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Geographic Labour Mobility in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Geographic Labour Mobility in Sub-Saharan Africa

Paulina Makinwa Adebusoye

Abstract:

In recent years, globalization, with its attendant increases in trans-national capital movements and worldwide trade in goods and services, has spurred people to move, with much greater frequency, beyond Africa to industrialized countries in Europe and America. Given the link between labour mobility and development objectives, more empirical evidence is needed to further understanding of the development impact of labour mobility, and to enable African leaders to fashion the tools and instruments to manage migration for growth and sustainable development. This report sets out key considerations for filling some of these research gaps including available data and methodological issues. Analysing major migration patterns, including internal and trans-border migrations within Sub-Saharan Africa, international (inter-continental) migrations, and forced migrations particularly trafficking in women and children, it assesses what we know about the nexus between migration and development and how migration policy affects poverty reduction and growth.

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Methodological Issues	2
2.1. Public Data	2
2.1.1. Census data	2
2.1.2. Immigration and emigration statistics	2
2.2. Ad hoc surveys	2
2.2.1. Surveys Types	3
2.2.2. Hypotheses	3
2.3 Definition of key terms	3
2.3.1. ‘Diaspora(s)’	4
2.3.2. ‘Trafficking’	5
2.3 Facilitating data availability	5
3. Migration Patterns	7
3.1. Internal: national and trans-border migrations	7
3.2. International (Inter-continental) Migrations	9
3.2.1 Causes	9
3.2.2. Volume	9
3.2.3. Migrants	9
3.2.4. Destinations	10
3.2.5. Emigration of skilled persons – ‘brain drain’	11
3.2.6. Costs and benefits of ‘brain drain’	12
4. Migrations, Poverty Reduction and Development	14
4.1. Internal and trans-border migrations	14
4.2.1. Remittances	15
4.2.2. Direct Investments	16
4.2.3. Human Trafficking	17
5. Policy Response	18
5.1. Internal Migrations	18
5.2. International Migrations	18
6. Summary and Conclusions	22
Bibliography	24

1. Introduction

Geographic mobility or migration has always been an integral part of labour markets and livelihoods across much of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). These movements were linked with diverse factors including rural poverty, the labour demands of primary products such as cocoa and coffee for export, the mining industry, petroleum oil exploitation, long distance trade, and import substitution industries and employment in urban centres. Most migrations include men, women and children who participate in voluntary internal migrations within national borders or trans-borders between neighbouring countries in the region. Other internal and trans-border migrants are, however, forced to leave their homes on account of famine and poverty, natural disasters and environmental degradation, and violent conflict or persecution.

In recent years, globalization, with its attendant increases in trans-national capital movements and worldwide trade in goods and services, has spurred people to move, with much greater frequency, beyond Africa to industrialized countries in Europe and America. Voluntary migrants ranging from the highly skilled professionals to unskilled farm labourers are motivated by the desire for higher wages and better opportunities. Other international migrants are, however, forced to leave their homes on account of human trafficking particularly in women and children.

Given the link between labour mobility and development objectives, more empirical evidence is needed to further understanding of the development impact of labour mobility, and to enable African leaders to fashion the tools and instruments to manage migration for growth and sustainable development.

This report is based on a review of available migration literature, and is arranged in six sections. Following this introduction, Section two deals with methodological issues: data availability, *ad hoc* surveys, and some definitions. Section three highlights salient aspects of major migration patterns, namely; internal and trans-border migrations within Sub-Saharan Africa, international (inter-continental) migrations, and forced migrations particularly trafficking in women and children. Sections four and five deal with migrations development nexus and migration policy respectively. The report ends with a summary and conclusions.

2. Methodological Issues

2. 1. Public Data

In order to gain greater understanding of the causes and consequences of migration, adequate migration data are essential. However, a major challenge to the study of labour mobility in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is the dearth of migration data and the doubtful quality of those few that exist.¹

2.1.1. Census data

A popular source of migration data is population census. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has declared census data as the basic and perhaps more reliable source of information on international migration in the Africa region (UNECA, 1983). However, not many African countries have conducted regular censuses and some have not held a census within the last ten years. Moreover, where available, census data face a major drawback as they provide data on stocks rather than flows of migrants and contain little additional information on migration.

2. 1. 2. Immigration and emigration statistics

Data collected at ports and land entry points are yet another popular source of migration data. Although these are available for most countries, they are less reliable for documenting trans-border African migrants who mainly utilize clandestine routes across scantily policed borders. Immigration data are probably more useful for documenting movements of non-Africans while noting their limitations due to inability of declared intentions (reasons for entry) to accurately distinguish between types of international movements.

