

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)

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ECOSOCC and GIZ hold final Free Movement protocol Webinar in the 2-year series

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), successfully concluded a two-year expert webinar series on the Free Movement Protocol on April 25, 2024. The series, titled "Mobilising Africa: Promoting Free Movement for Growth and Development," brought together a panel of experts to explore the topic "The Road to Implementation of the Free Movement Protocol."

During his opening remarks, William Carew, Head of Secretariat at ECOSOCC, expressed gratitude for the fruitful collaboration between ECOSOCC and GIZ. He highlighted their joint efforts in raising awareness about the AU Free Movement Protocol and advocating for policies and initiatives that promote free movement while addressing security, social integration, and economic development concerns. Carew reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Member States in the ratification and implementation of the Free Movement Protocol, emphasizing the potential for socio-economic development and regional integration across Africa.

Professor Diego Arcarazo from the University of Bristol, provided insights into the intersection of European and migration law, underscoring the importance of active engagement from both state and non-state actors in ensuring the adoption of the Free Movement Protocol by Member States.

Mr. Brian Chigawa, a Migration Advisor to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) shed light on efforts by the African Union and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to address challenges hindering the adoption of the Free Movement Protocol. He highlighted ongoing dialogues between the African Union Commission and Regional Economic Communities (RECS) to strengthen the integration of the protocol's provisions across all stakeholders.

Mr. Chigawa emphasized the vital role of civil society organizations in grassroots awareness efforts and stressed the need for a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track progress towards Free Movement Protocol implementation by each Member State.

In his closing remarks, In his closing remarks, Dr. Gowtam Raj Chintaram echoed the appreciation for the ECOSOCC-GIECOSOCC-GIZ partnership outlined various awareness campaigns and engagement initiatives conducted since 2022 to promote

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the widespread adoption and implementation of the Free Movement Protocol across the continent. Dr. Chintaram expressed optimism that the webinar series' conclusion marks the beginning of continued efforts to raise awareness about the Free Movement Protocol across Africa.

Overall, the webinar aimed to concretize key steps towards the ratification of the AU-FMP by Member States while addressing common concerns regarding the free movement of persons. The session sought to facilitate the development of a roadmap to guide Member States in their approach to achieving free movement of persons.

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