



Conclusions

Senior Officials' Meeting

12th-13th February 2019, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Following the adoption of the cooperation programme which will govern the dialogue from 2018 - 2020, the partners of the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process) met on 12th and 13th February 2019 in Ouagadougou for a Senior Officials' Meeting. The main objective of the meeting was to launch the implementation of the Marrakesh Action Plan 2018-2020. This important meeting, which was held under the Chairmanship of Burkina Faso, was also an opportunity to exchange views on the conclusions of the Valletta Senior Officials' Meeting held in November 2018 in Addis Ababa. In the light of recent events at the continental and global levels, the positioning of the Rabat Process in these new contexts, and its continued added value as a regional dialogue, were also examined by the partners.

The meeting brought together 25 African countries (including two observer countries, Libya and Algeria), 14 European countries and regional dialogue partner organisations (ECOWAS, European Union). Two international organisations (UNHCR and IOM) also participated as observers.

Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony took place on 12th February 2019 in the presence of the Minister of African Integration and Burkinabe Abroad, the Head of the International and European Affairs Department at the French Ministry of the Interior, the Special Envoy for Migration and Asylum of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Head of the European Union Delegation to Burkina Faso and the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) Commissioner for Trade, Customs and Free Movement. A word of welcome was given by the Mayor of the commune of Ouagadougou.

- **Belgium, Burkina Faso** and **France** highlighted current global migration challenges, illustrated by the political divisions which the signing of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration generated for many governments around the world. In this context, the Troika underlined the continued relevance of the Rabat Process, which - thanks to its spirit of partnership, solidarity and shared responsibility - continues to occupy a cardinal position in Euro-African relations. Troika members expressed their wish to make the dialogue operational, by establishing a roadmap and working modalities, whilst bearing in mind the dialogue's political, strategic and intergovernmental dimension. Finally, they reiterated the importance of the Rabat Process' mandate to follow-up on the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP).
- The **European Union** (EU) commended the shared vision of migration and mobility between Africa and Europe and the quality and open-nature of the exchanges which characterise the Rabat Process. Referring to the Valletta framework, the EU representative stressed the importance of the JVAP database as a reporting tool to assess its implementation. He reiterated the commitment of the EU and its partners to all areas of the JVAP. He gave concrete examples concerning, for example, the fight against irregular immigration and the creation of new channels for safe and legal migration. To this end, the EU has created pilot projects on legal and labour migration. In addition, the European Commission has proposed a new "Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Employment"¹ to boost private investment in Africa, strengthen trade, create jobs and invest in education and skills. The EU representative also stressed the need to make progress on the return and readmission of irregular migrants. In this

¹ The objective of this alliance is to create up to 10 million jobs in Africa over the next five years.

area, the EU continues to encourage the reintegration of returning migrants in their countries of origin, and has developed several programmes focusing on the protection of returning migrants. For example, a joint EU-AU-UN Task Force was established at the 5th AU-EU Summit in Abidjan in 2017 to address the situation of migrants in Libya. The three partners share responsibility for managing migration flows globally and the Task Force has already helped nearly 30,000 people stranded in Libya to voluntarily return to their countries.

- The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** echoed the Troika's comments on the importance of establishing concrete modalities to make the Marrakesh Action Plan operational and to consolidate its role in the follow-up of Valletta and its contribution to the Global Compact. The ECOWAS representative stressed the need to establish a hierarchy of priorities and a timeline for implementation with the necessary indicators. He also highlighted the importance of regional integration, informing partners of the validation of the regional migration policy in 2019 and the advocacy carried out ECOWAS Member States to ensure the deployment of the biometric identity card in this sub-regional area. He also raised the possibility for the Rabat Process to create synergies with other regional dialogues, such as the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA).

