration policies in ECOWAS member States.
3. To development partners
- a. Support the regional governance of free movement of persons, in particular the components of mobility of workers and right of establishment, control of the movement of persons and goods and travel documents;
 - b. Strengthen the capacity of ECOWAS Member States in the collection and analysis of data on migration and free movement;
 - c. Strengthen the ability of ECOWAS Member States to tackle document fraud;
 - d. Support awareness programs of the Member States on the dangers of irregular migration.

Key Achievements

- 1. Adoption of the document “Elements of Contribution for the Formulation of an ECOWAS Common Position on Irregular Migration for the Malta Summit.”





3rd Annual MIDWA Ministerial Meeting 23-25 August, 2016– Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Chair: The Federal Republic of Nigeria

Theme: “Impact of Free Movement and Challenges of Migration”

Objective of MIDWA 2016

Identify the various pitfalls that delay the effective implementation of texts relating to free movement of persons to propose alternative solutions.

Specific Objective

- Analyze the relation between free movement of persons and the escalation of security problems, including terrorist attacks;
- Assess the impacts of free movement of persons: Political, social and economic plan after 41 years of existence of the ECOWAS;
- Analyze the consequences of desertification, land degradation and climate change on internal and intra-regional migratory movements;
- Discuss the opportunities and operational modalities for a better contribution of the partners to a proper management of migration.

“The discussions on climate change and land degradation in the context of significant regional mobility at this year’s MIDWA serves as a prerequisite to effective and efficient community political action” – *Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification*

Key Recommendations

1. Implementation and Operations of MIDWA
 - a. Establish a MIDWA Steering Committee;
 - b. Appoint MIDWA National Secretariat;
 - c. Create eight thematic working groups in relations to migration:
 - i. Border Management and cross-border crime;
 - ii. Diaspora and West African communities;
 - iii. Labour migration;
 - iv. Mixed migration;
 - v. Environment and climate change;
 - vi. Migration data and statistics;
 - vii. Return and reintegration;
 - viii. Cooperation and Partnership.
2. Create a MIDWA Permanent Secretariat
 - i. Establishing satellite surveillance systems;

- ii. Strengthening cooperation between Ministers of Security, Transport and Defense;
 - iii. Setting a Warning Mechanism and collecting reliable information and database;
 - iv. Boundary delimitation and demarcation;
 - v. Building of joint border posts;
 - vi. Harmonizing control procedures at borders posts;
 - vii. Strengthening inter-States dialogue, intelligence sharing and local governance of trans-border management;
 - viii. Strengthening capacities of law enforcement officers at borders posts
 - ix. Fight against the proliferation of spoiled products and fraudulent pharmaceutical products.
3. Assessment of political, social and economic impact of Free Movement of persons in the Member States
- a. To create more detailed statistics data on the social and economic impact of the implementation of Protocol on Free Movement of Persons within the ECOWAS space.
 - b. To protect migrants' rights in their host country;
 - c. Migrants to comply with laws of the host country.
4. Consequences of desertification, land degradation and climate change on internal and intra-community migration movements
- a. To strengthen hydro agricultural infrastructures and the creation of cereal banks.
 - b. To develop early warning systems;
 - c. To promote research on the linkage between climate change, desertification, land degradation and migration;
 - d. To strengthen rules and procedures on land security and trans-humane;
 - e. To strengthen resilience capacities of populations through adaptation of seed diversity to climate change and land degradation;
 - f. To strengthen trans-boundary natural resources management through involvement of local authorities;
 - g. To improve management and safeguarding of forest resources.
5. Opportunities and operating methods for a more efficient involvement of partners towards a better migration management
- a. To development partners
 - i. Financial support to Member States for the harmonization of travel documents, training of immigration staff;
 - ii. Financial support to Member States for the equipment of land border posts.
 - iii. Financial and technical support to Member States for the achievement of trans-border revenue generating projects;
 - iv. Support to the creation of youth and rural borders women employment.
 - b. To the ECOWAS Member States
 - i. Continuous sensitization in specialized media in relation with citizens' rights and obligations on free movement;
 - ii. Implementation of the ECOWAS passports by Member States that have not yet complied with it;
 - iii. Census and biometric enrollment of citizens and establishment of identity documents;