2. 2. Ad hoc surveys

Data generated from *ad hoc* surveys are probably among the best type of migration data provided it is recognised that, in large countries, surveys may not lend themselves to

¹ Notable exceptions are countries that participated in the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS). LSMS were conducted annually in Cote d'Ivoire between 1985 and 1988; in Ghana for 1985, 1987, 1988, 1991, and 1998; in South Africa for 1993 and for the Kagera region of Tanzania in 1993. See <http://www.worldbank.org/lsm/>

systematic national coverage. Another pitfall is that a sample frame for international migration is lacking except in cases where the population of whole countries is covered. Since 1985, special surveys, the Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS) that include figures on internal migrations have been conducted by the World Bank in some African countries.²

2.2.1. Surveys Types

A cross sectional survey approach is useful to elicit socio-demographic characteristics of migrants. However, given that a sample frame for migrants is usually lacking, another approach is an adaptation of a 'tracer study' utilized by this author in studies of internal migration in Nigeria. As the name implies, a tracer study involves a random sampling of households in known sending communities at favourable times (like during major festivals) when migrants return to origins. This is supplemented by non-random sampling at major destination city of those traced through previously established contacts.

2.2.2. Hypotheses

The study of migration is necessarily linked to micro level concerns of individual migrants and macro level environmental factors. It is generally profitable, however, to develop research hypotheses at the micro level since macro level influences (structural and systemic) work through the perceptions and decisions of migrants acting at the micro level. Migrants' actions are dictated by their socio-demographic characteristics as well as meso level influences such as associations and social networks. The advantage of surveys formulated at the micro level is that studies can be conducted based on individual interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions.

2.3 Definition of key terms

There exist different definitions for specific categories of migrants, which can result in incomparable conclusions. The Africa Union (AU) has made recommendations to its member states to utilize the *UN Recommendations on International Migration Statistics* that was jointly published by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD) and the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD). In addition, important key words such as 'diaspora(s)' and 'trafficking' that have gained currency in recent years, are defined below.

² See footnote 1 above.

2.3.1. 'Diaspora(s)'

The term 'diaspora(s)' is used either in its singular 'diaspora' or plural 'diasporas' to connote trans-national migrants who maintain ties with countries of origin. One writer, who prefers the singular form, defines diaspora as consisting of "migrants from a particular area living scattered outside their place of birth but remaining in contact with it through trans-national linkages" (Skeldon, 2003). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has utilized the plural form "diasporas"³, which is defined as "trans-national populations, living in a place but still related to their homelands, being both 'here' and 'there'".

It is, therefore, useful that each study is preceded by a definition of diaspora(s) and preferred spelling which should be used consistently. For example, the singular form, 'diaspora' is used in this report to refer to trans-national populations.

The study of African migrants abroad (the diaspora) poses special challenges: Many African countries do not keep records of departing citizens; and censuses of host countries capture only legal residents excluding a significant number of immigrants who are illegally living in these countries. Another major barrier to data collection on diaspora is the reluctance of diaspora populations themselves to respond to surveys and government inquiries. A report of the IOM contains suggestions to improve data on diaspora. These include partnerships between countries of origin and countries of destination to improve mechanisms for data collection and exchange of information, for example, among foreign consulates; and partnerships among different international sources of migration data; the United Nations Office of the High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), EUROSTAT, United Nations Population Division, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank (IOM, 2005).

³ The term "diasporas" avoids confusing these diasporas with the historic Jewish Diaspora, hence the preference for "diasporas" "without capitalizing the first letter... and in the plural ... to better express the plurality, the diversity and the individual interests within diasporas" (IOM, 2005).

2.3.2. 'Trafficking'

'Trafficking' as a concept poses several challenges. The UN defines *Trafficking in persons* as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receipt of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for purpose of exploitation". The legal definition thus places emphasis on force, coercion and deception as distinguishing features of trafficking in adults. In the case of children, trafficking in persons shall mean "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation" whether or not force, coercion and deception are involved (ILO, 2002).

Given that child fostering is practiced with the aim of improving the fortunes of such children in most parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in West Africa (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985), care is needed to define 'trafficking' in a manner that avoids confusing a trafficker with a legitimate foster parent. Children involved in trafficking should similarly be differentiated from children migrating voluntarily even though the latter may experience much of the same problems as those forced to migrate through trafficking. NGOs working on child trafficking often experience difficulty determining whether or not an intermediary who helps children to migrate is a child exploiter or a benefactor.

2.3 Facilitating data availability⁴

The AU, mindful that the lack of reliable migration data is one of the principal obstacles to effective migration management, has made the following suggestions for generating adequate and comparable migration data in African countries.

