

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION CONCLUSIONS

1. On 23 July 2023, upon a joint initiative discussed by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic, Giorgia Meloni, and the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Kaïs Saïed, participating States and organizations¹ of the broader Mediterranean region, the Middle East and Africa (herein after also “the Region”) met in Rome in the presence of the President of the European Council and of the President of the European Commission to renew their shared commitment to addressing the political, socio-economic and climate drivers of migration and forced international displacement and foster legal and safe pathways for migration and more effectively counter human trafficking and migrant smuggling².
2. Participants agreed that the Conference will launch the “Rome Process” - a strategic, comprehensive, inclusive, multi-annual platform for collective action.
3. The “Rome Process” is founded on the common understanding that a committed, coherent and comprehensive response is required to support political stability and foster social and economic development, address the root causes of forced displacement, making a major contribution to promote legal migration, prevent and tackle irregular migration and human trafficking across the broader Mediterranean region, the Middle East and Africa, guided by the following principles: respect of national sovereignty including respect of domestic law; shared responsibility; solidarity; partnership among equals; migrants’ safety and dignity, and full respect of international law, including human rights, humanitarian and refugee law.
4. Participants agreed that only tailor-made, comprehensive, balanced and mutually beneficial partnerships between countries of origin, transit, and destination – supported also by relevant international organizations and financial institutions, civil society and public and private sector – can deliver the broad consensus, political will and financial capacity required to address migration challenges such as irregular migration and forced international displacement, including their root causes. Such strategic and forward-looking partnerships would help to build a long-term structural solution for the sustainable management of migration, while also providing for greater opportunities for people-to-people contacts.
5. They also recognized the contribution of regular and well-managed international migration to the development of societies at all levels.

¹ Participating States (in alphabetical order): Algeria, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Tunisia, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates. Participating institutions (also listed in alphabetical order): African Development Bank, African Union, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, European Investment Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Monetary Fund, International Organization for Migration, Islamic Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, World Food Programme.

² The commitment to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration adopted in December 2018 was recalled by participating States which are signatories to the aforesaid documents, which also welcomed the outcome of its first review by United Nations General Assembly in May 2022 aiming to foster a multilateral support to Member States efforts to implement its objectives.

6. In this spirit, participants committed to work together consistent with shared and differentiated approach in planning, mobilizing the most appropriate funding and implementing cooperation initiatives and projects for the development of Countries of origin and transit also to tackle the challenges associated with irregular migration flows in the broader Mediterranean region, the Middle East and Africa, including host Countries of refugees. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to address the drivers of irregular migration and forced displacement resulting from State fragility and insecurity, as well as from demographic, economic and environmental trends.
7. In particular, based on specific national needs and priorities, the above-mentioned initiatives and projects will be aimed at strengthening:
 - socioeconomic development, the fight against poverty and social protection;
 - job creation and skills development through quality education, technical and vocational training, entrepreneurship support, including for migrants, refugees and displaced people, especially in countries of origin;
 - essential services, such as access to energy, health, water and sanitation, housing and infrastructure;
 - legal pathways for regular migration;
 - the role of migrants and diasporas as development actors, including through investments, skills circulation, faster and cheaper remittance transfers, and the financial inclusion of migrants;
 - national efforts for good governance, promotion of the rule of law, and capacity building for public administrations;
 - a culture of mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect for human rights in order to counter violence, hate speech and extremism;
 - climate change adaptation and mitigation, environmental protection and the creation of a diversified energy mix, with a focus of developing renewable energy sources;
 - asylum systems and procedures, and migration management;
 - collaboration to ensure predictable and equitable burden sharing and collective responsibility, including host countries of refugees;
 - addressing compounded crises and natural disasters through strengthening preparedness and response mechanisms to minimize the displacement of people;
 - humanitarian assistance both for the emergency response and protracted situations.
8. In the same spirit and within the same regional contexts, participants also undertake to collaborate as appropriate in planning, mobilizing the most effective funding and implementing cooperation initiatives to provide support to refugees and their host Countries, prevent and curb irregular migration, notably by tackling smuggling networks, addressing the root causes of forced international displacement, and promoting orderly and legal mobility, including through humanitarian admission. They recognized the ambition and objectives of the African Agenda for Migration, which also revolves around the migration-development nexus and the shared responsibility of States.
9. Participants agreed to adopt a comprehensive routes-based response to mixed movements, in the spirit of solidarity and responsibility sharing. This approach envisions concerted efforts based on mutual consent in countries at all stages of key mixed movements routes, including in destination countries, to enhance protection to migrants and people forced to flee, to mitigate the exposure to risks of onward journeys, thus countering the trafficking and smuggling networks.