- iv. Improvement of livelihood and work conditions of borders posts officers to fight against of borders' users harassment;
 - v. Adoption at the earliest of the African Union Strategy of Borders Management and adoption by Member States of the AU Convention on trans-border Cooperation;
 - vi. Strengthening of synergies between regional economic communities and the African Union;
 - vii. Political commitment of the African continent through Ministers in charge of Environment/Climate Change at the COP 22 in Marrakesh in November 2016, to propose practical measures to address the impact of climate change and land degradation on migration and to promote green jobs;
 - viii. Encourage the Rabat and Valetta processes to consider land degradation as a root cause of migration in West Africa and promote the development of mitigation measures;
 - ix. Involvement of the civil society as warning agents for sensitization in the fight against rackets.
- c. To the ECOWAS Commission
- i. Harmonization of employment legislation, which diversity is a hindrance to free establishment;
 - ii. Signature of preferred specific agreements between ECOWAS and its immediate environment (Chad, Mauritania, Cameroun, etc.)
 - iii. Shared strategies for Security measures;

Key Achievements

1. Decision made on the establishment of the MIDWA Secretariat
2. Decision made on the creation of the 8 MIDWA TWGs



**4th Annual MIDWA Ministerial Meeting
12-14 September, 2017– Accra, Ghana**

Chair: The Republic of Ghana and Burkina Faso

Theme: “The Global Compact on Migration.”

Objective of MIDWA 2017

Discuss the regional impact of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM)

Key Recommendations

1. *To the MIDWA Secretariat*

- a. Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation system on migration-related activities;
- b. Establish a network of MIDWA focal points and experts in charge of migration;
- c. Establish of thematic working group on mixed migration and one on security;
- d. Institutionalization of relations between the MIDWA and the National Committees in charge of migration;
- e. Inclusion of Thematic Working Groups action plans in the national agenda on migration and related issues;
- f. Provide dedicated staff for the Secretariat and adequate funding for the sustenance of MIDWA activities.

2. *Migration Data*

- a. Strengthen the collaboration between the Ministry involved in migration data collection and National Statistics Office at the national and regional levels and identify focal points;
- b. Conduct annual migration data collection, analysis and dissemination using the ECOWAS guidelines;
- c. Encourage Member States to conduct diaspora censuses and foster digital data management and avoid duplication of mandates and duplication of efforts in data collection.

3. *Border Management*

- a. Harmonize border control procedures by training of operatives on ECOWAS free movement and border management manuals;
- b. Provide technical support for the deployment of the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Cards and removal of the resident permit requirements for ECOWAS Community Citizens in territories of Member States to encourage labour mobility;
- c. The ECOWAS Commission to inform its Member States of the availability of necessary technical assistance on the issuance of the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card;
- d. Install border management information systems at border posts to read biometric documents;
- e. Increase joint border patrols, investigation and information sharing across ECOWAS borders to enhance the security architecture in the region;

“It is important to channel the challenges presented by migration into fruitful deliberations by the revision of policies, restructuring of existing institutions and partnership for its effective management and development of the region.” – Hon. Charles Owiredu, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana.

- f. Establish national strategies and timeframe for the implementation of the ECO visa for third country nationals to boost tourism in the region;
- g. Ensure timely exchange of information amongst operatives across borders to prevent and combat crime.

4. Return and Reintegration

- a. Harmonize migrant treatment and profiling procedures as well as training tools on standard operational procedures (SOPs) and intervention strategies;
- b. Establish and ECOWAS emergency fund to facilitate the return and reintegration of migrations;
- c. Strengthen the return and reintegration mechanism and create a website on migration in each Member States.

Key Achievements

- 1. Creation of the ECOWAS Position on the GCM



**5th Annual MIDWA Ministerial Meeting (Virtual Conference)
24 July 2020**

Chair: The Federal Republic of Nigeria

Theme: “Deepening Regional Integration and the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Objective of MIDWA 2017

Ensure the involvement of Member States at the highest level in the implementation of regional legal instruments relating to free movement of persons and migration to foster integration and development in the region with the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic.