State of play on dialogue activities - Secretariat of the Rabat Process / International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Mr. Martijn Pluim, Director of Migration Dialogues and Cooperation at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), spoke to provide an overview of the activities of the Rabat Process Secretariat:

- The Rabat Process is in its twelfth year, it continues to demonstrate its added value as a platform to address the governance challenges and opportunities presented by migration at the inter-regional level. The importance and impact of migration dialogues, which go well beyond *talking- shops* without concrete results, should not be underestimated. Indeed, dialogue not only allows for the exchange of ideas and visions, but also provides partners with a space to address disagreements and seemingly conflicting objectives, with the aim of finding solutions and moving forward together. Networking and trust are essential elements, and they can only be built by listening to each other and having the opportunity to interact in a non-binding environment.
- ICMPD has supported the implementation of migration dialogues for the past 25 years (it supports dialogues such as the Rabat Process, the Khartoum Process, the Prague Process and the Budapest Process) and is therefore in a position to facilitate the sharing of good practices and the promotion of solid and innovative approaches.
- Mr. Pluim highlighted the results of the recent consultation conducted by the Secretariat, which showed that there was a strong political and technical will to make progress and take concrete steps to bring the Marrakesh Action Plan to life. He encouraged the creation of new tools to support the implementation of the Action Plan, such as the system of "*champions*", which reinforces the state-led nature of the Rabat Process.
- Mr. Pluim reiterated the importance of contributing to balanced, evidence-based communication on migration and diaspora. He highlighted ICMPD's institutional expertise on this issue and its willingness to support partners in the Rabat Process.

The governance of the Rabat Process

During this session moderated by Burkina Faso, the issue of the governance of the Rabat Process was addressed.

- Two requests for membership of the Steering Committee were sent, by Cameroon and Niger.
- Burkina Faso announced to partner countries the decision of members of the Steering Committee not to expand the committee in order to preserve its effectiveness. It therefore

remains a restricted forum for exchange, composed of a "hard core" of current members. However, in order to open up participation to other partners, enrich debates and ensure a dynamic Steering Committee, a note presenting different options for temporary participation in the committee will be prepared and presented to Rabat Process partners.

- Niger asked the Chair and Steering Committee members to reconsider its application for membership in view of Niger's strong commitment to migration issues, as a country of origin and transit.
- Cameroon, for its part, decided to withdraw its application for Steering Committee membership. Cameroon expressed the wish that the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) could play a more important role in the dialogue and will initiate a consultation with CEMAC members on this subject.

The Rabat Process in the continental and global contexts

Morocco presented the **African Migration Observatory**, which is responsible for facilitating and coordinating migration issues between countries from the African continent. The headquarters agreement for the creation and establishment of the Observatory in Rabat was signed on 20th December 2018 in the side lines of the Intergovernmental Conference for the adoption of the Global Compact.

- At the African Union Summit held in January 2018, King Mohammed VI presented the African Agenda for Migration, which included two proposals: 1) the creation of an African Migration Observatory; and 2) the creation of an AU Special Envoy for Migration to coordinate African policies in this area. The Observatory is designed to address the lack of reliable data on migration in Africa, which can sometimes render migration policies ineffective.
- The Observatory will be placed under the guidance of the African Union and will be an effective and operational instrument to develop data-collection, analysis and exchange between African countries. Its objective is to inform policy-makers and strengthen the capacities of African Union countries with a view to improving the situation of migrants and the development of the migration-development nexus.
- The Observatory's mission will be threefold: 1) to understand the migration phenomenon through the collection of reliable and harmonised data; 2) to anticipate migration flows through studies and research and the sharing of experiences and good practices; 3) to propose actions in the framework of its annual report, to be submitted to the COREP, which will decide on the follow-up to these proposals. This mission will be carried out through the following actions: observation and monitoring of migratory flows and stocks through data collection, analysis and dissemination; conducting research studies, monographs and dissemination of good practices in migration management.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reviewed the **main events that have taken place on the global scene** since the (Rabat Process) Marrakesh Ministerial Conference held in May 2018. The IOM introduced the **United Nations Migration Network** and the inter-State consultation mechanism on migration.