- Laws for collection and dissemination of data on migration
- Greater coordination between ministries and research institutions gathering migration data, including the establishment of a national migration statistics unit in charge of coordinating the gathering of migration statistics

⁴ At its third ordinary session, held in South Africa 18-23 April 2005, the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the Africa Union (AU) discussed a draft "Strategic Framework for a Policy on Migration in Africa"

- A systematised registration mechanism at embassies or consulates to record the number of nationals living abroad in order to provide them with the necessary assistance
- Capitalizing on technical, material and financial assistance from UN Agencies, International Organizations
- Implementation of existing initiatives under the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) concerning in particular the use of ICT to facilitate the collection and exchange of data
- Regional *fora* for further exchange of information, experience and perspective among governments, and through which a stock-taking of existing mechanisms and data could be undertaken; “best practices” highlighted; common definitions identified (such as those in the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration); and bilateral and multilateral possibilities of data harmonisation considered.

3. Migration Patterns⁵

3.1. Internal: national and trans-border migrations

Movements of labour in Sub-Saharan Africa predated colonialism. Pre-colonial labour migrations were spontaneous, little-organised movements which were generally circular, seasonal and of short duration. Pastoral nomads moved across countries in response to seasonal climatic change: Examples are pastoralists moving between Somalia and Ethiopia (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1983) between Kenya and Tanzania and between northern Nigeria and the Cameroons (Gwen, 1976). Sedentary farmers also moved seasonally in search of supplementary income during the dry and therefore slack farming period from the drier interior into the plantations (cocoa and coffee) of West Africa and also to the coastal farm estates (cotton and tea) of East Africa (Ohadike, 1974; Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1983).

The colonial administration also introduced far reaching structural changes, notably, rapid improvement of transportation systems, monetization of the economy, the deliberate development of mining enclaves and plantation agriculture and the introduction of taxes. These innovations created early regional inequalities, caused and dictated directions of labour movements. Consequently, in French West Africa, for example, there were periodic short-term migrations of labour from Burkina Faso (former Upper Volta), Mali and Togo to the coffee plantations of Cote d'Ivoire and the groundnut belt of Senegambia. Similarly, in British West Africa, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia obtained labour migrants from Nigeria and the French colonies of Togo, Mali and Burkina Faso (UNECA, 1983). In East Africa, colonial labour laws encouraged circular labour movement. Families lived in labour reserves from which men were drawn to work on plantations while the rest of the family remained behind (Gould, 1995). With the most active members withdrawn from rural economies, families left behind had to depend on remittances.

⁵ This section draws from Makinwa-Adebusoye, *International migrations in Tropical Africa: Current Trends*, 1990: paper written for IUSSP Committee on International Migrations, unpublished, and Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1992. *The West African Migration System* in International Migrations Systems, A Global Approach. Kritz et al. eds. Clarendon Press, Oxford

Another type of circular migration is the movement of secondary school children in East Africa. As a result of the colonial education pattern, the few schools that existed were not within daily commuting distance. Hence school children moved regularly within Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and this pattern of movement persisted until the 1980s. Workers from Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique and Malawi were recruited to Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa for employment in agricultural estates. Similarly, workers from Swaziland, Lesotho and Malawi regularly engaged in short term circulatory migrations to Central and South Africa to work in the mining areas and tobacco farms of Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa (Ohadike, 1974).

International (more correctly, trans-border) migrations during the colonial period remained largely within Sub-Saharan Africa occurring between neighbouring countries which were separated by arbitrarily drawn boundaries that sometimes cut across homelands of ethnic or language groups. There were also long distance movements between colonial blocs (between British or French colonies), which were facilitated and encouraged by colonial laws to ensure labour for colonial enterprises. After a comprehensive review of the literature on these long distance movements, Gould concluded: "The literature of the period was not primarily concerned with whether migrations were internal or international, but with general issues such as whether and to what extent they were responsible to changes in economic conditions at source and destinations" (Gould, 1974:351).

The formation of regional economic groupings such as the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), and Southern African Development Community (SADC)⁶ has reinforced these inter-regional migrations. The situation is, however, different in East African countries where voluntary labour circulation has decreased since the 1980s with the advent of conflicts that have resulted in an upsurge of forced migrations by refugees (Oucho, 1995).

⁶ Regional groupings in Sub-Saharan Africa include: ECOWAS- Economic Community of West African States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo); SADC- South African Development Community (Angola, Congo, Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe); COMESA- Common Market of East and Southern Africa (Members of SADC minus Angola and including Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia); UEMOA- Union Economique et Monetaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic

3.2. International (Inter-continental) Migrations

3.2.1 Causes

Quest for higher studies, higher wages, better facilities, more opportunities for advancement, incapacity of home countries to provide employment corresponding to the qualifications and skills acquired by the individual, as well as widespread poverty⁷, disparities between North and South and an expanding global economy are some of the factors responsible for the significant increase in movements outside the continent to countries in Europe and North America (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1992, UN, 2004).