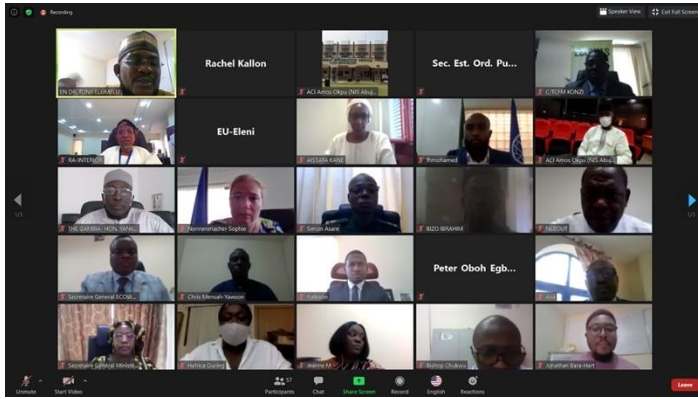
“As the world deals with a global pandemic, it is only through a concerted approach engagement that the rights of migrants and people on the move are reaffirmed and protected. Similarly, only a tailored and coordinated answer to this situation can help strengthen the facilitation, governance and management of migration through the region” – Aissata Kane, IOM Senior Regional Advisor for Sub-Saharan Africa

Key Recommendations

1. Development of GCM coordination within the region so that MIDWA can coordinate ECOWAS position and implementation on this agenda;
2. Member States should take identity management for community Member States seriously hence Member States should commit themselves in issuing the ENBIC to its citizens;
3. Due to the nature of spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, each Member State should develop procedures to manage migrant mobility to and from their countries;
4. Member States and donors should continue to support MIDWA activities in area of the operationalization of the MIDWA Monitoring and Evaluation Framework; provide funding for MIDWA activities; and creating the requisite platform for data/information sharing;
5. Establish relationships and linkages between continental dialogue processes with the MIDWA platform;
6. Explore opportunities for Member States to take ownership and provide funding to facilitate MIDWA technical and ministerial meetings;
7. Establish MIDWA as a repository and exchange platform for data, information, good practices and lessons learned in the region;
8. For governments considering selective re-opening, there is need to look at diverse criteria as well as taking into account the measures and capacities in partner countries; and
9. Consider both health imperatives as well as regional dynamics and mobility priorities, including impacts on socio-economic recovery.

Key Achievement

1. Validation of the following key documents:
 - a. ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy,
 - b. ECOWAS Regional Border Management
 - c. ECOWAS Free Movement Training Manual,
 - d. The Guidelines for the Harmonization of Migration Data Management in the ECOWAS Region and
 - e. The MIDWA Monitoring and Evaluation Plan



MIDWA THEMATIC WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

Meeting of the MIDWA Regional Thematic Working Groups on Migration Data 25 – 26 May, 2017– Abuja, Nigeria

Chair: The Federal Republic of Nigeria and Burkina Faso

Objective:

Analyze the situation regarding the collection, management and analysis of migration data in the ECOWAS region, in particular the critical and/or failing points in order to capitalize on MIDWA's achievements and produce an action plan.

Key Recommendations:

- ECOWAS to finance the workshop on the validation of regional migration data;
- Consolidate data models of administrative sources on migration;
- Establish or strengthen National Committees on migration;
- Apply national protocols on the sharing of migration data with the National Statistical Institutes;
- Include migration data management on the policy agenda.

Meeting of the MIDWA Regional Thematic Working Groups on Border Management 1 – 2 August, 2017– Abuja, Nigeria

Chair: Togolese Republic and the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Objective:

Analyze the situation regarding border management and free movement in the ECOWAS region, in particular the critical and/or failing points in order to capitalize on MIDWA's achievements and produce an action plan.

