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Orientation Committee

Remarks by  
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*Check against delivery*



**Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and President of NEPAD**

**Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee;**

**Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and President of the African Union;**

**Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa;**

**Mr. John P. Magufuli, President of the Republic of Tanzania;**

**Madame Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, President of the African Union Commission;**

**Mr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group;**

**Excellencies;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Since early 2015, a relentless flow of images from the Italian island of Lampedusa, the city of Calais where the Eurotunnel starts, Bodrum in Turkey, the eastern islands of Greece, or the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco, are invading television screens and media outlets. They portray a massive scale attempts by desperate souls trying to reach European countries.

Migration is part of the human journey since the sophisticated apes started moving out of the Rift Valley in Africa. The History of humanity is so rich and complex that we have difficulties relating to a very remote common origin, except for historical assessments and philosophical statements. It is easier for all to link to a more recent past, the one that through events and social interaction shaped our identities. Human beings have a selective reading of History. For most compensation will be justified for a wrong done to some, but not the other. Apologies will be fine with some, but not the other. Peace offers will be morally acceptable to some, but not the other. This is after all mimicking individual behavior at a larger, societal level.

Most Italians forgot they created entire nations such as Argentina and Uruguay. The British do not necessarily relate Australia, New Zealand or the Spanish and Portuguese most of South America to their making amongst other because of migration. When referring to Indochina the Chinese must have only a vague idea why that region carries their name. Americans will find it bad taste to mention part of the current US was bought from Mexico. The list is vast.

Still one continent in recent History has never been associated with migration to colonize or profit from other regions richness: Africa! If anything Africa is rather known for suffering from slavery, plundering of its natural resources and unfair international treatment.

Africa has struggled more than most to find a way out of poverty. It has been doing better of late, since the turn of the century in fact, posting growth rates above the world's and developing countries' average. Yet part of the narrative about the continent seems to be fixated on migration and negative assessments of its performance. It is, therefore, important, first to understand why Africa is perceived to be generating more migrants today than ever before.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

African countries receive a lot more migrants than the continent exports abroad. In fact the bulk of Africans looking for opportunities outside their countries go to another African country. Less than 2 million seek a destination abroad every year, which is a tiny number in relation to migrant stocks, particularly in Europe. Of the quarter of a million that have tried the Mediterranean route last year, the largest contingent are Syrians. Afghans, Yemenis, Pakistanis and other non-Africans use the route too.

Europe's pull factor is to be understood by a variety of developments, from information access (6 billion cell phones in the world), human rights proclamations, a call for universal moral values all the way to unfair distribution of income and inequality across the globe. Terrorism

and religious extremism have played a card as well. It looks like the strong European rights advocacy has worked for its detriment.

Pockets of war such as Libya and its surrounding deserts, the Great Lakes and its neighborhood, and the long battled Somalia are generating political asylum seekers and massive number of refugees as well. But, still this does not give us the full story.

In every moment of History growth has generated outward migrants from the same location. It is indeed happening with Chinese and Indians right now as it is in Africa. Growth spins the chances for a new life but its distribution, particularly at the early stages of a country take-off, is uneven and unpredictable. Those who see their neighbor with means and hope they do not have, venture out. It would have been absurd to propose bombing the boats that were sailing to South America full of migrants escaping the misfortunes of the two World Wars aftermath. These migrants were seeking better lives. Yet their countries were growing like never before, thanks amongst others to the Marshall Plan.

Africans dying in the desert or the sea are the determined lot. They do not accept their fate and are ready to risk their life. The youngest population of the world sees the developed nations of Europe as the closest beacon of hope. For them it is the house of human rights that will, certainly, understand their plight and welcome them to work!

Africa's youthfulness will keep growing when the rest of the world will be ageing. The difficulty of admitting that the current State's welfare in all ageing countries is unsustainable has led to the most bizarre economic policy proposals. Accepting there is a demographic challenge would imply a vast overhaul of social and political choices to sustain the economy. As we all witness the limits of transfer of value from production and labour to knowledge and financial control, we are also seeing the limits of the prevailing economic model. A demographic equilibrium is still essential despite technological progress and productivity gains. Social security or pension funds

cannot be contributed towards by robots or intellectual property; it needs people, workers, and productive workers indeed. That is why Europe will have to come to grips with its need for migrants, as many times acknowledged by the EU Commission; and now also by the IMF.

### Ladies and Gentlemen,

Between now and 2050 Africa will double its population. Even if it grows economically as fast, or faster than it is doing right now, Africa is likely to generate a much bigger flow of young Africans looking for opportunities in an ageing Europe. Find the right policies and processes to transform such a flow into a win-win situation is the challenge ahead.

African leaders need to tackle migration comprehensively. Migration has the potential of bringing significant contribution to the economic growth and human development in Africa if it is tackled in a holistic manner and mainstreamed appropriately in development planning and strategies. It is necessary to mainstream migration into national development planning for economic transformation and jobs.

There is a vital role of migration in regional integration, and of cooperation, policy dialogue and partnership with all stakeholders – countries of destination and development partners; private sector, including diaspora entrepreneurs and investors; civil society, including migrants and Diasporas – in making migration work for development transformation and regional integration.

Given the multiplicity of stakeholders and actors, there is a need for coherence and coordination of policies and actions on migration and development in Africa. A number of migration policies have been adopted by African leaders under the auspices of the African Union. These include the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the African Common Position on Migration and Development and the Ouagadougou Action Plan to combat Trafficking in Persons,

especially women and children. In addition, free movement of people and labour mobility are recognized as important enablers for the regional integration and economic development of the continent.

The AU Commission in 2008 embarked on a process of developing a framework for harmonization of Higher Education Programmes in Africa. This initiative, part of the provisions of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa which was adopted by the Heads of State in January 2015, is designed to foster cooperation in information exchange, harmonization of procedures and policies, attainment of comparability among qualifications, and possibly the standardization of curricula, so as to facilitate professional mobility, employment and integration. Let us not forget Africans need visas to travel to 55% of other African countries. Free movement on the continent would entail the implementation of continent-wide visa free regimes including issuance of visas at ports of entry for Africans.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The bottom line remains simple to equate: Let us see migration in the larger context of mobility and let's contextualize this human phenomena so we can construct the solutions for the future.

Thank you.

