

## Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development- Side Event- Draft Concept note

### **Green Recovery and Nature-based solutions in response to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 facing Africa: Building Back Better with Migrants and Youth 25 February 2021 – 16.00-17.30 am (Nairobi time)**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

**Human mobility** in Africa carries a long history and is a key driver for the resilience of communities. As part of the 2030 Development Agenda and of the Global Compact on Migration objectives, there is now recognition that migration can become a development enabler, a strategy to improve livelihoods, and adapt to environmental pressures and climate change.

During this decade of Action when governments and other development actors were gearing towards the scaling up of innovative approaches, including those relevant to the green and climate resilient economy, the on-going pandemic of COVID-19 has presented unprecedented challenges that are multi-dimensional. In this current context characterized by mobility restrictions, the destabilization of supply chains and the disruption of cross-border trade, the pandemic is further challenging communities' resilience and States' capacity to respond.

For instance, the Agricultural sector in Africa has been impacted by the various Covid-19 related measures put in place by governments. Considering the reliance of African economies on agriculture and the role the latter plays in securing communities' climate resilience, the impact of the pandemic on food production, income and trade has been significant<sup>1</sup>. Representing 15 % of the continental Gross Domestic Product (35% for West Africa<sup>2</sup>), agriculture is a sector which is heavily dependent on seasonal labour migration. Generally low-skilled, these seasonal migrants are themselves farmers whose livelihoods depend on rain and therefore are extremely vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Therefore, the essential role of these migrants in terms of local food security and economic growth needs to be further highlighted, as well as their protection guaranteed when they are on the move and livelihood solutions supported back in their territories of origin.

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<sup>1</sup> Towards an Integrated and Coordinated Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Agricultural Sector, AGRA, June 2020

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, 2019

As policymakers and practitioners are looking at concrete alternatives and opportunities to build up the necessary multi-layered response to address the structural challenges and emerging shocks such as COVID-19 and climate change, Green economy is being considered more and more as a viable option by African Governments<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, nature-based solutions have already proven to strengthen the resilience of communities vis-à-vis COVID-19 and climate change. Good practices have been witnessed in Africa whereby local agroecological initiatives have become successful despite ongoing mobility restrictions, thereby generating more income and providing job opportunities.<sup>4</sup> Such initiatives are not isolated and are becoming increasingly common across the continent, often supported by the financial investment of diaspora communities, implemented by returnees and their communities (Morocco, Senegal, etc.) As documented and in some cases supported by IOM<sup>5</sup>, the sector creates jobs locally, short-circuit solutions, contributes to local biodiversity, climate adaptation and provides healthy food supply.

## II. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

IOM is organizing this event in collaboration with key continental stakeholders (TBC) in order to contribute to the discourse on green recovery in the context of Covid-19 and climate change. This is mainly inspired by the example of the agricultural sector in which migrant workers and youth play an important role in Africa.

The session will aim to facilitate the discussion over the following questions:

- What are the main sectors where there are tangible opportunities for green economy in Africa? What are the main gaps constituting a bottleneck for the continent's leap into Green Economy?
- In the context Covid-19, are there lessons learnt from the Agricultural sector that could be drawn from the adaptation of local economies and related restrictions?
- What is the role of labour mobility in agriculture and what are the considerations that need to be addressed to maximize the protection of migrant workers' rights as well as their contribution to the recovery process ?
- Which nature-based livelihoods solutions for migrants, youths and their communities must be supported to strengthen their resilience towards climate change and COVID-19?

## III. PARTICIPATION

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/african-ministers-environment-commit-support-green-covid-19-recovery>

<sup>4</sup> Burkina Faso, Le Monde, 2020

<sup>5</sup> See IOM's latest infoshheet on [Migration and Agroecology in West Africa](#).

The session is expected to bring together by various participants including representatives from African governments, private sector, civil society, UN and other international partners, Regional bodies including the African Union Commission, and RECs.

#### **IV. DATE AND VENUE**

The session is scheduled to take place on February 25th, 2021 from 16:00 to 17:30, virtually on ZOOM.

#### **V. DRAFT PROGRAM OF WORK**

**Speakers** (TBC): IOM, ILO, Great Green Wall Initiative, AfDB, ACPC

#### **VI. CONTACT PERSONS**

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