

CHARTER OF THE WEST AFRICAN OBSERVATORY ON MIGRATIONS

In meetings in Accra, Ghana from the 9th to the 11th February 2016, held alongside the ECOWAS meeting for the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan, West African civil society organisations agreed that it was necessary to pool their efforts in a joint action in order to ensure that West African migrants' rights are defended. Within the context of increased violence of all sorts (war, terrorism...), natural disasters, and faced with an influx of refugees and climate migrants, countries' responses have been limited to reinforcing border security and creating 'hotspots' to the detriment of migrants and their right to free movement. The crisis in Europe, arising from the number of migrants arriving on its coasts, has led to a series of meetings between the member states of the European Union and the African Union. This series of meetings, culminating in the Valletta Summit in Malta in November 2015, endorsed an action plan for the coming years built around five priority areas:

- Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement;
- Legal migration and mobility;
- Protection and asylum for migrants fleeing conflicts;
- Prevent and fight irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings;
- Return, readmission and reintegration of irregular migrants.

In their declaration sanctioning the Accra meeting (see appendix), civil society organisations underlined the human rights obligations that must be respected in future projects and policies related to the priority domains covered in the Valletta action plan and financed by the European Union trust fund that are to be implemented in West Africa. In order to accomplish their mission and guarantee the rights of West African migrants to free movement, civil society organisations meeting in Accra decided to create the West African Observatory on Migrations (WAOM). The present charter lays down the goal, objectives and operating rules to which civil society organisation members of the observatory adhere.

GOAL

The West African Observatory on Migrations aims to ensure that the right of West African migrants to free movement is respected; a right that is recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, regional and international conventions, and the ECOWAS protocols on the free movement of persons, residence and establishment.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the observatory are to:

- continually report any infringements to the free movement of West African migrants;
- facilitate exchanges of experiences at country and regional level on migration and development;
- ensure that civil society is better represented in national, regional and international talks on migration.
- challenge political and administrative authorities of ECOWAS member states, regional institutions and third party States regarding any failures to respect West African migrants' rights;
- monitor the implementation of ECOWAS, European institution and others stakeholders projects and policies on migration in West Africa.

MEMBERSHIP

Any West African civil society organisation (associations, networks...) or the West African diaspora organisations adhering to the present charter and sharing ideals regarding the respect of migrants' human rights may become a member of the observatory.

ORGANISATION ET OPERATIONS

The observatory is a non-profit organisation and in this respect is equipped with democratic structures that guarantee its operational function. Observatory life is governed by the following bodies:

- **The General Assembly:** brings together annually the observatory focal points from each of the sixteen (16) West African countries and is open to member organizations up to date with their membership fees. However, only the focal points have the right to vote
- **The Steering Committee:** is composed of the ten (10) founding member organizations of the observatory. It meets periodically and the chairmanship of its meetings is ensured in a rotating manner by the representatives of the member organizations of the committee

- **The Permanent Secretariat:** ensures the administrative tasks and coordinates the permanent activities of the Observatory. The Permanent Secretary has the mandate to sign administrative correspondence relating to the activities of the observatory.
- **The Focal Points:** The focal point is an organization member of the observatory up to date with its membership fees, designated by the General Assembly to facilitate actions among the observatory members in the same country. The focal point periodically collects on behalf of the Observatory, data on migrants' rights and information relating to the migration and development with organizations within and outside of the observatory, in his country. Each country can have only one organization as a focal point independently of the number of the observatory members in the country.

FINAL PROVISIONS

The present charter will be completed with the statutes and internal regulations which will stipulate the rules governing the observatory and obligations of organisation members in more detail.

The following founding organisations of the observatory are signatories to this charter:

	ORGANISATIONS	COUNTRY
1	ONG UNION FAIT LA FORCE (UFF)	BENIN
2	ALERT MIGRATION	BURKINA FASO
3	MIGRATION POLICY AND ADVOCACY NETWORK (MiPAN)	GHANA
4	RESEAU AFRIQUE JEUNESSE DE GUINEE (RAJ-GUI)	REPUBLIQUE DE GUINEE
5	MOVIMENTO NACIONAL DA SOCIEDADE CIVIL PARA A PAZ, DEMOCRACIA E DESENVOLVIMENTO (MNSCPDD)	GUINE-BISAU
6	ECOWAS CIVIL SOCIETY	LIBERIA
7	ASSOCIATION MALIENNE DES EXPULSES	MALI
8	AMALGAMATED YOUTH MOVEMENT	SIERRA LEONE
9	ENDA DIAPOL	SENEGAL
10	VISIONS SOLIDAIRES	TOGO