Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations
866, UN Plaza, Room 304, New York, NY 10017.
Tel: (212) 363-0489 E-mail: info@kenyaun.org Website: www.un.int/kenya

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

TO BE DELIVERED BY

H.E. AMB. EKITELA LOKAALE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

DURING THE 13TH SESSION OF THE EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

ITEM 4

PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT OF MIGRANTS

THURSDAY 23RD APRIL 2026 FROM 15:00 TO 16:30 PM

CONFERENCE ROOM 6

Chair
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues

Kenya welcomes this timely discussion on the participation, inclusion, and right to development of migrants. At its core, this conversation reminds us that when migration is managed humanely, cooperatively, and with respect for human dignity, it can contribute meaningfully to development in countries of origin, transit, and destination alike.

The right to development is grounded in dignity, equality, and non-discrimination. Migrants, regardless of status, are rights-holders who must be protected from discrimination, exploitation, and abuse, and enabled to participate fully in the social, economic, and civic life of the communities in which they live. Development cannot be truly inclusive if migrants remain at the margins.

Inclusion is therefore not only a moral imperative, but also a practical necessity. Migrants bring skills, labour, entrepreneurship, remittances, and resilience that strengthen our economies and societies. These contributions should be recognized through fair, humane, and rights-based policies that ensure access to information, legal pathways, decent work, essential services, and effective remedies where rights are violated.

Kenya also believes that meaningful participation goes beyond presence alone. Migrants should have avenues to share their views, engage with local institutions, and contribute to decisions that affect their lives. In this regard, local authorities, municipalities, and migrant-led organizations have an important role to play in building trust, advancing inclusion, and strengthening social cohesion from the ground up.

Protection from exploitation must remain central. The non-punishment principle, effective labour inspections, ethical recruitment practices, and accountability mechanisms are essential to safeguarding migrants from trafficking, smuggling, forced labour, and abuse. Those who exploit migrants must be held accountable, while victims must be able to seek protection and remedy without fear.

Kenya has taken important steps to protect migrants in Kenya and to support Kenyans in the diaspora, including through its migration governance framework, the National Action Plan for the Global Compact for Migration, and the Kenya Diaspora Policy 2024. These efforts reflect our conviction that migration governance must be grounded in cooperation, shared responsibility, and respect for human rights.

We therefore emphasize that no State can address migration alone. Countries of origin, transit, and destination must work together through dialogue, coordination, and mutually beneficial frameworks to ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration. Strong international solidarity, evidence-based policymaking, and accountability are essential to addressing the vulnerabilities migrants face at every stage of their journey.

In conclusion, Kenya reaffirms that migrants, regardless of status, must be treated with dignity, equality, and humanity. Their participation should be encouraged, their inclusion ensured, and their right to development protected.

Thank you.