10. Based on specific national needs, the above-mentioned initiatives and projects will be aimed at:
- strengthening measures to prevent and curb irregular migration flows while preventing loss of life, also through bilateral or multilateral agreements to effectively combat smuggling of migrants by land and sea. In particular, disposal on land of improvised and unseaworthy vessels; retrieval or disposal of vessels used for irregular migration; blocking supplies of unsafe boats or boats intended to be used for unsafe purposes; enhance cooperation between customs and border authorities;
 - common actions, cooperation, and operational partnerships between law enforcement and judicial authorities to dismantle criminal networks engaged in migrant smuggling, and enhance national capacities for border management as appropriate;
 - sharing best practices and expertise in the fight against trafficking in human beings, including protection of victims of human trafficking;
 - promoting transnational coordination to prosecute smugglers and traffickers on the basis of their national legislation and to update it where this is inadequate or absent;
 - adopting measures to target financial interests of smugglers and traffickers and hinder their activity, disrupting their “supply chain”, while ensuring protection of victims of trafficking as appropriate;
 - measures to identify, track, freeze and potentially confiscate illegal profits from human smuggling and trafficking in accordance with national law;
 - encouraging comprehensive international partnerships on migration and forced international displacement, also in the field of readmission and guaranteeing the best conditions for reintegration of irregular migrants, involving relevant International Organizations, coupled with efforts to link reintegration to local development and addressing drivers that compel migrants to embark on irregular movements in the first place;
 - promoting of orderly and legal mobility to Europe and support integration processes;
 - enhancing communication and information campaigns raising awareness of the risks and dangers of irregular migration and efforts to crack down on online communication by trafficking and smuggling networks in line with national legislation;
 - promoting policies aiming at the possible introduction of adequate visa regimes towards Countries of origin;
 - ensuring accessible, efficient and transparent visa issuance procedures by countries of destination, in order to promote people-to-people exchanges, especially for categories who do not pose an irregular migration risk;
 - promoting initiatives and measures for the international protection of those in need.
11. Participants agreed that the adverse effects of climate change constitute a threat to sustainable development. They reiterated their commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and conveyed their full support to the upcoming UAE Presidency of the COP28 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Participants also concurred on the climate-energy nexus and the climate-refugees nexus, and agreed to enhance the role of Africa, the Mediterranean and the Gulf as hubs for renewable energy cooperation.
12. In the implementation of all cooperation activities related to the "Rome Process", Participants agree to promote a model of widespread, non-exploitative and sustainable development in Countries of origin and transit of irregular migration, and to pursue:
- an integrated and country-based approach to the various dimensions of development, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for

Development, with National Development Plans, and with commitments under the Paris Agreement (Nationally Determined Contributions - NDCs);

- the enhancement of already existing bilateral, EU and multilateral cooperation and collaboration initiatives in order to avoid duplication with existing processes;
- better opportunities for integration between the agricultural, economic and industrial sectors among the Countries participating in the initiative (*local content*);

and, with specific regard to the African continent,

- support for Africa in its demographic transition process, requiring substantial investment both in physical and human capital;
- enhance cooperation with countries and people vulnerable to climate change, by facilitating their engagement in just transition processes and significantly scaling up accessible and sustainable finance for adaptation and mitigation, and loss and damage;
- support for the 'green transition' and counteracting the effects of climate change, including on human mobility;
- development of renewable energy, by encouraging and facilitating investments in green, blue, and circular economies, also through strengthening the role of public-private partnerships;
- promotion of investment in infrastructure development, as needed to increase the competitiveness of products from Africa and reduce transport costs;
- encourage Multilateral Development Banks to facilitate concessional financing, technical assistance, and partnerships for countries of origin to foster sustainable development and inclusive growth;

and, with specific regard to refugees and host countries:

- ensure continuation of support for humanitarian response plan and to relevant organizations in delivering appropriate services.

13. These commitments aim to provide a broad-based, concrete and verifiable basis for action and cooperation among relevant stakeholders, as well as for mobilizing partnerships with public and private companies and other entities, including in the energy sector.

14. While recognizing the humanitarian-development nexus, participants will seek to leverage financial instruments and programs at national, regional and international levels prioritizing the scaling-up of those that have already proved to be effective.

15. Sharing the spirit, aims and approach of the "Rome Process", the participants invite International Organizations and International Financial Institutions, in compliance with statutes and regulations governing their activities, to consider the most appropriate forms of financial support for Countries of origin and transit for the implementation of the above-mentioned cooperation initiatives and projects.

16. For the financing of the above-mentioned cooperation initiatives and projects related to the "Rome Process", participating States and organizations, which so wish, will make available adequate financial resources.

17. Participants agree that the commitments contained in these Conclusions will be set out in an Action Plan, taking into account other relevant initiatives and regional processes.

18. A network of representatives from Participants in the Conference will be established for this purpose and shall meet regularly to identify mechanisms of coordination and follow up the implementation of the Action Plan.
19. The Action Plan will be specifically discussed and refined in follow-up meetings. These may be envisaged back-to-back with major events on the international agenda, such as the Italy-Africa Summit in the autumn, the G20 Summit in India and the COP 28 in the UAE in November-December.
20. Participants will seek to integrate the work of the “Rome Process” into policy development and delivery in relevant organizations, also taking into account existing multilateral mechanism and platforms for dialogue and cooperation, such as the Rabat and Khartoum Processes.
21. The “Rome Process” is based on the principles of cooperation, inclusivity, and mutual respect between all participating countries. Therefore, Countries not represented at the Conference are invited to express their interest and participate in follow-up meetings, specifically based on their commitment to provide a tangible, effective contribution to the objectives and initiatives of the “Rome Process”. Tunisia stands ready to ensure continuation of this process by hosting a next high-level event.
22. Considering the high relevance of the issues discussed today, the participants agreed that these conclusions will be forwarded to the Secretary General of the United Nations, and other relevant international and regional organizations and institutions.