The Rabat Process in the context of Valletta

Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) Database - Lessons learnt

As an introduction to the JVAP Session, an update on the JVAP Database was presented based on the survey conducted among JVAP Database users at the end of 2018. The survey aimed to assess the

engagement of partners, their needs, and the challenges they face when collecting, reporting, and analysing JVAP initiatives. The key preliminary recommendations are the following:

- Improve user friendliness
- Increase number of users
- Deliver tailored training sessions

The results of the survey will be further refined through a series of targeted interviews, hence, applying a methodology which will combine both quantitative and qualitative parameters. A comprehensive lesson learnt report will be drafted providing an overview of key recommendations to improve the JVAP Database. The results of the survey provide the team with several guiding factors that will influence the recommendations for the future of the database.

Follow-up to the joint conclusions of the Addis Ababa SOM

The European Union moderated a session on the follow-up to the conclusions of the Valletta Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in Addis Ababa (November 2018). A roadmap was used as a basis for the discussion. The roadmap will also be presented and discussed at the Khartoum Process SOM in Asmara in March 2019. The work will be carried out and the decisions will be made within the framework of the Rabat and Khartoum Process Steering Committees.

Future working meeting in the framework of Valletta

Equatorial Guinea expressed its interest in hosting a working meeting in the framework of Valletta (example: steering committee)

Implementation of the cross-cutting priorities of the Marrakesh Declaration

Six cross-cutting priorities are included in the Marrakesh Ministerial Declaration and must now be translated into the functioning of the dialogue. The discussion paper prepared by the Secretariat and suggestions for the implementation of cross-cutting priorities were discussed:

With regard to the first priority "***A human rights-based approach***":

- The discussion paper proposes – in order to implement this priority and that migrants' dignity is respected – that migrants' voices be represented in the dialogue through case studies and migrants' stories where the latter can express themselves in their own words.
- Partners agreed that respect and dignity are at the heart of the dialogue. However, ensuring a human rights-based approach entails more than just respecting the dignity of migrants, it is a broader issue. By ensuring the integration of human rights considerations in all activities implemented under the Rabat Process, the partners ensure a broader approach which goes above beyond that provided for in the Marrakesh Declaration and Action Plan (AP).

With regard to the second priority: "***Particular attention will be paid to the issues of gender and the protection of migrants in vulnerable situations...***"

- The discussion paper proposes that partners focus on the issue of vulnerabilities. A good understanding of mixed migratory flows and different categories of vulnerabilities would enable partners to better identify and respond to the needs of those in need of protection.
- The partners agreed but stressed the importance of distinguishing between different categories of people (migrants, refugees, victims of trafficking, etc.) within mixed flows.
- It is important to learn from existing programmes that address vulnerabilities and to maximise synergies with existing initiatives (e.g. UNHCR programmes)
- It is necessary to systematise the gender approach in the implementation of all dialogue activities

With regard to the third priority: "***Increased attention to the fight against xenophobia, racism and discrimination***":

- The discussion paper proposes that Rabat Process partners give priority to communication based on facts and figures, and that they engage more with those who are in a position to influence public opinion (especially the media).

- The partners agreed, noting, however, that influencing public opinion through the media is not the responsibility of the Rabat process partners.

With regard to the fourth priority "**A regional approach**":

- In order to respond to this priority, the discussion paper proposes the organisation of sub-regional events bringing together, for example, countries from a region, a sub-region or a specific zone of the dialogue.
- Partners encouraged the creation of sub-regional events, particularly for events related to capacity building (as activities involving a limited number of countries provide a more appropriate framework for this). However, it is necessary that the results of such activities – carried out at the sub-regional level – be shared with all partners and feed into the wider political dialogue.
- In terms of the activities to be carried out in West Africa, MIDWA (Migration Dialogue for West Africa) should be more closely involved.

