

Press Conference of April 28th 2015

Introductory remarks

Members of the press, Ladies and Gentlemen , allow me to thank you, on behalf of CARITAS Sénégal which is hosting MADE-Africa Secretariat and personally, in my capacity as Coordinator of Made-Africa steering Committee, for responding to our today's press conference. This press conference is organized on the occasion of the bereavement that afflicts the whole world, owing to the loss of about 900 people in the Mediterranean. These brave people whose only crime was to seek to improve their living conditions and their families' ones by braving the indifference, hypocrisy and oligarchy of developed countries, in an poverty island where resourcefulness remains the only response to the survival of these new wretched of the Earth.

MADE Africa (Migration and Development) which is an international project that arose as a result of a participatory approach for consultation and dialogue between actors from the North and the South who have been working for years, on the issue of migration and development , would like at the start of the press conference, to honour humbly and with considerable consternation, the memory of all the migrant women and men who died a painful death in the Mediterranean, due to oppressive and inhuman migration policies (a minute's silence).

MADE Africa's continental platform comprising African civil society organizations working on migration, is strongly condemning the silence of the African authorities, the sadism of unscrupulous smugglers and human traffickers and the indifference of some political leaders throughout the European Union.

MADE-Africa, engaged in advocacy strategies and actions as well as in the promotion of the rights of migrants and displaced persons in a world dominated by a multisectoral crisis, is lobbying for people and human development-centered migration policies. The network is an offshoot of MADE International which, in addition to Africa, brings together Asia, the Americas and Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you will understand that this today's initiative is to be taken into account in the international advocacy conducted by MADE networks and guided by 2 main concerns : i) to denounce African states' guilty silence and the hypocrisy of some European countries confronted to what is commonly called the globalization tragedy and ii) to urge African leaders to find the answer to the underlying causes of illegal migration and also identify quick solutions so that this will never happen again.

The global context of Migration in Africa

As you may know, migration is a universal phenomenon. It reflects men's dynamic looking for a space to be subjected to his reason. From the earliest of early times –and for decades, the movement of persons, geographically, has always existed. However, since the enclosure movements, the emergence of nation-states and the replacement of technology by man, international migration flows did not stop modeling itself on the trend of the international and local capital and related risks.

According to the statistics of the International Organization for Migrations in its 2013 report, more than 230 million people are living outside their country of origin. So sociologically, migration and human movement have existed for centuries. They are and remain thus source of advantages and potential for development through income generation and cooperation between communities of various and different cultural backgrounds. Throughout the history of mankind, women and men have migrated in search of work, knowledge, income for a better life. Even if it is true that the root causes of migration are different, it is understood that most migrant men and women are seeking to increase or boost their income in order to improve their living conditions. In this regard, migration is an efficient tool for stimulating the economic, social and cultural development of countries of origin, transit and destination as well as for migrant men and women. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the development of many countries today was made possible with migration.

However, it is becoming increasingly noticeable, especially in Africa, that migration trends remain more than ever marked by mass departure movements, often « illegal » ones subjected to repressive measures that contribute to the violation of those persons' human rights.

In West Africa, a region with a long history of migration flows, migrations are mainly characterized by dynamic patterns of young and feminine persons. West Africa appears also as the most evident example of intra regional migration flows in sub Saharan Africa.

In Central Africa, conflicts and crises are mainly accentuating human displacement in the forests which do not facilitate population movements. Lately, the humanitarian crisis in Central African Republic has accentuated the mass displacement at regional level, of people in state of insecurity. The problem of South Sudan, Sudan and Chad is another complicating factor in a sub region that is still seeking a political and economic stability.

As for East Africa and the Horn of Africa, the region continues to be beset by insecurity. Wars, conflicts in a background of kidnapping and hostage taking push many communities into forced migration. Security with armed groups and networks may accentuate population movements in those areas already weakened by drought cycles.

As for Southern Africa, it remains a destination area of some sub Saharan migrants looking for mining and other sectors jobs in a sub region that still bears the scars of Apartheid and of an economic independence which is seeking to consolidate itself.

The Violation of the human rights of migrants and evictions are often frequent with sometimes similar scenes as to what has been recently seen in South Africa.

As for North Africa, it is a transit and destination area for sub Saharans, who from there, seek to reach the Europe door by sea. However, North Africa has also become a migrating crossroad where flows of migrants from major neighboring geographical groupings of the regions (Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East) and even farther away, are meeting. With the increase of the sub-Saharan flows through North Africa, countries of the Southern Mediterranean, especially Morocco, Algeria and Libya have become migrants 'receiving countries. But these migration dynamics pose new challenges in a turbulent socio-economic context; (uncertain status, discrimination, socio- economic insecurity,) and lead these countries of departure to become also destination and transit countries.

