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The FMM West Africa Project supports the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan in West Africa

ACCRA, 9 February- In 2015, about 1 million migrants arrived in Europe, with more than 2000 migrants losing their lives in the process. West African migrants featured in the top 5 countries of origin, which crossed the Mediterranean to arrive in Europe.

The ECOWAS Commission concerned about the successive tragedies of West African migrants in the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean, and determined to effectively address irregular migration in an integrated and balanced manner, adopted a Common Position on Irregular Migration, in Nouakchott, Mauritania, on 8 October 2015, at the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA).

The ECOWAS Common Position on Irregular Migration paved the way for ECOWAS' contribution to the Valletta Summit on Migration, which took place on 11-12 November 2015, and gathered the European Union (EU), EU Member States, African governments, regional economic communities, and other partners, to develop common solutions for the sharp rise in refugee flows, asylum seekers and irregular migrants to Europe, and the human suffering which has accompanied these flows. The Valletta Summit agreed on an Action Plan to enhance the management of migration flows in all their aspects. This Action Plan is built around five priority areas, namely Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement; legal migration and mobility; protection and asylum; prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; and return, readmission and reintegration. The implementation of the Action Plan will be supported by the "EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa", as well as relevant financial instruments of the EU, its Member States and associated countries.

From 9-11 February 2016, a meeting on the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan by ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania will take place at the Ramada Resort in Accra, Ghana. The Meeting will deliberate on initiatives for the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan by ECOWAS Member States, and serve to enhance migration stakeholder coordination and information sharing in the region. The first two days of the meeting will be dedicated to discussing initiatives that fall within the five areas of the Valletta Action Plan, and gather the ECOWAS Member States, ECOWAS Commission, civil society organisations and key partners. While the third day of the meeting will focus on the ECOWAS Commission's migration priorities, opportunities to support these priorities using all existing instruments, including the newly established EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing

root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. The initiatives for the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan by ECOWAS Member States, which were developed during the first two days of the meeting will also be presented to Development Partners, key International Organisations and donors.

The Meeting on the Implementation of the Valletta Action Plan by ECOWAS Member States is organised by the ECOWAS Commission with the assistance of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) within the framework of the “Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa” (FMM West Africa) Project, which is jointly funded by the EU and ECOWAS.

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For more information, please contact:

Bernhard Schragl

Spokesperson, Communication and Media Coordinator

ICMPD

Tel: +43 1 504 4677 2444

bernhard.schragl@icmpd.org

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is an international organisation with 18 Member States and more than 350 staff members. Active in more than 90 countries worldwide, it takes a regional approach in its work to create efficient cooperation and partnerships along migration routes. Priority regions include Africa, Central and South Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Its three-pillar approach to migration management – structurally linking research, migration dialogues and capacity building – contributes to better migration policy development worldwide. The Vienna-based organisation has a mission in Brussels, a regional office in Malta and project offices in several countries. ICMPD receives funding from its Member States, the European Commission, the UN, and other multilateral institutions, as well as bilateral donors. Founded in 1993, ICMPD holds UN observer status and cooperates with more than 700 partners including EU institutions and UN agencies.

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