3.2.2. Volume

The volume of African emigrants is not known with any degree of certainty. While the Africa Union (AU) reports that one third or 50 million of the 150 million international migrants in the world are Africans (AU, 2005), the ILO estimates that 20 million African workers are migrants and that the number of labour migrants in Africa today constitutes one fifth of the global total (ILO, 2002). In sharp contrast, the IOM attributes just 16.2 million of the total estimated 175 million migrants worldwide to Africans (IOM, 2003). These figures exclude large numbers of undocumented African migrants.

3.2.3. Migrants

Who are these migrants? International migrations involve men, women and children who have moved voluntarily; short and long term workers, commercial migrants involving the ubiquitous traders, students and the Professional, Technical and Kindred workers (PTKs). Many women are now moving independently of spouses or partners (UN, 2002). International migrants also include an increasing number of unauthorized and forced migrations of refugees generated from historical, political and ethnic factors as well as conflicts in East, Central and Western

(CAR), Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo)

⁷ Sub-Saharan Africa today is home to many of the world's poorest countries. Average per capita income (expressed in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP)) is lower in many countries than at the end of the 1960s. Incomes and access to income-generating and essential services are unequally distributed. Though women constitute an important growth reserve, their productivity is hampered by widespread inequality in education and access. The continent contains a growing share of the world's absolute poor. (UNECA, 2000).

Africa. Of great concern also are the increasing numbers of victims of “trafficking”, mainly women and children.

3.2.4. Destinations

While African emigrants are now found in many developed countries worldwide, choice of destination countries still largely reflect the ties with former colonial powers. France has had relatively liberal admission requirements for citizens from former French colonies while English-speaking migrants favour the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Table 1 shows number of African-born residents from five countries as revealed in the 2000 census of the United States of America (USA).

Table 1: African-Born Residents in the USA, 2000

Country of birth	Number
Nigeria	134,940
Ethiopia	69,531
Ghana	65,572
South Africa	63,558
Sierra Leone	20,831

Source: US Census, 2000, cited at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/print.cfm?ID=147>

Table 2 reveals that each year, between 1995 and 2000, 111,157 persons left Sub-Saharan Africa for the USA and Europe. The actual figures are probably higher as they exclude illegal immigrants. As the table indicates, in the period 1995-2000, more people moved from West Africa to Europe and USA than from any other region. Emigrants from West Africa account for nearly half of total mean annual movement from Africa during the period; nearly double the number of emigrants from each of southern and eastern Africa and more that five times the movement from Central Africa.

Table 2: Mean Annual emigration to Europe and the USA, 1995-2000

	Origin	To Europe (1)	To USA (2)	Total (1) + (2)	Total Population (1998 estimate)	Average Annual Emigration % 1995-2000
Total E. Africa	Somalia	5949	2744	8693	8175320	0.11
	Eritrea	770	686	1457	3879000	0.04
Total Central Africa		14385	1105	25481	169655140	0.02
Total W. Africa		8400	1171	9571	77895410	0.01
	Ghana	5840	4563	10403	18449370	0.06
	Senegal	4894	480	5374	9033530	0.06
	Cape Verde	2514	951	3465	412240	0.84
	Liberia	981	1817	2798	2961520	0.09
	Sierra Leone	910	1374	2423	4830480	0.05
	Togo	1155	225	1380	4258140	0.03
	Gambia	1008	196	1204	1223810	0.10
	Guinea Bissau	884	89	973	1149330	0.08
	Mauritania	583	48	631	2493120	0.03
Total S. Africa		32642	19980	52622	254993000	0.02
	South Africa	10825	2323	13148	41402390	0.03
	Mauritius	2700	54	2754	1159730	0.24
	Namibia	607	26	633	1681820	0.04
	Comoros	290	2	292	530820	0.05
	Seychelles	52	14	66	78850	0.08
Total Africa		84226	35404	111157	627642490	0.02

Source: Adapted from Black, Richard, 2004..

Notes: 1. Migration of Africa citizens to European countries, by citizenship, 1995-2001, Copyright Eurostat.

