

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation and other representatives of Algeria, Austria, Chad, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Libya, Malta, The Netherlands, Niger, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, and the Deputy High Commissioner of UNHCR and the Director General of IOM;

Meeting in Rome, on 6th of July 2017, to participate in the Ministerial Conference “A shared responsibility for a common goal: solidarity and security” in order to strengthen the cooperation with the African countries of transit at the Central Mediterranean Route in fighting human trafficking, smuggling and exploitation, better managing and preventing irregular migration and enhancing border controls, building, for the European Countries, on the EU New Partnership Framework with Third countries and the Regional Development and Protection Programs as part of the European Agenda for Migration and the Malta Declaration of 3rd February 2017;

Willing to tackle the challenges posed by mixed migratory flows of persons in need of international protection and irregular migrants, between Africa and Europe; and acknowledging that countries see themselves increasingly touched as countries of origin, transit and destination of forced displacement and irregular migration at the same time;

Expressed their deepest concern for the suffering, abuse and exploitation of refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants, in particular women and children, and for the unacceptable loss of life along their journeys and reiterated their commitment to adopt all possible measures, in line with international standards, to rescue and protect those people whose lives are at risk, breaking the business model of the smugglers and traffickers and their ability to operate;

Committed to continue responding firmly and jointly to these challenges in all their dimensions, guided by the principles of solidarity and security, partnership and shared responsibility in the spirit of the Valetta Declaration and Action Plan, as well as the Khartoum Process and the Rabat Process;

Reiterated that this common cause shall be pursued in full respect for human rights, international law and the sovereignty of participating countries, in accordance with their national legislations and specificities;

Acknowledged the generosity of hosting communities in African Transit countries which are often the first ones concerned by large movements of people, resulting increasingly in protracted situations, and also stressed that it is crucial to build and

strengthen their resilience. All necessary tools for a better migration management - such as institutional and capacity building and financing for investment - should be provided in order to tackle this phenomenon by providing alternative opportunities for local communities reliant on migrant smuggling and granting support to improve cooperation on the return of irregular migrants. Voluntary return opportunities, reintegration assistance, also through full-fledged packages, and reinforced cooperation, including swift issuing of travel documents, are needed to facilitate returns.

Recalled that migration is a complex, global, long-lasting phenomenon requiring a comprehensive, balanced, evidence-based sustainable, long-lasting and coherent policy response, also through addressing its root causes; recognizing the benefits of well-managed, safe ,orderly regular migration and mobility between and within our continents, and the fact that poorly managed migration can create major challenges on countries of origin, transit and destination, and is often linked to smuggling, human trafficking, exploitation and other illicit activities that may pose security threats;

To this end reiterated their commitment to the efforts of the United Nations for the definition of the Global Compacts for safe, orderly and regular migration and on refugees, to be adopted in 2018; calling on the United Nations to consider inter alia the particular circumstances of transit countries in the discussions and negotiations that will lead to the adoption of those Global Compacts;

Agreed on this basis to sustain and support initiatives to address the multi-dimensional nature of smuggling, to mitigate the suffering of migrants stranded in Transit Countries and to support local host communities, and the efforts of the local Authorities, together with IOM and UNHCR.

To achieve this goal and on the basis of the positive experiences already developed we will focus on:

- sustaining local communities of African Transit Countries: by investing in the relevant regions, and creating new job opportunities for the local population, especially the young and women; supporting the resilience of hosting communities, including through rural development, food and nutrition security, health, education and social protection;

- supporting the African Transit countries authorities in their fight against human smuggling, human trafficking and exploitation, and sustaining their efforts in border control activities;

-increasing international mobilization in the fight against smugglers and human trafficking networks, building on existing instruments –notably the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime – and supporting national capabilities in transit countries;

-protecting migrants and refugees by increasing IOM and UNHCR capacities and host governments capacities to assist migrants and refugees in Transit countries and improving the existing channels of regular migration;

- supporting UNHCR activities to ensure effective and safe access to asylum and by providing legal alternatives to onward movements – including asylum seekers stranded in Transit Countries - with the support of the international community and other alternative legal pathways, according to their national laws;

-improving returns: by supporting IOM in increasing the number of Assisted Voluntary Returns in countries of origin and by assuring reintegration packages that can benefit both the returnees and their local communities in countries of origin; by strengthening consular cooperation and establishing swift procedures to manage efficiently all types of returns;

-intensifying further communication and information campaigns to strengthen awareness raising of the risks related to irregular migration;

Confident that this comprehensive approach could become a new effective scheme, starting from February 2018; to deal with migration flows at a global level and offer an important contribution to the definition of the Global Compacts.