Key Recommendations:

- Border community engagement / management/ development: Deliberate engagement with border communities by ways of awareness creation/ education and development of these communities. Also interfacing with the commercial drivers who ferry the migrants from one point to another and engaging civil society organizations, opinion / religious leaders in these corridors;
- Establishment of data exchange platform to showcase the migratory trends in MS;
- Data archiving: To ensure better data management, data archives of ECOWAS member states should be developed to ensure a reliable bank of knowledge to refer to;
- Establishment of a West African Migration Training Academy for better understanding of migration issues among border officials in the region. Exchange programmes between/among member states and with foreign missions should also be encouraged;
- Border Posts should be well equipped and inter-operability of these equipment should be ensured. For example ECOWAS should set up a mechanism that will ensure that equipment at all Border Posts can clearly read all the details of the biometric ID card;
- Officials at the Border Posts should be given access to the West African Police Information System (WAPIS) database to ensure quick exchange of information;
- There should be a common/ standard design for data systems to be used at the borders and the design of all Border Posts should conform to international standards;
- Neighborhood policing should be put in place as a preventive measure to forestall possible challenges before they arise;
- The modalities for all member states to deploy the biometric ID card should be put in place for security and ease of movement;
- Funds should be dedicated by relevant authorities to support heads of immigration meetings beyond the annual forums such that Immigration Heads can meet more than once a year if need be.

**Meeting of the MIDWA Regional Thematic Working Groups on Return and Reintegration
30 - 31 August, 2017– Niamey, Niger**

Chair: Republic of Niger and Republic of The Gambia

Objective:

Analyze the situation regarding return and reintegration in the ECOWAS region, in particular the critical and/or failing points in order to capitalize on MIDWA's achievements and produce an action plan.

Key Recommendations:

- Harmonization of the procedures in processing and profiling of migrants;
- Governments should have resources dedicated to management of migration;
- Focal points and institutions should be identified at national level;
- Establishment of National and regional databases on migration;
- Strengthening of the secretariat of MIDWA so that it can adequately support the services of all the working group;
- Establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation system to monitor progress;
- Formalization of the collaboration between MIDWA and dialogue existing at National level;

- Harmonization of training tools on Standard Operating Procedures and intervention strategy;
- Creation of a unit in each Member State to be in charge of migration;
- Establishment of a web platform for information dissemination and visibility;
- Establishment of an ECOWAS emergency fund for Return and Reintegration.

**Meeting of the MIDWA Regional Thematic Working Groups on Border Management, Migration Data, Return and Reintegration and Labour Migration
17 – 19 July 2018 – Abuja, Nigeria**

Chair:

Labour Migration

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Guinea and Burkina Faso

Migration Data

Burkina Faso and Republic of Mali

Border Management

The Federal Republic of Nigeria and Republic of Benin

Return and Reintegration

Republic of The Gambia and Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

Objective:

Analyze the situation regarding return and reintegration in the ECOWAS region, in particular the critical and/or failing points in order to capitalize on MIDWA's achievements and produce an action plan and discuss the various migration tools currently available at the regional level

Key Recommendations:

1. Thematic Group on Labour Migration

- a. Advocacy for ratification and implementation of international instruments on labour migration (United Nations 1990, ILO Conventions: 97, 143, 144, 181, 189, 102, etc.);
- b. Strengthen Public Employment Service (PES) and labour market statistics institutions to promote effective matching of demand and labour supply through the establishment of labour Market and Migration Information Systems (LMMIS) in the ECOWAS region;
- c. Strengthen Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue structures at the national and the regional level;
- d. Establish the Permanent Secretariat to better coordinate the activities of the forum on Social Dialogue;
- e. ECOWAS must prioritize the problem of labour migration and increase funds for its actions;
- f. Integrate a monitoring mechanism into the ECOWAS labour and Employment Policy under revision.