The world before its conscience

Indeed, the strong partnership with developed countries on the hunt for migrants from under developed countries through very drastic measures at borders will indeed reinforce the human waves breaking on European shores. The operations conducted by Frontex, Mare nostrum, Triton and Poséidon could not successfully contend the trend.

The world conscience is thus called upon in front of the migration flow, of increasing importance and whose responses seem more oriented towards borders protection than the establishment of a coordinated and coherent framework for a global human mobility. It was probably President Abdou Diouf who recognized, when talking about migration from Africa to Europe, that I quote « one cannot stop the sea with one's arms ».

This message is still up to date. Today, it is no longer a question of whether to barricade in order to prevent nationals from under developed or conflict affected countries to go to more secure countries for themselves and which may assist them in finding jobs, but to facilitate the conditions of movement and access to employment as is the case with migrants from a developed country to Africa.

Following this tragedy of the Mediterranean, a great deal has been said and we have seen many strong reactions around it. Among these, we can mention the following:

- ✓ From the Pope who, on behalf of the Catholic Church has condemned a global policy that creates inequalities before calling for more solidarity between the States and the world's peoples.
- ✓ From the Italian government, who, overwhelmed by the catastrophes, has urgently called upon European countries and the international community for a better consequence management of these flows,
- ✓ From the authorities of the European Union, who quickly convened an emergency meeting of experts, which issued 10 recommendations and a special summit meeting of the Commission.
- ✓ Numerous demonstrations of support and condemnation to denounce all evil these shipwrecks have created in the Southern countries and the Middle East.

The strong proceedings of the EU meetings are in the press document provided. But we could say that the recommendations of those meetings are below our expectations as they are essentially focused on enforcement measures and not on development actions that protect migrants' rights.

In addition, all this is happening when in South Africa, Xenophobia is rocking Mandela's country which is hardly trying to do away with economic Apartheid.

Africa's guilty silence and complicity

Since the beginning of 2015, about 1750 migrants died at sea according to IOM, which is more than 30 times the number of deaths over the same period in 2014.

As all freedom and social justice loving people are moved by the tragedy of the shipwrecked of the Mediterranean, the rule of silence is prevailing among African decision makers, at least for the information taken up by the press and the minor steps taken by some decision makers. Thus, Africa as in the past is conspicuously silent.

The meeting of the European Union with the African Union held in Brussels on April 23rd did not however, lift the veil on Africa's guilty silence. The proceedings of the Brussels meeting thus show a true imbalance of the power relations between Europe which seeks to protect itself from the migrant people through a strengthened security system and Africa which is hiding behind a guilty silence for causing the mass exodus of its brave women and men whose unsustainable living conditions in the continent, have ended up working them over. Anything goes when the time comes to move away from a precarious situation and uncertain future while the continent is blessed with resources of wealth which only need to be equally distributed.

Africa' has a full responsibility in the current situation. Indeed stronger controls at European borders and readmission agreements signed with the European Union have turned the states along the southern Mediterranean into Europe's border guards by converting them

into refugee’s camps where migrants from the South are staying when they cannot go further.

« Irregular » and transit migration that developed in the region during the last ten years have deeply upset the old migratory systems. It is quite beyond dispute that the North Africa sub region is brought to greater prominence in the international migration “arena” since irregular migration control and the crackdown of “illegal” migrants and the issue of smugglers have become a recurrent issue in the relationships between United Europe and the states of the southern shore of the Mediterranean in general.

That may partly explain what happened these last weeks with the shipwrecks of thousands of people departing from Libya, which has become a stateless nation after the murder of President Khadafy with the complicity of the NATO forces.

When FRONTEX is announcing that about 500 000 to 1 000 000 migrants will find themselves crossing the Mediterranean in the coming months, what can we do?

MADE Africa’s Responses

As per our statement included in the press folder, MADE Africa is calling on an Afro-African gathering on migration and development in connection with the forthcoming Addis Ababa Summit on Financing for development and the post 2015 agenda scheduled in July this year.

Such action may lead us to a Special Euro-African Summit at the earliest opportunity.

Meanwhile, MADE Africa is proposing to organize an event to commemorate all the victims of the shipwrecks and particularly the Africans who are among them and hand over a memorandum to the European Union, the President of NEPAD, African and European representatives in Dakar and at the African Union.

Of course while we stay open to all proposals to this effect, we will keep on working with our focal points and members in Africa and around the world for more concerted efforts on this issue.

For further information :

MADE Africa is part of [MADE – the Migration and Development Civil Society Network](#). MADE connects civil society worldwide to promote policies for the well-being and protection of all migrants and communities

The network, active since early 2014, picks up from years of civil society organising around the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and takes forward [5-Year 8-Point Action Plan](#), a key result of the 2013 UN High Level Dialogue on Migration Development.

For further information, please visit the [MADE website](#).



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