2. US immigrants admitted by region and country of birth fiscal years 1995-2001, 2002 Year Book of immigration statistics, US Department of Homeland Security, Office of immigration statistics 2003

3.2.5. Emigration of skilled persons – ‘brain drain’

Although data on the flight of skilled human capital latter or the ‘brain drain’ is highly fragmentary, recent reports point to the magnitude of the phenomenon. Since the mid-1980s, when the economies of many African countries worsened drastically many highly skilled workers including several medical personnel –doctors and nurses- who mainly received training locally at great public expense, have left Africa. According to the ILO up to 75 percent of persons emigrating from Africa to the US, Canada or OECD countries have completed

university level, or equivalent technical training (ILO, 2003). On average, migrants who leave from Africa have had schooling that is three times as long as the average national population at migrants' destination (UN, 2002).

A case study of Ghana exemplifies how damaging the 'brain drain' can be as several cadres of health personnel have left Ghana to the detriment of health care provision in the country. As shown in table 3, in the period between 1995 and 2002, nearly a quarter of various cadres of health workers who were trained in Ghana emigrated. Those migrating include more than two thirds of medical officers (General Practitioners) who left Ghana to seek livelihoods abroad. The migration of a significant number of trained personnel resulted in increased work load for the few remaining, thus contributing to the poorer health care in Ghana.

Table 3: Proportion of Health Workers Leaving as Percentage of those Trained, Ghana, 1995-2002

Profession	Trained	Emigrated	% Leaving
GPs/Medical officers	702	487	69.4
Dentists	77	21	27.3
Pharmacists	812	352	43.3
Medical Laboratory technologists	339	66	19.5
Environmental health specialists	1	1	100
Environmental health technologists	992	25	2.5
Nurse/Midwives	7876	1553	19.7
Total	10799	2505	23.2

Source: ISSER (2003) State of the Ghana Economy cited in Black, 2003.

3.2.6. Costs and benefits of 'brain drain'

The Ghana situation is similar to situations all over Africa causing African governments to perceive the flight of human capital or 'brain drain' as a major negative repercussion of international migration. The loss of health personnel is particularly felt because of HIV/AIDS scourge ravaging Africa. Uses of remittances and their impact on development are usually cited as the beneficial aspect of international migration. Whether and to what extent the beneficial effects of remittances outweigh migrations' negative effects is still a subject of concern and debate among policy makers.

Reflecting the concern of African countries, Olusegun Obasanjo, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria speaking in his capacity as the chairman of the Africa Union, decried the loss of PTKs as a major negative consequence of globalization in his address to the Ninety-third Session of the International Labour conference, in Geneva, last June (2005). According to Obasanjo: “While the brain and brawn drain may have some benefits in remittances from abroad, it still deprives the home economy of quality skills, leadership, experienced workers and an internal holistic capacity to promote overall development. At times we tend to get carried away with remittances and overlook the huge hole that the drain creates in our developmental agenda” (Obasanjo, 2005).

Remittances and direct investments by migrants abroad are further discussed below in the section on migrations, poverty reduction and development.

4. Migrations, Poverty Reduction and Development

4.1. Internal and trans-border migrations

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, migration is a significant livelihood strategy for the poor. These migrations, both rural-rural and rural-urban are considered necessary to sustain poor families. As many families in the region face economic hardship, decision to migrate becomes a family enterprise to which family members at both ends of the migration pole contribute to ensure the success of the strategy and the attainment of its two related goals; survival and the accumulation of human capital. A prospective migrant makes the decision to migrate in consultation with family members who, in most cases, bear part, if not all of the financial cost of migration. Urban-based family members and acquaintances from sending areas assist new migrants to adapt to life in cities. The moral and financial support to migrants is in expectation of reaping future benefit in the form of gifts or cash remittances (Makinwa-Adebusoye 1993, Oucho, 1995). Family members left behind in rural areas are of particular importance. In both the Sahel and South Africa these migrants continue to maintain rights over their land through family members left behind (Findley, 1997, Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1993).

The case of Burkina Faso, which is located in the drier Sahel region of West Africa exemplifies the importance of remittances emanating from rural-rural and rural-urban migrations within Africa. Burkina Faso is a major source of migrant labourers into coastal areas for the production of primary export crops, notably cocoa and coffee, in Cote D'Ivoire. Until the recent civil war in Cote D'Ivoire, remittances from migrants accounted for a substantial portion, around a quarter of the GDP of Burkina Faso (Black, 2004). These sums sent back to Burkina Faso by emigrants in Cote d'Ivoire keep entire families alive. The money is put to diverse uses: to buy food, to pay school fees or medical bills, to finance weddings, to purchase cattle, ploughs and agricultural vehicles, to acquire grain mills or shops, to buy plots for cultivation, to build houses etc. (ILO, 2002). A recent study of over 800 immigrant household heads in Abidjan suggests that the monetary transfer to family members both outside the country and those living in other parts of Cote D'Ivoire remain substantial even during the civil war.