2. Thematic Group on Migration Data

- a. Strengthen the link between policy and statistical specialists by producing specific studies on important policy areas for which data are generally scarce or scattered, such as diaspora, remittances, internal migration and irregular migration;
 - b. Create and operationalize a coordination framework between all actors in charge of collecting and managing migration data;
 - c. Build capacity in statistics on migration and deploy monitoring and evaluation tools;
 - d. Allocate an appropriate budget allocation to ECOWAS and Member States for the collection, analysis and publication of data on migration;
 - e. Support National Institutions in developing data management strategies that will facilitate effective migration data collection and analysis for the development of migration databases;
 - f. Harmonize the timing of migration surveys in the region to ensure comparability of indicators and migration modules in general population censuses and surveys.
3. Thematic Group on Border Management
- a. Member States should integrate the regional E-NBIC (Electronic National Biometric ID Card) Directive into national identity management policies to ensure the implementation/issuance of regional travel documents;
 - b. Establish a common fund within ECOWAS to address persistent challenges in border management to ensure sustainability;
 - c. National authorities should allocate funds to support immigration leaders' meetings beyond the annual forum to give them the opportunity to address emerging issues as they arise;
 - d. Border posts should be equipped with Border Management Information Systems (BMIS) and the interoperability of such equipment should be ensured;
 - e. ECOWAS should provide technical assistance to Member States to facilitate the issuance of the biometric identity card;
 - f. Data exchange platforms should be established to share and analyze migration flows in the region;
 - g. Strengthen border surveillance through joint border posts, joint patrols, modernization and standardization of border posts, deployment of border officials;
 - h. Recognition and issuance of ECOWAS biometric identity cards before or by 2020;
 - i. Strengthen and harmonize training of officials in ECOWAS Member States using Nigeria TUGA as a regional training Centre;
 - j. ECOWAS should support the establishment of Documents Examination Centers in Member States that do not currently have it.
 - k. Border Management should be complemented with the requisite infrastructure and systems.
 - l. Issuance of ECOWAS biometric IDs without putting in place biometric scanners, readers and the required data systems at the borders would be meaningless.
 - m. Provision of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms to effectively monitor outcome of the various capacity building training programmes carried out on effective border management.
 - n. Promote effective sensitization, awareness and marketing of the ECOWAS Protocols on Free Movement, Rights of Residence and Employment through effective Advocacy Programme(s) in the sub-region.

4. Thematic Group on Return and Reintegration

- a. Provide substantial resources to meet the challenges of return and reintegration at the national and regional levels;
- b. Share, monitor and evaluate recommendations from ministerial meetings;
- c. Strengthen youth employment policy by giving greater emphasis to vocational and technical training, including the civic dimension.

**Meeting of the MIDWA Regional Thematic Working Groups on Border Management, Migration Data, Return and Reintegration and Labour Migration
20 – 22 August, 2019 – Lomé, Togo**

Chair: Republic of Niger

Objective:

- Building upon progress made from such previous meeting in 2016 and 2017;
- Review and validate the Regional Migration Policy;
- Discuss Common Position on Migration;
- Review Regional Migration Data tools;
- Establish four (4) remaining thematic working group;
- Formalize the network of MIDWA focal points and experts;
- Setting up of the National Migration Committees;
- Institutionalization of the relations with the National Committees in charge of Migration;
- Discussion/inclusion of TWG action plans in the national agenda on migration and related issues;
- Update MIDWA on the functionality of National Migration Committees set-up by the Spanish Fund in some Member States;
- Review and Validate the MIDWA Website.

Key Recommendations:

1. **Advocacy and Sensitization on Free Movement and the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card**
 - a. Member States to ensure the deployment of the ENBIC;
 - b. Members of the forum to conduct advocacy in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission in their respective States;
 - c. Member State to ensure the removal on harassment;
 - d. ECOWAS to continue sensitization in Member States.
2. **ECOWAS Brown Card**
 - a. Member States to ensure issuance of Brown Card to transporters, especially on ECOWAS Highways;
 - b. Member States to sensitize community citizens on the benefits inherent in Brown Card Regime;
 - c. ECOWAS to work in collaboration with Brown Card Bureau to ensure the popularization of the Brown Card.
3. **ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy**
 - a. Member States to take ownership of the Regional Migration Policy;
 - b. Member States to ensure adequate funding of migration issues;
 - c. Member States to establish structures to ensure exchange of information;

- d. Member States to ensure the respect of rights of migrants along ECOWAS highways and in host countries;
- e. Provide assistance to migrants of ECOWAS extraction irrespective of status within and outside the region.

4. ECOWAS Monitoring Unit and National Platform on Migration and Development

- a. Member States to adequately support the establishment and strengthening of the units and the platforms on migration;
- b. Member States to ensure the sustainability of the units and platforms on migration;
- c. MIDWA focal points to have oversight function of the units and platforms on migrations.

