



## **The Second Africa - Europe Ecumenical Forum on Migration Communiqué**

### **Background**

Between 17th and 21st March 2025, representatives from the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the Second Africa-Europe Forum on Migration. Building on the outcomes of the first forum held in Hamburg, Germany, in March 2023, we convened for this second forum, fully aware of the pressing challenges and opportunities that migration continues to present for Africa and Europe.

We affirm that migration is an integral part of humanity, yet it remains an area fraught with injustices. In light of this reality—and united by our shared commitment to human rights, dignity, and sustainable development in both Africa and Europe—we respond to our Christian call to seek justice, correct oppression, and show mercy and compassion to one another (Isaiah 1:17; Zechariah 7:9; Micah 6:8). We remain steadfast in opposing the criminalization and weaponization of migration and resisting migration management policies that disregard human dignity and safety. At the same time, we are intentional in discouraging irregular migration and combating human trafficking, modern slavery, and all other exploitative migration practices that hinder many from experiencing the love and goodness of God.

During our time in Addis Ababa, we had the opportunity to:

- Critically examine the externalization of asylum and migration policies and the impact of that on migrants and communities.
- Interrogate the role and fairness of existing bilateral migration agreements.
- Explore the intersectionality between climate change, conflict, and displacement.
- Analyze the role of the African Union and individual countries in migration governance. The role of individual countries in bilateral agreements, particularly how the EU engages directly with a single country instead of negotiating through the African Union (AU).
- Envision a new narrative for the Church in its mission to combat the marginalization of refugees and migrants, trafficking in persons, and modern slavery.
- Witness the inspiring work done by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to promote the rights and well-being of migrants.

We noted the growing frustration among a significant proportion of young Africans who are seeking every possible avenue to migrate in pursuit of employment and better living conditions.



We also recognize:

- The increasing normalization and legitimization of the externalization of border control in Europe and the complicity of some African countries in the process.
- The rising negative narratives surrounding migration even as the demand for migrant labor continues to increase.
- The imbalance of bargaining power, and lack of transparency and accountability in bilateral migration agreements, which, in turn, perpetuate modern-day slavery, and other human rights abuses in migration.
- The prioritization of border security over human safety and sustainable development in migration management.
- The widespread misinformation and ignorance regarding the realities of both Europe and Africa, which further fuels irregular migration.
- Most of the migrations in Africa are intra-continental
- The surging number of unaccompanied minor returnees and the limited resources for reintegration support as expressed by the IOM office in Addis Ababa.

As we conclude this Forum,

We commend:

1. The remarkable work carried out by AACC member churches in Ethiopia, like many other churches in both Africa and Europe, addressing the plight of migrants and their efforts in providing care and support, fostering community reintegration, and fighting migration-related stigma. We encourage all churches to emulate their example.
2. The AACC campaign on “Africa: My Home. My future,” striving to address the push factors motivating irregular migrations from Africa.
3. The efforts of the Churches and Civil society organisations in Europe devoted to the protection of migrants
4. The efforts of the African Union in migration governance, the development and implementation of migration policies and in building the capacity of member states to address pressing challenges in human mobility.

These initiatives showcase how churches can be at the forefront of migration response, offering protection, economic empowerment, and reintegration support.

### **Commitment**

As the AACC and CCME, we jointly commit to:

- Accompany our member churches to play their prophetic and diaconal role in protecting the dignity, human rights and wellbeing of all people irrespective of their status.



- Challenge negative narratives on migration by developing and promoting life-giving theologies of migration, amplifying migrant voices and promoting inclusive dialogues on migration governance.
- Resist the normalization of border externalization and advance advocacy for humane and just migration policies.
- Facilitate mutual accompaniment between the churches in Africa and Europe responding to the plight of migrants.
- Positively respond to the African Union's call for the churches' accompaniment and support in facilitating the process of healing for migrants and their communities in the resettlement process and in pursuing accountability for missing migrants.

### **Call to action**

We call upon Churches, other faith-based organisations, civil society organizations, policy makers and the private sector in Africa and Europe to:

- Multiply efforts addressing the social, economic, ecological and political root causes of irregular migration and trafficking in persons.
- Invest in the protection and expansion of legal channels for migration to disrupt smuggling networks.
- Enhance Protection of migrants from all forms of abuse, expand safe spaces for their growth and development, and promote sustainable integration and meaningful reintegration measures for migrants.
- Transform Government's responsibility and accountability in migration governance to ensure that:
  - (a) All bilateral migration agreements are fair, transparent and possess reliable accountability measures.
  - (b) All migration policies prioritize the "protection of people more than borders."
  - (c) The protection of vulnerable populations such as children, their access to social services and enjoyment of their freedoms is guaranteed in every aspect of migration governance.
- Keep abreast of and, where possible, contribute to the work of the African Union on migration management and governance.