As reported by Black (2004), Roy Stacy, Program Director of the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) Network, described the effect of trade liberalization and free movement of labour in West Africa as follows:

‘a spatial redistribution of people with approximately 8.0 million Sahelians dispersing into other parts of West Africa. Many of these migrants are now an important source of capital, ideas and improved agriculture management techniques, which flow back to the Sahel as a result of the livelihoods diversification that has occurred with the labour mobility.’

4.2. International Migrations

4.2.1. Remittances

Depending on the length of stay abroad, participants in contemporary international migrations from Sub-Saharan Africa gain financial, human, social and other types of capital⁸. Migrants can contribute immensely to poverty alleviation and sustainable development in home countries and more broadly to achieving the Millennium Development Goals⁹ by bequeathing one or a mixture of several types of capital gained in host countries.

Remittances from foreign workers to countries of origin represent the clearest and possibly most important link between international migration and development. It is a potential source of investment and augments the income of many families left in sending countries. Empirical evidence suggests that remittances have significant impacts on poverty and on long-term economic development; a recent World Bank study revealed that a 10 percent increase in the

⁸ **Financial Capital** in the form of remittances, is the most widely highlighted. But emigrants also gain in **human capital**, which **encompasses** the levels of education, training skills, knowledge and know-how of diasporas populations; **Social Capital** that involves social networks sharing values and trusts such as families, parents and friends in the home country; **Affective Capital** which “reflects (1) the personal interest of diasporas to “make a contribution” for home countries based on a sense of responsibility, or even guilt and (2) the products of “sentimental trade.” Paradoxically international migrants generate **Local Capital** which involves maintenance of localized ties with specific regions of origin(IOM, 2005).

⁹ The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are: eradication of extreme poverty, universal primary education, gender equality, reduction in child and maternal mortality, combating HIV/AIDS and malaria, ensuring environmental sustainability and development of a global partnership.

share of remittances in a country's GDP leads to a 1.2 per cent decline in poverty (World Bank, 2004). International migrations like internal migrations have become a successful strategy for poverty reduction in a significant number of households in Sahelian countries such as Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso. In these countries, many studies have shown that the decision to participate in international migration is often a collective decision, a tacit economic strategy among members of the same household (Ndione and Lalou, 2005).

Although data on remittances are scanty, it has been argued that the Africans of the diaspora are present-day Africa's most important donors abroad. According to the ILO, Ugandans living abroad send back an estimated US\$400 million every year, more than the country's total earnings from the export of its main agricultural product, coffee. Ghana's High Commission in London reported that Ghanaians abroad send between US\$350 and US\$450 million back to their country each year (ILO, 2002). According to Keita, Mali reportedly received about 113 million FCFA through the bank and an approximately additional 61 million through pockets and briefcases of travellers as remittances in 2002 from France-based immigrants (Keita, 2005).

In addition to their sheer volume, remittances possess certain characteristics that make them a key development tool. For dependent families remittances constitute a steady, reliable source of income and unlike foreign aid, they go directly to those that need them and to whom they were directed without any intervening and costly bureaucracy. Remittances tend to be less vulnerable to economic ups and downs and are less volatile because amount sent tend to increase in times of economic hardship in countries of origin because families depend on them. Furthermore, whether intended for consumption or investments, remittances have multiplier effects positively impacting development in countries of origin. Remittances constitute a potential source of investment, and augments the income of many families left in home countries.

4.2.2. Direct Investments

In addition to remittances, migrants abroad contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development in home countries by direct investments. More and more often, migrants organize within the host countries to contribute to the development of countries of origin by funding various "projects" which have had visible impact on poverty alleviation in the region of

origin. For example, migrants in France who originate from the Kayes district of Mali have formed an association which financed the installation of photovoltaic equipment for the electrification of the region (ILO, 2002). Moreover, a scholar has itemised various projects in the same region that have been funded in the past 20 years, by Malian immigrants in France from the Kayes district as follows; 12 pharmacies, 11 dispensaries, 7 maternity homes, 70 classrooms, one library, 45 teachers' accommodation, 180 wells, 6 earth dams, 5 water towers, one post office, 19 cooperatives and 45 mosques and 14 *medersas* (koranic schools) (Keita, 2005).

Groups of immigrants in several countries can also join together for greater development impact. For example, migrants within the European Union have set up a Coalition of African Organizations for Food Security and Sustainable Development (COASAD) whose aim is to provide expertise to countries of origin in Africa (ILO, 2002).

