



# International Migration and the Achievement of MDGs in Africa

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# International Migration and Development in Africa

- The loss of skilled Africans to the developed world has shaped the debate on the impact of international migration on development.
- However, growing evidence shows that international migration has positive effects on social and economic development in Africa.
- The estimated 3.6 million Africans in the Diaspora are directly and indirectly contributing to the achievement of the MDGs.
- Remittances and the income multipliers they create are becoming critical resources for the sustenance strategies of receiving households as well as agents of local and national development.

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# Migradollars

- In 2004, remittances to Africa amounted to \$14 billion
  - Morocco, Egypt and Nigeria are the largest recipients
- Households that receive migradollars tend to use the proceeds primarily for:
  - current consumption (food, clothing),
  - investments in MDG related areas such as children's education, health care and,
  - improvement in household food security through investments in agricultural technology.

# Africans in the Diaspora

- The voluntary movement of both low-skill, low-wage workers and high-skill, high-wage workers is increasing in Africa.
- The movement is fueled by the dynamics of globalization, in particular the structural needs of industrialized markets.
- The decision to migrate is also



## Africans in the Diaspora (cont.)

- The process of transnationalism has allowed African migrants to build and maintain multi-stranded relations that link together their communities of origin and settlement.
  - Hometown Associations
  - Investment groups
  - Religious groups
- Developments in telecommunications and transportation have been critical.
- These African migrants have become a key factor integrating African countries into the global economy.
  - They contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of their countries of origin



## Africans in the Diaspora (cont.)

- In addition to financial remittances, social remittances are also finding their way to local communities across the continent.
- However, most countries are still struggling with how to effectively harness the social and economic capital created by diaspora networks for the purposes of national and regional economic growth through:
  - migrant initiated business investments,
  - transfer of knowledge and skills,
  - the exploitation of migrant ethnic markets and enterprises.
- Ethnic markets and enterprises are spurring the demand for home-made goods, products and services among Africans in the Diaspora.
- This has also led to the formation of transnational enterprises.
- The financial goodwill of such groups can be tapped to help eradicate extreme poverty and hunger if with the right policy frameworks.



# International Migration and MDGs

- Africans in the diaspora transfer resources across time and space that can be effectively used to reduce poverty and enhance economic development.
- However, the impact of international migration on the achievement of MDGs in Africa is not easy to quantify.
- There is no simple cause and effect relationship between international migration and the achievement of the MDGs.

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# International migration and fighting extreme poverty and hunger

- Migration can have both positive and negative effects on economic development.
- At the national, regional or local level, remittances can spur development either in total or at the margin.
- Brain gains in destination countries can spur economic dynamism .
- Brain loss from poorer countries affects their ability to develop and fight poverty.
- At the household level, remittances can reduce the level, depth and severity of poverty.
- Remittances sustain livelihoods through increased purchasing power for food, education, health, consumer goods/durables, housing and other essential services.

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# Evidence 1

- Data from 74 low and middle income developing countries showed that on average:
  - a 10 percent increase in the share of international migrants in a country's population leads to a 1.9 percent decline in the share of people living in poverty.
  - a 10 per cent increase in the share of international remittances in a country ' s GDP also leads to a 1.6 percent decline in the share of people living in poverty.
- In the Kayes region of Western Mali, the mean amount of remittances received per household from immigrants in France in 1996 was CFA 740,145
  - amount far exceeds the World Bank's poverty line of \$1 a day or CFA 700 a day.

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## Evidence 1 (cont.)

- In rural Egypt, the number of poor households declined by 9.8 per cent when household income included international remittances.
- Kenyan families receiving remittances had more productive capital than non-remittance receiving families.
- In Burkina Faso, the percentage of the population living beneath the poverty line was reduced by 7.2 per cent (famil)4.2(i)-1.8(es.)TJt )Tj16.468396 TD-0.

## Evidence 1 (cont.)

- Across Africa, remittances are also reducing the proportion of people living in poverty through investment induced multiplier effects.
- Investments, venture capital and technology transfers from diaspora populations are stimulating local and national development efforts.



