Civil Society Consultation for West and Central Africa

on Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC)

Dakar, 8 December 2015

Organizers:

- Global Coalition on Migration (GCM)
- Caritas Senegal and MADE (Migration and Development Network) Africa
- International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) and MADE

Participants:

- Cameron, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Ghana, Togo, Senegal, Belgium, USA
- Invitees: IOM, ICMPD

Rapporteur: Fr. Alphonse SECK, Caritas Senegal and MADE Africa

1. **The main crises** affecting our two sub-regions are thus identified:

   - **Climate change** and its disastrous consequences especially in the Sahel countries, with droughts, food insecurity, flooding with forced population evictions, and often without accompanying measures for their resettlement;
   - **Land grabbing**, **mining extractions**, and their consequences on social peace;
   - **Refugee movements** following the crises which, although localized in one country, have consequences in neighboring countries;
   - **Abuses by the BOKO Haram group** in Niger, Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and those of **jihadi groups** in northern Mali that strongly undermine peace and social stability of the country and the region etc.

- **The Ebola epidemic** that led to the closure of borders, which in turn limited the movement of people in general.

The sources of the crises must also be taken into account in the mindset of prevention, with clearly identified mechanisms; they range from the quality of the supply of public services, equitable use of resources, the ability to develop plans for effective response and response to alerts, to maintain cohesion between the various groups living within the country etc. This crisis management requirement or **risk management strategies** are especially applicable for coastal erosion which is a symptom faced by many of our coastal countries.

2. **Context of our action:**

- On a global scale, the context of migration today is marked by quite an unfavorable impact. We are therefore faced with **the requirement to be effective in our interactions**; This calls for more resource mobilisation, including financial resources, to support programs that ensure the sustainability of actions. It is about addressing **the causes of the crises** and not only the crises themselves, through policies that avoid deadlock;
- We must also **pay particular attention to the causes of migration**; it must be managed in order to stay safe; migration governance is particularly important so that it takes place while respecting human dignity; should always remain a right for people to fulfill themselves at home or elsewhere.;
- The complexity of the issue of migration requires an open dialogue at all levels: the United Nations, the African Union, regional organizations such as ECOWAS, CEMAC etc.

3. **Initiatives that can contribute to the success of the MICIC initiative in our regions**

- The issue of migration management continues to be challenged by **weakness of the statistics that are being gathered**. Many situations are not or minimally documented, including at the state level. In the same

vein, it seems that although many government agencies and ministries are often involved in migration management, there is, regrettably, an absence or insufficient coordination and an absence of a more comprehensive framework.

- **Alerts of impending crises, and proposals by civil society should get better reception by governments**. This will ensure that civil society become interlocutors who are listened to by the governments of their countries.

- To do this, we feel it is necessary to put in place within countries, a **consultative framework between the State and civil society organizations,** to support at the local level, legal instruments for the defense of human rights and, by extension, those of migrants with the necessary harmonization and dissemination.

- This framework should help to **anticipate threats to migrants' rights and civil society**, and would serve as the appropriate place to launch the necessary warnings. Otherwise what we fear is that CSOs, without other means to be heard, will utilize the media, which will bear the risks of misunderstanding between the government and civil society, even though they should be partners in action.

- Specifically, this framework would bring together governments and non-state actors for **dialogue, reflection, analysis, recommendation, monitoring/evaluation, in short a place for advance anticipation**.

- In a crisis and emergency situations, cooperation between neighboring countries is just as necessary through multilateral or bilateral arrangements. Well managed migration between neighboring countries would be better coordinated, so that migrants do not face, for example, border closures due to what might be legitimate security concerns, but could be detrimental to the free movement of people. These same agreements between states would guarantee the protections of migrants settled in a third country, that they are not forced to leave and return to their home country because of a crisis.

- **The effective support provided to migrants and by governments and migration governance**; since migrants are increasingly not supported by governments and instead are forced to fend for themselves, migrants

become easy targets by terrorist groups that can recruit them, and exploit their precarious situation and vulnerabilities.

- **The management of returnees** requires real thought, because of their vulnerabilities. It should include appropriate accompaniment procedures to their final destination, and their effective integration back to their communities. In the context of Libya, the return of migrants was an important element that should be reviewed. This was the case in Niger in particular.

4. Some expectations directed to the countries participating in the MICIC initiative:

- **This initiative should be a forum for sharing best practices** in managing both crises and migrants caught in crisis. This forum should also include best practices on means which are necessary for effective action by governments and civil society. For example, how have countries like the Philippines or the United States, who have often been confronted with natural disasters, managed to formulate response or even anticipation strategies .

- **The MICIC initiative** should be able to promote programs, transnational information mechanisms, monitoring of migration flows and reception of migrants. It can build bridges between people, frameworks for collaboration and capacity building. This MICIC Initiative must work towards **a global governance more respectful of human rights** against the temptation to give priority to a security-oriented and "every man for himself" approach, in a world struck by crises and violence.