

31st May, 2016

THEMATIC MEETING ON RETURN, READMISSION AND REINTEGRATION
31ST MAY - 1ST JUNE 2016 BRUSSELS BELGIUM

Objectives

- Establishing a technical dialogue in the field of return, readmission and reintegration among the countries of the Rabat Process.
- Presenting operational cooperation mechanisms in the pre-departure phase, for identification techniques and reintegration measures, in order to assess possibilities for replication.
- Strengthening cooperation mechanisms while discussing the particularity of the countries of origin, transit and destination.
- Improving the monitoring of initiatives implemented in this field and identifying new opportunities for collaboration.

Key Topics:

- Improvement of procedures in the pre-departure phase and promotion of voluntary return.
- Innovative identification techniques and cooperation mechanisms that allow effective and efficient identification and rapid travel documents deliverance.
- Good practices and the challenges of reintegration programs and of special measures for vulnerable migrants.

Background:

The Gambia is surrounded on three sides by Senegal and open to the Atlantic Ocean. It has 26 recognized entry and exit points including the Airport and several porous and unmanned borders. It has a land size of 10,356 Sqkilometers and a population of 1.9 Million inhabitants (2012). About 60% of the Gambian populace are farmers. The country is predominantly governed by taxes collected as revenue.

Irregular Migration has been a push factor in the Gambia since the past decade. Many Gambian youth are still being monitored through national programmes and border control officers to desist from the deadly urge and clandestine journeys.

In an effort to combat this menace. The Islamic Republic of the Gambia has embarked on pull factors through its lines ministries and home based organizations to implement strategies on national programmes.

Pull Factors – Government efforts – PHASE – Policies-

- The Gambia Government has issued a directive on Operation no back way to Europe for the retention of its youthful population since 2008.
- Operation Back to land was issued and enforced for engagement of youths in agriculture 2006

- A presidential directive was issued to deny applicants on acquisition of passport who were recorded on return from Europe on clandestine journeys.
- Presidential decree on pardoning of 300 political prisoners including some abroad.

Other measures include;

- Media coverage and publication of returnees nationwide from Europe.
- University of the Gambia has been established in 2005 to provide higher education to encourage and engaged youths in the country
- National youth Service scheme is operational to provide skills development in tailoring, construction and etc.
- The Gambia Hotel school is operational
- President's scholarship award scheme is providing higher education to high school graduates to further their education abroad.
- Construction of schools and establishment of Gam jobs center to assist young school leavers.
- Bilateral cooperation with some EU countries and deployment of Liaison officers to identify Gambians abroad.
- Youth empowerment initiatives and awareness campaigns through media, billboards and leaflets.
- Gambianization of the expatriate quota board providing 80% staff enrollment of companies hiring staff from outside the Gambia.

PUSH FACTORS:

- Peer influence
- Poverty
- Lack of availability of expectations of youths on government.
- Lack of adequate economic activities as compared to neighboring countries.

Challenges:

- Porous and unmanned borders
- Change from group to singular departures
- Lack of support from youths to the government initiatives.

Recommendations:

- Enhanced coordination and cooperation with EU countries through bilateral agreements
- Facilitation of joint identification exercises from suspected countries of origin.
- Support for biometric identification systems
- Support to enhance and provide effective and efficient forensics facilities
- Deployment of liaison officers to facilitate identification and return of irregular migrants.
- Technical support for communication and information infrastructure (radios, internet facilities for effective networking.

Best Practices

- Construction of Irregular migration center and a monitoring tour at Tanji coastal side.
- MOUs agreed with Italy, Germany and Switzerland. *see*
- Denial of passport to all once recorded as a returnee from Europe. Stopped list.
- Enforced monitoring and border control measures

Sub-theme 2.2: identification of cooperation mechanisms

Through which mechanisms can states assist each other in order to permit a reliable identification?

Which joint projects can be developed for this purpose? The discussion points are: joint investigation teams, collaboration strategies for complex identification cases (stateless persons, persons born and residing in other countries, mixed couples...), reduction of the delays for travel documents issuance.

On identification of cooperation mechanisms, States can permit the following for effective and efficient identification of the irregular migrants from their countries of origin,

Joint Investigation team –

- EU countries require fostering interaction with Heads of Border control departments of states where suspected irregular migrants migrate from. Reason being that heads of border control departments have the technical expertise in combating irregular migration and related effects. Interactions in forms of assessing operational capabilities of border management systems of these countries will have to be verily understood for effective interventions and enhancement of identified gaps for mitigation. It is presumed that with mutual co-existence and confidence building on quarterly visitations will result in effective collaboration
- Based on the African settlements and co existence. - Joint identification exercises can be held involving all stakeholders at the same time. The exercise will undoubtedly provide unnecessary referrals and verifications resultant from individual country identification exercises.
- Bilateral Agreements on identified areas of interest has facilitated returns and readmissions and reintegrations to an extent. It is also prudent on EU countries to deploy permanent liaison officers to monitor verifications obtained from identification exercises held within EU countries. A joint collaboration and an EU task force deployed on such initiatives will enhance country specific approach and adherence to procedures for effective and reliable identification. It is with regards that The Gambia Is with keen interest on the return of irregular migrants. Eg. As a country mutual benefits from cooperation with EU countries will not be impeded by one Gambian or group.
- Pledges and technical support. - As a matter of fact, Readmissions and reintegration of migrants is delicate, Handling of such persons appears costly than cost incurred in their migration. The Gambia government has sponsored flights on voluntary return of her citizens from Libya, Kuwait and others on individuals support through media assistance, Reintegration of such persons within our communities have been stigmatized as failures amongst successful ones which cause more harm than good. It is with regards to life for

the EU to identify and support imitative of the beentos for their reintegration and retention

- Enforcement of a mandatory Automated Finger Printed System for all migrants in EU countries. Such Scientific support and technological facilities will enhance greater efficiency on identification and information sharing with stakeholders.

Collaboration strategies for complex identification cases.

- Stateless Persons
 - Political – Due to political instability and wave of personal security within and among Africans as a result of stigma or otherwise. EU is targeted for that personal sanity and dignity of human rights. Statelessness of migrants with African origin can be minimized by effectively engaging the ECOWAS and AU for the welfare of its migrants. A Presidential Directives have proofed a best practice for those who assume statelessness, asylum and fled from The Gambia for obvious reasons. Intervention of AU and Ecowas may also assist the EU with solicited assistance through to the realization of effective returns, admission and reintegration of African migrants and the African Union. One thing that cannot change is decent wherever found. Africans have their own eyes to establish the fact beyond reasonable doubt despite no documentation to identify their nationals,
 - Displacement- Displacement is undoubted in Africa. Most migrants have been push to migrant by tribal wars, civil unrest and poor economic performance. In the wake of technology and' media. Youths have realized the self reliance brought in by clandestine journeys despite the deadly affairs. It is with regards that this common menace can also be a factor in which EU can take up with AU and ECOWAS secretariat and office migration for it's displace migrants within EU countries. Joint identification can be made by Ecowas team comprising its member states.
 - Documentation: Identification of migrants depends largely on presented documentation. In the event of complexity,
 - Amnesty
 - Pardoning
 - immunity
- Persons born and residing in other countries
- Mixed couples
- Siblings of mixed couples
- Privileges and entitlements