

NHRIs Special Event

“Role of African NHRIs in the negotiating process leading to the adoption of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration”

7 May 2017, Niamey – Niger

Concept note

The challenges and issues of migration, refugees and forced displacement worldwide have become an urgent matter for the international community and a reality for all. Amidst this humanitarian crisis, Declaration 71/1, adopted in a summit held by the UN in New York, was of great importance for the negotiations, which should lead to the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration by 2018. It also unanimously recognized the need for a comprehensive approach to issues related to human mobility. Following this summit, it was decided to initiate a process for the adoption of two separate international compacts: one on migration and the other on refugees. It was also agreed by member states that the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration should be developed according to an inclusive process of consultations and negotiations involving States, national human rights institutions (NHRI), civil society, communities and migrants themselves.

For a variety of reasons, NHRIs can play a key role in the process of developing the Global Compact. First and foremost, NHRIs have a mandate to promote and protect the human rights of all. Their prerogatives include migrants, refugees and displaced persons who are generally in a situation of vulnerability with a demonstrated need for assistance and protection. The essential role of NHRIs in the UN human rights system is also reflected in Resolution 70/163 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

Secondly, NHRIs, which also play a “mediating role” between the national and international stakeholders, can bring together the various national actors in order to raise their awareness and involve them in the process of drawing up the Global Compact.

The commitment to protect and promote the rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons is also supported by the Global Alliance of NHRIs (GANHRI). Indeed, GANHRI decided to support the participation and contribution of NHRIs at all the stages of the consultation, in accordance with the General Assembly Resolution 70/163, calling on all UN mechanisms and processes to strengthen the participation of NHRIs in their work. Named as the African focal point of GANHRI in the Global Compact process, the National Human Rights Council of Morocco (CNDH) has committed for many years to protecting and promoting the rights of migrants and refugees in Morocco, which was a country of transit and became a country of residence within a few years. This trend is a fact in almost all African countries, which have increasingly become emigration, transit and immigration countries: 7 out of 10 migrants in our continent emigrate from one African country to another.

Civil society organizations also play a crucial role in the promotion and protection of migrants in transit and upon arrival in their host countries. They provide different types of assistance: medical support, food, clothing, shelter, legal aid and political support, especially in contexts of increasing xenophobia and racism. NHRIs and NGOs can work together with governments to defend the rights of migrants. Of course, NGOs, especially those with a consultative status within the Economic and Social Council, are

part of the process of developing the Global Compact and their contribution would be highly desirable.

The Niamey event on migration is intended to be a meeting to enable NHRIs and civil society to develop African reflection on the process of negotiations on the Global Compact on Migration.

Main objectives :

- Inform on all the processes of the Global Compact and the related issues and challenges;
- Raise awareness among African NHRIs on the importance of cooperation in order to achieve a common African migration policy;
- Adopt a common African position, containing the recommendations of the African NHRIs in order to respect the human rights of migrants and refugees.

Proceeding:

Duration of the event: 3 hours

Speaking time: 10 min each

Debate at the end of each session: 25 min

Participants:

The event will be attended by about ten French and English speaking African NHRIs, civil society organizations from Africa, representatives of the African Union and experts on migration issues.

Expected Results:

A “Niamey Final Document” summarizing the discussion of this event and containing recommendations for NHRIs and civil society to better engage in the process of developing the Global Compact.