

Bamako Declaration against the “hotspots” In Africa for asylum seekers

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We, men and women, 71 members from 52 African civil society organizations and the diaspora, gathered on 28-29 August 2017 in Bamako (MALI) for the pan-African regional consultations on the Global Compact on Migrations, are strongly concerned about the migratory policies that are being put into place under the pressure of the European Union and its member States. These policies are featured by a purely safe and exclusion based approach.

La Valletta process was an important moment in setting up such exclusive policies. The agreement and the related declaration in Valetta concern mainly:

- The prevention of “Irregular migration ”,
- Cooperation in terms of return and reintegration .

These policies go against the interests of African populations and migrants. Moreover, they have negative effects on the free movement both at the international level and within the African continent.

The recent summit between France and some African countries, held on 27 and 28 August at the same time of our consultations, is part of this logic continuation of denying migrants’ rights. It implements some items included in La Valletta agreements, in particular by deciding on the next establishment of asylum centers called “hotspots” in Niger and Chad

These centers, which are key elements in the policies of outsourcing the borders of Europe in Africa, will become focal points for asylum applications from the African continent. In this sense, any African asylum seeker for Europe will now have to go through these centers to be able to introduce his or her application within the European Union. This approach makes asylum applications almost impossible and is contrary to both the Geneva Convention and the one of African Union on refugees.

Our organizations strongly condemn:

- The initiative to set up hotspots in our continent that will only violate the rights of asylum seekers but also create more conflicts between neighbor countries
- European migration policies that generate deaths on the roads of migration, the main victims of which are our youth;

- **EU's pressure to impose to African countries agreements in total contradiction with the interests of African populations;**
- **The EU's will to undermine all African integration initiatives with the introduction of new barriers to the free movement of people in formerly integrated spaces like ECOWAS ;**

We require from our states to:

- **recognize that migration is a fundamental human right;**
- **refrain from signing such agreements with the European Union countries that will cause more damage to the continent development and interaction with other parts of the world ;**
- **guarantee the interests of African migrants and refugees whether they are in or outside the continent ;**
- **put in place genuine African policies that promote citizenship, empower migrants and especially women and youth while privileging the rights of accompanied or not children;**
- **work on the emergence of a genuine African migration policy recognizing the very positive roles played by migrant and providing them with frameworks that can promote their dignity and their status as vectors of the continent's inclusive development.**

We are committed to send this to the African and European leaders and to share as widely as possible the current declaration all over the world.

Respect migrants' rights now and everywhere!

Bamako, August 29, 2017

The participants