With regard to the fifth priority "**An inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach**":

- To address this priority, the discussion paper proposes to gradually create a space for cities and local authorities within the dialogue. A draft note entitled "Cities and local authorities" was prepared by the Secretariat to support this approach. In addition, there are a growing number of urban platforms and networks (including cities, local authorities and local elected officials) working on the issue of migration and links should be created with such networks.
- The proposal was favourably received by the dialogue partners. Indeed, local authorities are increasingly actors in international cooperation (decentralised cooperation led by cities) and the diaspora is an important driver for this. Involving local authorities in the Rabat Process would make the dialogue even more concrete and operational.
- It is necessary to involve African and European cities in the dialogue in order to allow exchanges and the creation of synergies at the South-North, North-North and South-South levels.
- It should also be ensured that the choice of cities to participate in the dialogue is made in such a way that the regions of the dialogue are represented. As for the term "local authorities", it was noted that different administrative divisions exist in southern and northern cities and that in the African context, community leaders are often considered as local authorities.

With regard to the sixth priority "**Particular attention to the collection, analysis and sharing of disaggregated data**":

- According to the discussion paper, this priority could be integrated into the dialogue by strengthening collaboration with research institutes active in data collection and analysis. The latter have the capacity to collect data on a large scale using appropriate technology. The example of the [4Mi initiative](#) (implemented by the Danish Refugee Council) was given. 4Mi is a network of field monitors located along the busiest migration routes and in major migration centres; it aims to provide a quantitative system for collecting primary data on mixed migration flows.
- Partners welcomed this proposal, as access to reliable data would support the Rabat Process in developing sound and evidence-based policy recommendations. Partnerships with institutes should be established on a long-term basis to be more effective.
- The partners added that in addition to providing better access to reliable data, it is also important to build the capacity of those responsible for data analysis and sharing.

General comment: Partners considered it imperative that technical expertise feed into the political dialogue; they strongly recommended the participation of thematic and technical experts (with relevant profiles) in future meetings.

Conclusions and decisions of the working groups for the implementation of the Marrakesh Action Plan

The Senior Officials' Meeting provided an opportunity to prioritise the actions contained in the Marrakesh Action Plan with a view to its effective implementation. To this end, working and discussion groups were set up on day 2 of the meeting. These groups provided a framework for consultation and exchange between partners, allowing them to make decisions regarding:

- **Priority themes** and the **format** of future dialogue activities.
- The **commitment mechanism**, which comprises two pillars (the **labelling system for existing projects** and the **commitment to implement** a specific action from the AP)
- The identification of **Referral Countries** ("champions") (for an entire domain) or **Thematic Countries** (for a sub-objective of the AP) and their respective roles

On the basis of the results of these groups, a calendar of activities for the Rabat Process 2019-2020 will be established (and shared with all partners)

WORKING GROUP 1: DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF MIGRATION AND ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND THE PHENOMENON OF DISPLACED PERSONS

The discussions revealed a general interest in addressing the theme of diaspora and remittances as a priority in the coming years. Participants placed considerable emphasis on strengthening diaspora participation in the development of countries of origin, in particular through the facilitation of diaspora investment.

- Mali volunteered to be the reference (*champion*) country for the implementation of domain 1 of the Marrakesh Action Plan (AP). It will work closely with the countries responsible for the proposed activities for 2019.
- A Technical Workshop on how remittances can contribute to sustainable development will be organised in November 2019. The country responsible for this activity is Belgium. This joint proposal will be carried out with the support of Belgium, France and Mali. It was decided to first list the activities already carried out in this field in order to guarantee the added value of the event. Similarly, in order to enhance the relevance of this activity, experts from the private sector (and in particular representatives from the banking sector) will be invited to participate. The United Kingdom will be consulted in relation to this, as it has proposed, as part of the consultation carried out by the Rabat Process Secretariat, to organise a thematic meeting on regional circular migration and enhancing the positive potential of remittances.
- Action 1 of the AP will be implemented through the development of a Guide on diaspora engagement strategies in the Rabat Process region. The country responsible for this activity is Burkina Faso.
- Mali will also organise a Forum of the Malian Diaspora in April 2019. The contribution of the Dialogue to this activity will be discussed in the coming weeks. This activity will aim in particular at establishing a dialogue between the Malian state and its diaspora.
- The activities planned for the implementation of AP Domain 1 will be supported by the new functionality of the Rabat Process website entitled "ideas laboratory". This platform will serve as a tool for exchange among the Dialogue's focal points, including a discussion on the objectives, scope and organisation of the November 2019 technical workshop.

