

**Voices from the Region  
Africa/Europe Session Summary  
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Africa is a laboratory for the many issues concerning migration and development. Nevertheless, Africans are frequently underrepresented in discussions and deliberations in such topics.

Among the most important points raised in this session included a call to repeal the Return Directive of the European Union, and a call for the Africa Union to defend the rights of migrants and to denounce the aforementioned directive.

In addition, a range of policy issues and action steps were identified. A general priority was expressed to focus efforts on protecting the most vulnerable, particularly, women, children, and victims of trafficking.

**Policies**

Several participants argued for the repeal of the Return Directive of the European Union, which empowers member states to arrest, detain, and expel undocumented workers. Participants also called for a review of the policies that rely on the Maghreb countries to police the Mediterranean border for Irregular African migrants. Also mentioned were bilateral agreements. These may create a larger system of marginalization for migrants. If economic partnerships do not support the rights of African workers, they should be denounced.

Participants highlighted a need to redefine and reinforce migration as a choice. The choice belongs to the migrants, not the receiving countries who choose what type of migrant they will admit.

Positive examples were also cited with recommendations that they be replicated and the source governments lauded. Some countries have policies to protect the victims of human trafficking rather than criminalize them, for example, enabling them to stay in the country at least for the period of litigation for their cases. Countries that have denounced harmful policies should be praised and used as an example for others to follow; for example, the governments of Senegal and several Latin American countries have denounced the EU's Return Directive.

A range of policy needs was also identified, including:

1. Policies to enable irregular workers to access social services. Successful partnerships with local governments were cited, and it was recommended that the GFMD engage with local governments on this issue.
2. Policies to recognize African credentials in Europe to avoid brain waste; for instance, doctors practicing as nurses.
3. Policies to recognize/acknowledge migrants as assets to the receiving countries and contributors to the development of their countries of origin.

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4. Policies to allow for the accumulation and mobility of social security and pension benefits across borders; particularly, during short term and circular migration movements)
5. Policies to address illegal work as a priority superseding those that address irregular workers
6. National youth policies in sending countries to provide livelihood options other than migration

### **Actions**

Action steps were identified; most prominently, advocacy a range of actors to support the policy needs noted above. Two specific advocacy targets were also identified.

Several participants noted the absence of regional organizations in protecting African workers in Europe. For example, the Africa Union and other continental organizations (e.g., Arab League, Maghreb League) have not denounced the EU Return Directive. These regional organizations should defend Africa and its workers and ensure that human rights are respected.

Participants also stressed that sending countries have a responsibility to protect their own nationals. Diplomatic missions should demonstrate a stronger commitment to protect African migrants in Europe.

Beyond advocacy, two **capacity building** needs or targets were highlighted:

1. Build the capacity of sending governments to manage better their relationships with receiving governments and with the diaspora, including helping them to develop mechanisms to connect with the diaspora.
2. Create rights awareness and education programmes for migrants, particularly women, so they can exercise their rights

Since people's behavior cannot be legislated, civil society should focus on **educating and working with the media** to try to influence attitudes vis-à-vis migrants.

Finally, African and European civil societies should collaborate to address effectively the needs of the migrants and development.