4.2.3. *Human Trafficking*

Forced migration occasioned by trafficking of women and child workers is, according to the IOM, the second most lucrative business after gun running¹⁰. The core element of trafficking is the fact that the victim is deprived of her/his will and is forced into slavery-like condition. Trafficking is one of the negative social consequences of globalization, and has been described in some quarters as the modern equivalent of the slave trade. The very nature of trafficking means that it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of victims. According to IOM figures, between 500,000 and 700,000 women and children are trafficked worldwide, each year. For Africa as a whole, the number of children subject to trafficking and to the worst forms of child labour is put at 80 million (ILO, 2002). The most active source of child labour is West Africa, where children are taken from Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria or Togo to work on farms or in domestic service either within the same sub-region or in Central Africa, and beyond. An estimated 800,000 children participating in internal migrations within the country are engaged in the worst forms of child labour in Cameroon alone (ILO, 2002).

¹⁰ IOM, <http://www.iom.int>

5. Policy Response

5.1. Internal Migrations

While labour mobility has, for more than a century, been an important livelihood strategy for poor people and households seeking to reduce poverty and diversify sources of income, most African governments seem to have little understanding of, or are yet to focus on the poverty-reduction effect of internal migrations. A reasonable conclusion to be drawn from the recent review of policies affecting migrations in Sub-Saharan Africa (UN, 2002) is that most governments are averse to migrations or at best maintain a neutral stance. It should be noted that these are mostly policies pertaining to rural-urban migrations, the predominant form of internal migrations and which, together with trans-border migrations between neighbouring countries, continue to outweigh international (trans-continental) migrations.

African governments are averse to internal migrations because movements from rural to urban areas create major concerns for the provision of basic services in cities. Hence, African governments focus on the root causes of internal migrations, which are under-development, poverty, socio-economic instability, population pressures on limited natural resources, and conflict. This perception has informed governments' policies to reduce out-migration and mitigate its negative effects such as general depletion of the rural labour force and rural exodus to urban centres and attendant overstretching of urban infrastructure and drastic shortage of housing stock and proliferation of urban slums. Government policies view these migrations as 'development failure' and direct efforts to keep persons in rural location by development of rural areas. A notable example is the 'back to the land' policy in Tanzania under late president Nyerere.

5.2. International Migrations

In recent years, however, the easy access to information about life and opportunities abroad, provided by the globalisation process, has spurred great increases in the numbers of Africans migrating to countries of the North. This new wave of trans-Atlantic migrations including a significant number of both male and female, highly skilled workers have caught the attention of

African governments with emphasis on assessing costs and benefits of migration in the context of development and poverty reduction in countries of origin.

African governments are concerned about the negative impact of 'brain drain'- the costs arising from the flight of skilled personnel from Africa. Although quantifying the loss of investment in the education and training of the migrant incurred by countries of origin remains speculative, it has been calculated, in respect of brain drain to OECD countries, that it costs developing countries on the average 20,000 USD to educate someone to tertiary level constituting a loss of 60 billion USD in educational investment on about 3 million migrants from developing countries (UN, 2005). Furthermore, brain drain is associated with significant social costs as it impacts families since such migrations may result in single-parent families. The loss to the health sector arising from large-scale migrations of doctors and nurses, discussed above, is contributing to inadequate health coverage for domestic population.

African governments are equally aware of the benefits of remittances and the importance of 'resourcing the diaspora' by which migrants can contribute to development in their countries of origin. These later considerations are responsible for national policies aimed at maximizing the benefits of international migration while minimizing the negative aspects. However, recognising that international migration is a complex economic, developmental, political and social issue, African governments are addressing migrations in a comprehensive view and through the Africa Union. Policies to determine migration management strategy that would take into consideration economic and other dimensions are being worked out collectively by all African countries under the aegis of the Africa Union (AU). The thrust of the policy is on the understanding that international migrations so that they become advantageous to sending countries. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government assented to the inclusion of a clause in the AU Constitutive Act to "invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora in the building of the African Union" (AU, 2005).

The New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), a holistic development framework expected to ensure GDP growth rate of over 7 percent per annum for the next 15 years sees reversal of 'brain drain' to 'brain gain' as a major priority (AU, 2005). NEPAD is utilizing a two-

pronged strategy. The first approach is the retention of Africa's human capabilities by targeting economic development programmes to provide gainful employment, professional development and educational opportunities to qualified nationals in their home countries. The second NEPAD approach to counter the effects of 'brain drain' is by encouraging nationals abroad to contribute to the development of their country of origin through financial and human capital transfers through short and long term return migration. To this end, The AU through its Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) organized the first "AU-Western Hemisphere Diaspora Forum" in Washington D.C. in December 2002.¹¹

In addition to efforts by the Africa Union to maximize the benefits of international migrations, at the national level individual countries have initiated migration legislation such as legislation on human trafficking, especially women and children, and enforcement of international conventions on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Dual citizenship laws have also been liberalized while major efforts are on-going to facilitate major contributions by diaspora organizations to national development. In Mali, for example, the government has created Le Haut Conseil des Maliens de l'Exterieur (HCME) which liaises with various Malian diaspora organizations (Cisse, 2005).

