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

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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. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2003), in 2000, the number of international migrants in Africa amounted to 16.2 million (2 per cent of the total population) compared to the world total of 175 millions (3 per cent of the world population) and 5.9 millions in Latin America and the Caribbean (1 per cent of the total population). These proportions may be considered small compared to regions with the largest proportions of migrants, notably Oceania and the Pacific (19 per cent), Northern America (13 per cent) and Europe (8 per cent). But they hide a number of changes taking place in migration flows in Africa. For example, the proportion of female international migrants increased over time from 42 per cent in 1960 to almost 47 per cent in 2000. The number of refugees increased from 79,000 in 1960 to 6.4 millions in 1995 although it eventually dropped to 3.6 million in 2000 (Zlotnik, 2003), and it is most likely to have currently gone up due to additional civil unrests in such places as Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan. Undocumented migration is known to exist, but no accurate and reliable data are available on the phenomenon. Labour migration and the brain drain are recurrent issues on agendas when factors affecting Africa's human resources are discussed.

The large number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Africa is attributed to conflicts, human rights violations, lack of democracy and strong democratic institutions, and natural disasters (Ndiaye, 2004). Labour migration and related international remittances continue to raise a number of questions regarding benefits to sending and receiving countries. For sending countries, international remittances, defined as the share of remittances in a country's gross domestic product (GDP), are said to yield a strong impact on reducing poverty (Adams and Page, 2003). They state that on average, a 10 per cent increase in the share of international remittances in a country's GDP will lead to a 1.6 per cent decline in the share of people living in poverty. In addition, IOM (2003) estimates that over the last 20 years, annual official remittance flows to many African countries surpassed inflows of official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI). For example, as a proportion of total financial inflows, remittances amounted to 66 per cent in Morocco, 51 per cent in Egypt and Tunisia, 35 per cent in Cape Verde, 30 per cent in Nigeria and 27 per cent in Benin and Burkina Faso. However, at the same time, the brain drain is blamed for an annual loss of US$500 million to Africa in what is termed the reverse technology transfer (Ndiaye, 2003).

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 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.

B. ECA'S AND ITS PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES ON MIGRATION

ECA is the major United Nations agency playing the role of policy analysis and advocacy, and of coordinating development activities in the Africa region. By nature, therefore, its activities include those on the characteristics and quality of life of human resources in the region. In the area of international migration, the following activities are notable:

1. African Center for Gender and Development (ACGD)

ECA, through African Center for Gender and Development (ACGD), plays the role of monitoring and evaluating the process of the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action. Among the issues covered in this process are: gender-based violence; international trafficking in women and girls; and forced prostitution and sexual harassment. These are issues closely related to undocumented international migrants.

2. Sustainable Development Division (SDD)

ECA, through Sustainable Development Division (SDD), plays the role of monitoring and evaluating the process of the implementation of the Dakar-Ngor Declaration (DND) and the ICPD Programme of Action and the related ICPD+5 Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme adopted in 1999. In the recent ICPD+10 review carried out by the Conference of African Ministers responsible for population and development in Dakar, Senegal, from 7 to 11 June 2004, satisfaction was expressed for some progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the DND and the ICPD Programme of Action. However, countries also recognized the persistence of extreme poverty and the existence of socio-economic inequalities, high levels of HIV/AIDS infection and high levels of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality, among other challenges. They, therefore, reaffirmed their commitment to

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).

In addition, ECA, through SDD, utilizes *Africa's Sustainable Development Bulletin* (former *Africa's Population and Development Bulletin*) to promote the exchange and sharing of experiences among countries in the implementation of the outcomes of major international frameworks related to sustainable development in Africa. The bulletin enhances discussions on critical regional population and development issues; presents briefs on trends and policies related to population, food security, agriculture and environment; highlights of achievements, best practices and constraints in the implementation of the international frameworks; and disseminates of information on research results, policy initiatives, policy outcomes, and national and regional activities. Issues contained in the bulletin include those on international migration, such as patterns of migration (causes and consequences), the brain drain, feminization of migration, human trafficking, migration and HIV/AIDS, racial discrimination and intolerance, and refugees and IDPs. There is no doubt, therefore, that the contents of the bulletin provide an important influence on planners and policy makers in Africa to rededicate themselves to dealing with the challenges of development concerns, including international migration.