5. Migration Data

- a. ECOWAS is to support national structures in the development of data management strategies that will facilitate the effective collection and analysis of migration data (National Committees for Data Collection and Management);
- b. Create and operationalize in each State a National Committee for the collection and management of migration data;
- c. Seek funding for the functioning of national committees for the collection and management of migration data at Member State level. ECOWAS to work with donor partners, who have supported the implementation of household condition surveys in the UEMOA region to extend it to all ECOWAS States. This will provide reliable data that can be compared frequently;
- d. Mobilization of resources for the sustainability of programs by creating a budget line dedicated to the migration issue;
- e. Reinforcement of the capacity of the MIDWA focal points in data collection; f) Encourage Member States to adopt regulations on migration;
- f. Facilitating social assistance access to airport infrastructure;
- g. Collaboration of National Institutes of Statistics and other administrations working on migration issues;
- h. Harmonizing migration data collection tools with the indicators captured in the policy.

6. Border Management

- a. Harmonization of training of border management officers in ECOWAS Member States;
- b. Encourage Member States to implement, in a definitive and widespread manner, the ECOWAS biometric identity card;
- c. Member States are invited, in the context of the implementation of the ECOWAS biometric identity card, to scrupulously respect the technical specifications and other recommendations already identified by ECOWAS;
- d. Seek an ECOWAS fund to support border management in the ECOWAS region (in particular by setting up structures to take care of people on the move at our borders, particularly the most vulnerable people on the move);
- e. Accelerate the construction of the migration and border management training academy in TUGA (Nigeria);
- f. Harmonize structures and operations at the different borders of the ECOWAS region;
- g. Generalize the computerization of immigration control at the borders of ECOWAS Member States;
- h. Strengthen the implementation of the WAPIS information exchange system and foster cooperation between WAPIS and entities such as INTERPOL and AFRIPOL;

- i. Raise awareness among the community's citizens of the dangers of irregular migration.

7. Mixed Migration

- a. Member States to ensure the building of documentation/identity management capacity;
- b. Clarifying residence processes, addressing reports of harassment and denial of entry and deportation;
- c. Ensure the Rights of People on the Move under the free-movement framework and reinforcing protective systems, particularly around the identification of those in need of protection;
- d. ECOWAS to ensure the speedy validation of the Mixed Migration Strategy;
- e. ECOWAS Commission in collaboration with IOM explore the possibility of the establishment of a Migration Observatory on Migration for West Africa.

8. Labour Migration

- a. Member States is to ensure Advocacy for the ratification and implementation of international instruments on labour migration (United Nations 1990, ILO Conventions: 97, 143, 144, 181, 189, 102, etc.);
- b. Strengthen Public Employment Service (PES) and labour market statistics institutions to promote an effective match between labour supply and demand through the establishment of Labour Market and Migration Information Systems (LMISTM) in the ECOWAS region;
- c. Strengthen Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue structures at national and regional level;
- d. Establish the Permanent Secretariat to better coordinate the activities of the Social Dialogue Forum;
- e. ECOWAS should give priority to the problem of labour migration and increase funds for its actions;
- f. Integrate a monitoring mechanism into the ECOWAS Labour and Employment Policy as part of the review process.
- g. In order to make the work of the Working Group on Labour Migration more readable at both the ECOWAS Social Dialogue Forum and MIDWA levels, the meeting strongly recommends that the ECOWAS Social Dialogue Forum Secretariat be established with the necessary resources to enable coordination and follow-up of the work of the Forum and its technical bodies such as the Working Group on Labour Migration; anything that would make its contribution to the work of MIDWA efficient.

9. MIDWA Website

- a. ECOWAS should ensure this website is sustained so that that the migration dialogue would be enhanced through this site;
- b. The site should be managed in such a way that only key stakeholders within the space of migration management have access to information on this site;
- c. ECOWAS Member States should ensure they update the MIDWA Secretariat all migration issues captured under border management, labour migration, data management, return and reintegration and mixed migration so that these information would be uploaded onto this website for timely use by stakeholders;
- d. MIDWA to include the Regional Logo on the website platform;
- e. Member States Focal persons are to submit articles and publications of migration issues in the established Thematic Working Groups to be uploaded onto the MIDWA Website.



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