

**ECOWAS REGIONAL CENTER FOR SURVEILLANCE AND DISEASE CONTROL (RCSDC),
WEST AFRICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

The vision of ECOWAS is to have “A borderless region where the population has access to its abundant resources and is able to exploit them through the creation of opportunities under a sustainable environment. An integrated region where the population enjoys free movement, access to efficient education and health systems, engages in economic and commercial activities, and lives in dignity, in an environment of peace and security”.

West African Health Organization (WAHO) is a Specialized Institution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) responsible for health issues. The West African Health Organisation was created by Protocol A/P2/7/87 of 9 July 1987 signed in Abuja by the Heads of State and Government.

WAHO's Vision is to be recognized by the Member States and the International Community as a proactive instrument of regional health integration that enables high-impact and cost-effective interventions and programs. For WAHO to fulfill its mandate on Disease Control, Epidemics, and other health Emergencies, 47th Authority of Head of States and Governments in December 2015 endorsed the regulation for the creation of RCSDC . RCSDC coordinates public health and epidemic response for the region. It has four main units; Surveillance and early warning, Health emergency and disaster management and Health Events & Risk Communication.

For centuries, West Africa has always been a place of significant mobility and is today the place of significant and complex mixed migratory flows. Hundreds of thousands of people move each year within the economic zone and to other parts of the world, including people seeking protection (refugees, asylum seekers, etc.).

This led to the development of ECOWAS Migration Policy of 2018-2028. The goal of the Regional Migration Policy (RMP) is to act as a coordinated and harmonized set of policies, strategies and actions addressing challenges raised by migration and opportunities, while harnessing the benefits of migration for the socioeconomic development of the ECOWAS region and its Member States, to strengthen intra-regional cooperation on migration to facilitate free movement of people, and to ensure security, stability, development and cooperation on the basis of the established processes of migration.

The ECOWAS supports the implementation of Kampala convention by creating a conducive and harmonized legal framework for the sustainable management of asylum seekers, refugees and Internally displaced persons in Member States.

As part of the efforts of RCSDC to reduce vulnerabilities among migrants and refugees, a workshop on the development of contingency plan was held 5-9 June 2023 in Abuja, Nigeria in collaboration with the Department of Humanitarian and

Social Affairs of the ECOWAS Commission. The objectives of the meeting are to understand the background and situation analysis of returnees, displaced persons, and asylum seekers in ECOWAS region.

The meeting highlighted areas of key interventions in cluster approaches such as One Health, Water & Sanitation, Food Security, Education, Shelter, Protection, Security, Community Engagement.

It was concluded that Contingency plan for internally displaced persons is an ECOWAS priority.

- Appropriation and application of the Kampala Convention by the States for better protection and assistance to the displaced/refouled.
- Mechanisms should be strengthened in order to guarantee protection and assistance programs favorable conditions for implementation
- ECOWAS should support resource mobilization efforts by States
- Cooperation and Solidarity between States, regional blocs and the AU
- There is a need for ECOWAS Emergency Fund
- There is a need to Launch an International Appeal by ECOWAS for Migrants and refugees.