DISCUSSION GROUP 3: PROTECTION AND ASYLUM

Taking into account the Marrakesh Declaration and Action Plan 2018-2020 and the specific recommendations of the Individual Analysis Report of the Rabat Process 2018 (shared at the Addis Ababa Senior Officials' Meeting) on domain 3, the participants in this group made the following proposals:

- The organisation of a regional workshop to promote the implementation of the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) (CRRF). The CRRF is an initiative led by

UNHCR and is a key tool for the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees; it is intended to respond to the needs of a country, at the national level or to a crisis situation affecting a group of countries, at the sub-regional level. To date, among the Rabat Process countries, the CRRF is being implemented in Chad. The regional workshop would allow for the sharing of experiences and good practices on this subject and would encourage the implementation of the CRRF by other members of the dialogue, at the regional and/or national level. This activity is consistent with actions 11, 12, 14 of the Marrakesh Action Plan.

- The organisation of a meeting to strengthen skills and knowledge in the field of protection and asylum. This meeting, which could be held in Geneva, is envisaged to involve a limited number of countries chosen on the basis of expressions of interest. Visits to the departments responsible for processing asylum and protection applications in Switzerland could be organised back-to-back with the meeting. This meeting, referred to as exploratory meeting, could also serve as a springboard to launch medium-term "twinning" or "pairing" initiatives between two countries wishing to work together to improve their capacities in the field of asylum and protection. This would allow peer-to-peer support or training, aimed at improving, for example, the reception capacities of persons in need of international protection; the protection system and the training of the main authorities in charge of these issues. The results of the exploratory meeting and lessons learnt from the twinning initiatives would be shared later with all partners in the Rabat Process. This activity is consistent with action 14 of the Marrakesh Action Plan.

WORKING GROUP 4: PREVENTION OF AND FIGHT AGAINST IRREGULAR MIGRATION, MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Within the framework of the Marrakesh Declaration and Action Plan 2018-2020, the working group proposed the following proposals:

- **The role of the reference countries ("champions"):** reference countries will ensure proper coordination of activities in this field; they have a leading role, they encourage the identification of actions where needs are expressed and ensure that priorities that have not yet been addressed are addressed. European/African "tandems" are proposed for the whole of Domain 4. In addition, and in order to support the work of the reference countries, two have been identified for the two sub-objectives in domain 4. They will share their expertise and coordinate with the tandem countries, and the governance of the Rabat Process (Steering Committee, Chair, and Secretariat).
- **Regional cooperation:** it emerged from the consultation and discussions that the issue of regional cooperation and capacity building is a priority in domain 4. It is accompanied by issues of protection and awareness, issues related to civil status, and the role of cross-border communities.
- **Proposed activities:** Different activities were identified for this domain. A thematic meeting on border management was proposed by Spain and Morocco. A thematic meeting on integrated border management was proposed by Switzerland and Tunisia. The latter proposes an approach to borders which is based on respect for human rights, vulnerabilities and asylum and protection issues. A thematic meeting on the issue of awareness campaigns, their management and impact was suggested by Togo. In addition, the working group insisted on building on existing mechanisms at the sub-regional level (e.g. G5 Sahel) and proposing modalities for linking up with these. In this regard, France placed special attention on the Niamey Process and the possibility of sharing respective experiences in the field of human trafficking and migrant smuggling.
- **Decision-making support tools:** Decision-making support tools were discussed. The proposal to "label" projects contributing to the implementation of the Marrakesh Action Plan was well received. However, labelling must be well defined. It must provide added value with a regional perspective. The Secretariat will get back in contact with dialogue partners on this

issue. The creation of a new feature on the Rabat Process website, entitled "ideas laboratory", was welcomed.

