

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND RELATED ECA AND PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

*Economic Commission for Africa
United Nations*

The phenomenon of international migration comes with its opportunities and challenges including those which can be termed social, economic, health, political and environmental. In Africa, the opportunities may include free movement of the population, expanded trade, widened employment opportunities, and international remittances. The challenges may include the scarcity of standardized relevant international migration statistics; lack of human resources and institutions to handle international migration; security concerns; the spread of diseases such as Human Immuno-deficiency virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), tuberculosis and malaria; trafficking of women and children; management of labour migration; the brain drain; and the adoption and implementation of appropriate policies on international migration in cooperation with other nations.

This paper briefly examines the question of international migration and development in Africa, and presents related activities conducted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and its development partners in the region.

A. I

Despite increased awareness on the issues related to international migration and development, available information from the ECA International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) +10 Survey indicates that less than 50 per cent of the Governments in the region have taken any measures or adopted strategies, including changes in legislation to facilitate the reintegration of returning nationals in their communities and development activities (21 out of 43 responding countries). In addition, less than one third of the Governments had ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (12 out of 43 countries) at the time of the survey. Even fewer countries had started implementing the Convention: namely, Algeria, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Rwanda, South Africa and Sudan.

It is, however, encouraging to note that countries in the region have started taking international migration seriously in their policies and programmes. With increasing regional integration and globalization, this trend should increase and dominate future perspectives on migration in the region. But in formulating and implementing policies and programmes, there will be a need to:

- (a) Adopt standard definitions and share knowledge on international migration;
- (b) Take note of changing patterns of international migration and the necessary policy measures and programmes to promote labour export and to utilize remittances more effectively as a development tool (for sending countries), and measures to respond to changing international migration dynamics (by receiving countries).
- (c) Adopt appropriate measures to deal with population displacement within and across national borders as a result of conflict, natural disasters, and poverty, especially for humanitarian purposes with regard to refugees and IDPs; and
- (d) Devise mechanisms to deal with undocumented migration, especially the trafficking in women and children, as well as security concerns.

deepened implementation of required actions and to concerted effort to achieve the goals set for the programme period.

The countries noted the extent to which conflicts and poverty constituted important root causes of mass migration and forced displacement of population in much of the region. They re-committed themselves to promoting activities aimed at preventing and managing conflict, promoting good governance and the rule of law, and eradicating poverty. Of special interest, was the recognition that the future success of national and regional policies focused on these issues, would depend on the effectiveness of sound political and economic governance as reflected in the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

convened by ECA; Governance, Peace and Security, convened by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Agriculture, Trade and Market Access, convened by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); Environment, Population and Urbanization; convened by United Nations Habitat; Human Resource Development, Employment and HIV/AIDS, convened by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and Science and Technology, convened by ECA.

This paper, draws on the activities of the Human Resources Development, Employment and HIV/AIDS; Science and Technology; and Environment, Population and Urbanization clusters to report on issues related to international migration. ECA is a member of each of these clusters. The Human Resources Development, Employment and HIV/AIDS cluster focuses on enhancing the implementation of the NEPAD in relationship to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS and the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The cluster reorganized its priority areas around four sub-clusters: (a) education, (b) employment, (c) HIV/AIDS, and (d) health which aimed at promoting the NEPAD health strategy. In education, the cluster was instrumental in exploring the creation of an African database, in collaboration with IOM, on African professionals working abroad. This would provide an appropriate tool for objectively analyzing the impact of the brain drain in Africa. The cluster on Science and Technology is also a collaborator on the brain drain database, while the cluster on Environment, Population and Urbanization examines rapid urbanization in Africa and its propensity to increase international migration within the continent and abroad.

5. ECA as a Collaborator in the Activities of the IMP

International Migration Policy Programme (IMP) organized a regional Migration Policy Dialogue

7. ECA as a member of the Commission for Africa

ECA is a member of the Commission for Africa set up by Mr. Blair. The Commission's main objectives aim at conducting deepened analysis of Africa's development challenges to promote appropriate