# International migration and children's schooling

- Progress towards attaining the MDGs requires rapid economic development.
- This process that can only be set in motion when high levels of educational attainment spread throughout entire societies.
- However, for most African countries, expanding access to basic primary education for both boys and girls is still a major challenge

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## Evidence 2

- Remittances are known to equip boys and girls in recipient households and communities with essential literacy and numeracy skills.
- In Zimbabwe, families that diversify their household portfolios through migration tend to have higher levels of educational attainment as compared to households without migrants.





## International migration, gender equality and women's empowerment (cont.)

- Traditional power structures that impact negatively on the status of women also tend to be weaker among diaspora populations:
  - female African migrants have a recourse to modern legal frameworks in destination places,
  - they are also exposed to different cultural practices.
  - values obtained in open societies are transmitted to communities left behind, altering the landscape of gender relationships
- Spouses of female migrants are more inclined to do household chores that are traditionally done by women in the places of origin.
- The feminization of international migration is also providing:
  - a means of economic sustenance for families left at the places of origin,
  - the future economic sustenance of female immigrants themselves.



## International migration and the health MDGs

- Although Africa had 906 million or 14 per cent of the 6.5 billion inhabitants of the world in 2005, the region has 24 per cent of the global burden of disease.
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- Poorly funded and equipped health care systems, poor governance and the loss of health care professionals through emigration, retirement and illness are undermining efforts aimed at tackling this disease burden.
- International migration has important consequences for all health-related MDGs – from reducing child and maternal mortality to combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.





# Negative impacts of international migration

- Movements of health workers from Africa to richer countries has led to significant hemorrhaging of essential skills in the health sector.
  - plunged most African countries below the threshold in workforce density that is essential to achieving health related MDGs.
- Percentage of doctors working in OECD countries:
  - South Africa has 37% (12,136 doctors)
  - Ghana has 29% (926 doctors)
  - Ethiopia has 17% (335 doctors)
  - Nigeria has 12% (4,261 doctors)
- In Zambia, only 50 of the 600 medical graduates trained in the 23-year history of the medical school in Lusaka still work in the country.



# Negative impacts of international migration (cont.)

- In terms of nurses and midwives trained in Africa and working in OECD countries:
  - Zimbabwe has 34% (or 3,183)
  - Ghana has 13% (or 2,267)
  - South Africa has 7% (or 13,496)
- Such losses impede the delivery of essential health services such as immunizations and outreach of other primary health care services.
- Consequently, these losses undermine efforts to improve infant, child and maternal survival.



# International migration and ensuring environmental sustainability

- Africa is today faced with a multitude of environmental challenges:
  - land degradation and desertification
  - destruction of tropical forests and loss of biodiversity.
- These environmental problems can in many cases be linked to:
  - local-level population-livelihood-environment dynamics
  - the impact of internal and cross-border populations movements,
    - E.g., the impact of IDPs and refugees on local environments
- Although international migration contributes to changes in population distribution and globalization, its potential positive and negative environmental externalities are not well known because of lack of data.

# International migration and ensuring environmental sustainability (cont.)



- The exodus to other countries can reduce pressure on natural resources in the sending communities.
- This demographic shift can have serious impacts on ecologically vulnerable areas and urban agglomerations through:
  - increased levels of pollution, waste disposal, and congestion.
- The transfer of remittances can indirectly contribute to ameliorating the negative links between poverty and natural resource exploitation.
- For instance, remittances were positively related to the degree of drought in Botswana- the worse the drought, the higher the level of remittances.
- The transfer of appropriate technologies from the Diaspora to communities of origin can lead to the sustainable exploitation of natural resources and land use



# Conclusions

- While the achievement of the MDGs in Africa will require a broad development agenda (e.g. NEPAD), the retention of African trained health professionals, teachers, and other professionals is essential.
- African countries in partnership with Western countries and Gulf States should find joint solutions to the massive brain loss that the region continues to face.
- The debate about social justice and the ethics of recruiting professionals, particularly physicians from poor African countries should also address some of the underlying push factors.
- African countries also need to put in place mechanisms and strategies that able the creation of a more conducive environment to leverage the financial and social remittances of the African Diaspora.

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THANK YOU

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