- Finally, the partners asked the Secretariat, in light of its expertise as an International Organisation (ICMPD), to carry out stock-taking exercises to identify gaps and make recommendations on the possibilities and modalities for transposing these practices for all Domains and in particular for Domain 4. This exercise should be carried out in coordination with actors conducting similar exercises in the region (ECOWAS, UNODC, etc.).

WORKING GROUP 5: RETURN, READMISSION AND REINTEGRATION

Within the framework of the Marrakesh Declaration and Action Plan 2018-2020, the working group on domain 5 made the following proposals:

- The organisation of a meeting to promote the role of cities and local authorities in the reintegration of migrants and the prevention of departures. This meeting would establish a more structured dialogue with local authorities, both on the subject of reintegration and on the prevention of departures. France offered to host this meeting as part of its future chairmanship of the Rabat Process. This activity is consistent with Action 22 of the Marrakesh Action Plan.
- The organisation of a meeting to share good practices on return was discussed. This meeting would focus on pre-return procedures, data collection (e.g. on the profile of migrants), and identification processes with the use of innovative techniques. The meeting would enable all dialogue partners to achieve a better understanding of return migration policies and procedures. This activity is consistent with Action 20 of the Marrakesh Action Plan.
- The organisation of a workshop on voluntary return, and actions to support and reintegrate returning migrants. This workshop would allow the dialogue partners to share their experiences and knowledge on this subject and could lead to the production of a good practice guide on reintegration in the Rabat Process region. France also expressed its interest in hosting this workshop. This activity is consistent with Action 23 of the Marrakesh Action Plan.
- **Reference countries ("champions"):** Togo and Cameroon expressed their wish to be reference countries for the whole of domain 5 of the Marrakesh Action Plan.

In addition, several requests for technical assistance were mentioned by the participants in the working group. These can be submitted through the "ideas laboratory". The participants in the working group identified the need for assistance in order to:

- Strengthen biometric identification systems
- Develop national maps of areas with high migration potential.
- Strengthen the capacities of local actors, NGOs and other actors in charge of the reception and reintegration of migrants
- Support States in setting up monitoring mechanisms to ensure sustainable reintegration
- Support public/private partnerships for the support and integration of returning migrants (e.g. training)

Press conference

The results of the two days' working sessions and the recommendations of the Rabat Process partners on the thematic priorities of the Action Plan were shared with the local media at the press conference. The press conference took place on 13th February 2019, after the end of the meeting and was organised in close collaboration with the host country, Burkina Faso.

- There was a large presence of local media at the opening ceremony and at the press conference including 33 journalists representing 19 media outlets;
- The most important media sources were present, among others: CCTV, Burkina Info TV, Service d'Information du Gouvernement (SIG), Le Quotidien, lefaso.net, Kaceto.net, Radio Omega, La Radiodiffusion Télévision du Burkina (RTB) ;

- The media's strong interest in the meeting resulted in a series of press and online articles; there were also radio and TV broadcasts before, during and after the meeting and press conference;
- The following speakers addressed the press conference: Ms Jacqueline ZABA-NIKIEMA, Ambassador for Burkina Faso to the Kingdom of Belgium, Benelux and the European Union; Mr KONZI Tèi Commissioner CEDAO; Mr Jean-Marie BRUNO Ambassador/ Head of the International and European Affairs Department, Ministry of the Interior of France; Mr Jean-Luc BODSON Ambassador, Special Envoy for Asylum and Migration of the Kingdom of Belgium; Mr Gérard DÉJOUÉ, Representative of the European Union; Mr Martijn PLUIM, Director of Migration Dialogues and Cooperation (ICMPD).
- The press kit included the agenda of the meeting, the press release, background documents on the Rabat Process and the meeting as well as biographies of the speakers and logos of the host country, the Rabat Process Secretariat, the ICMPD (responsible for implementing the Secretariat) and the donor (EU).
- The press conference lasted 40 minutes and included six three-minute statements per intervention followed by a question-and-answer session with the invited media for 15 minutes.