Skills, knowledge and technology can also be transferred in the context of activities organised by the IOM. IOM seeks to involve host countries and countries of origin in the management of migratory flows to limit the risk of countries of origin that feel that their highly skilled workers, whom they have paid to train, are being pillaged. One of IOM's programmes, Migration in Development for Africa (MIDA) no longer involves the systematic return of qualified migrants, as in the past, since IOM is aware that it is not a realistic approach. Instead IOM organises short stays back in their countries of origin for highly qualified migrants, long enough, for instance, to teach some university classes or perform complicated surgical operations before returning to their host country (ILO, 2002). There has also been some regional consultative process for better management of migrations. In 2000, the IOM and the International

¹¹ See the AU website www.africa-union.org

Migration Policy Programme (IMP)¹² initiated the Dakar Declaration, which was signed by most West African countries. The Dakar Plan of Action aims to promote the protection of migrants and strengthen their role in development.

¹² The International Migration Policy Programme (IMP) is an inter-agency initiative for government capacity building and cooperation involving ILO, IOM, UNFPA and UNITAR.

6. Summary and Conclusions

Historically, the migratory movements of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa have been closely related to the development of societies and to economic, social and political imbalances. The present pattern of migrations in Africa represents a complex picture featuring: (i) internal and inter-regional migrations to traditional immigration countries notably South Africa, Nigeria and, until recent civil unrest, Ivory Coast. Many countries such as Ghana and Uganda, due to deteriorating economic conditions went from being a receiving country to a sending one; (ii) marked increase in international (inter-continental) migration that is selective of highly skilled men and women into countries of Europe and North America; (iii) forced migrations as a result of violent conflict and trafficking in persons.

Statistical data on migration flows in Africa are incomplete and often outdated. According to AU (2005) relying on secondary data,¹³ in Africa, there are an estimated 16.3 million migrants and close to 13.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Internal and cross-border migrations within Africa historically followed a fairly regular pattern from poor rural to rural plantations, mines and to cities. These migrations involve men, women and children participating in rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-rural return migrations although women went to towns (Makinwa Adebuseye, 1990). Rural-urban migration is predominant spurring rapid urban growth. The UN estimates that urban population in Africa is increasing at the rate of 3.5 percent per annum, the highest rate in the world and higher than the annual rate of increase of the total population (UNCHS, 2001). Internal migration is spurred by a series of inter linked “push” and “pull” factors: declining agricultural yields, environmental degradation and conflict are some factors that push rural population to other rural areas or to cities. Additional pull factors to the cities are mainly increased opportunities for employment, education, and better access to healthcare facilities offered in cities.

Poor persons and families have used both internal and inter-regional movements to alleviate poverty and contribute to sustainable development. Strong links between migrants and their

¹³ UN Population Division, International Migration Report 2002, and Norwegian Refugee Council.

origins manifest in remittances that support rural livelihood and help strengthen linkages between rural areas and urban markets.

While international (intercontinental migration) to OECD countries, the USA and Canada is selective of the highly educated men and women, international migration shares some important characteristics of internal and trans-border migrations within Sub-Saharan Africa. International migrations, like internal migrations, are also used as a strategy for poverty reduction in a significant number of households as exemplified by countries such as Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso. Like internal migrations, decision to participate in international migrations is often a collective decision, a tacit economic strategy among members of the same household.

Because of its high educational selectivity, international migration has resulted in 'brain drain' and thus African States are increasingly concerned that their highly skilled workers, whom they have paid to train, are being pillaged. However, the flows of financial and knowledge-based capital, which are sent back home by migrants, as well as direct investments in home countries by returning migrants are among the most important contributions of international migration to poverty alleviation and long term developing of origin countries.

The *Draft Strategic Framework for a Policy on Migration in Africa* which was discussed at the Third Ordinary Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission, 18-23 April, 2005. Pretoria, South Africa, when accepted by African heads of state will become Africa Union's blue print for a comprehensive policy on African migrations. The document covers most of the elements of a good policy agenda including gender sensitive measures to protect female migrants from abuses, as well as plan for migration data collection and dissemination within the region. The progress made thus far in policy formulation is encouraging but challenges lie in the way of achieving the triple policy objectives of retention of prospective migrants, return of migrants to countries of origin and resourcing the diaspora.

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