For the future, there are plans to establish the working group of experts for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of DND and ICPD Programme of Action scheduled for 2005 to pay special attention to international migration and development, in collaboration with the African Union (AU), African Development Bank (AfDB), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), SROs, other regional institutions, and other Divisions in ECA.

3. Trade and Regional Integration Division (TRID)

In its policy analysis/advocacy activities, the Division, among other things, deals with the free movement of persons as a component of regional integration. In a review conducted by the Division to assess progress of sub-regional RECs in this area in 2002, it was observed that progress differs from the introduction of intra-regional passports by three Regional Economic Communities—Communauté Economique et Monétaire d'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Union Economique et Monétaire de l'Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)—to a long-term deferment by Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA). COMESA did not have a programme or a protocol on the free movement of persons. However, the East African Community (EAC) sub-region of COMESA was ahead of the rest of the COMESA sub-regions so that its second Development Strategy incorporated programme components on the relaxation of regional travel restrictions with the introduction of the East African passport and temporary passes, elimination of charges on temporary cross-border movement of motor vehicles, extension of border crossing services to twenty four hours and the provision of an exclusive airport immigration window for community citizens. These findings are part of the contributions to the debate on setting up an African Economic Community.

4. ECA as a Coordinator of the United Nations System Activities on the NEPAD

The United Nations agencies working in Africa meet in consultation, from time to time, under the chairmanship of the Executive Secretary of the ECA to discuss, harmonize and coordinate their activities in support of the NEPAD. Their work is coordinated under six clusters: Infrastructure Development (including Water and Sanitation, Energy, Transport, and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs),

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 Conference with 13 Governments from Eastern Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region, in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002. It was followed by the second Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in June 2003, attended by the same Governments. ECA was part of the collaborators in organizing the Conferences. The main objective of the first conference was to discuss priorities and establish common understanding on key migration and forced displacement issues, while that of the second one was to go into further depth on issues identified in Nairobi and, in particular, to begin to respond to the recommendations from the first Conference.

At the Addis Ababa Conference, an informal IMP/AU document entitled *"Towards the Establishment of a Strategic Framework for a Policy of Migration in Africa"* was presented to African Governments. The document was heralded as very useful for developing and presenting a coordinated migration policy position based on common priorities for Africa, and endorsed for further presentation to African Governments' expert group meetings and the AU Heads of State Summit with the objective of creating a common framework on international migration for use by the Governments in the region and development partners. The document is still going through the process of scrutiny. When it is finalized, it will become a major regional tool for guiding the Governments and their partners on international migration and development.

6. ECA and Coordination Activities of the Statistics and Population Divisions

ECA takes keen interest in participating in coordination meetings on issues of common concern to nations, regions and the international community. International migration has been, and still is, one of those issues. For example, the Commission contributed to the revision of the set of recommendations on international migration statistics which, among others, embrace internationally agreed definitions, foster the use of relevant sources of data on international migration and provide a framework for the compilation of statistics on migration flows.

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 actions and strengthen implementation of relevant policies and programmes, and to identify new responses within the NEPAD and other frameworks. The implications of international migration for security and development in the continent constitute part of the Commission's analysis.

C. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

From available information and activities reviewed, it may be concluded that the African States regard international migration as an important factor in development that requires special policies and programmes to manage. But a great deal remains to be done in the policy and programme areas. Future perspectives may be guided by:

- Holding a regional expert group meeting and conference on international migration to debate on the issues and harmonize approaches;
- Development of human resources and institutions to handle international migration, including security concerns;
- Intensified efforts to collect relevant, standardized and accurate data on international migration;
- Promotion of inter-State collaborative efforts to provide information on diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and related preventive mechanisms;
- Enriched research on the characteristics and impact of international migrants to inform policy;
- Continued debate on new approaches in migration policy and co-operation among origin, transit and destination countries;
- Strengthened efforts to identify the link between migration and trafficking in human beings, especially women and children;
- Enacting laws and policies to protect refugees and asylum seekers;
- Strengthened mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as good governance; and
- Developing partnerships and cooperation on international migration.

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