

**FOURTH COORDINATION MEETING ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations Secretariat  
New York, 26-27 October 2005

**ECA ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION  
2004-2005**

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

## ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEMAC	Communauté Economique et Monétaire d'Afrique Centrale
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CHGA	Commission for HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation
SDD	Sustainable Development Division
TB	Tuberculosis
TRID	Trade and Regional Integration Division
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire de l'Ouest Africaine

## A. INTRODUCTION

This ECA submission on international migration is a follow-up to our submission in 2004 on *“International migration and development in Africa and related ECA and partnership activities.”* It provides ECA’s additional activities on international migration in 2004-05

## B. ECA ACTIVITIES

Though international migration is not a programmatic area for actions and policy research at the ECA (no activities on international migration are included in the regular budget of the Commission), it has been frequently mentioned as an important factor in HIV/AIDS, regional integration and development activities in Africa. A forthcoming CHGA report considers international migration as factor that facilitates the spread of the AIDS virus. By contrast, international migration and cross border labor mobility are considered important pillars of regional integration in Africa.

Meanwhile, a paper that will be published in the forthcoming issue of the Sustainable Development Bulletin of the SDD argues that international migration in Africa presents an array of complex opportunities and challenges such as free movement of the population, expanded trade, widened employment opportunities, and international remittances, scarcity of standardized relevant international migration statistics, lack of human resources and institutions to handle international migration, spread of diseases (HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria) competition for scarce resources, trafficking of women and children, handling of migrant workers, the brain-drain, and the adoption and implementation of appropriate policies on international migration in cooperation with other nations.

The ECA’s Trade and Regional Integration Division (TRID) define regional integration as a framework through which obstacles to trade liberalization, markets, and the free movement of people are alleviated. Africa embraces the pillars of regional integration in the charter of the African Union, and seeks their implementation through the Regional Economic Commissions (RECS) such as CEMAC, COMESA, EAC, ECOWAS, SADC and UEMOA, and through the NEPAD initiatives. The free movement of people and skilled labor, and the right of residence are enshrined in the Abuja Treaty and the treaties of the RECS, with the aim of achieving them in phases.

In order to support and move forward on the regional integration agenda, the ECA/TRID undertook two policy reports titled “Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA)” The first report (ARIA I) was published in 2004 and the second (ARIA II) will be published in 2005. ARIA I considers international migration in context of human resources development and labor mobility. Cooperation and regional integration are considered as important for the African countries to overcome human resources constraints, through helping to achieve free movement of people and human capital.

Some measures to promote labor mobility and free movement of people between countries have been undertaken by some of the RECs. COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, SADC and UEMOA all have protocols and treaties that state free movement of people and the right of residence between their member countries. ECOWAS has ratified its protocol while SADC countries allow their citizens visa free entry for 90 days. However, the implementation of these protocols requires political will, which is largely lacking.

Moreover, cooperation between countries and economic communities on free mobility of labor has been obstructed by security considerations, lack of employment opportunities and competition for limited job opportunities. Due to paucity of statistics on cross country labor flows in Africa, ARIA I (2004) considered spending on education as a proxy factor for skilled labor mobility and capacity building for regional integration. The report indicates that an increase in education spending will promote international migration and the movement of skilled labor within the continent.

Considering international migration and labor mobility as major constraints in Africa, ARIA II (2005) report called for harmonization of labor laws and labor markets to encourage labor mobility across countries. The countries will need to relax visa requirements for people through adopting common travel documents and labor standards. Moreover, they will need to ratify and implement the protocols of the RECs.

### C. CONCLUSION

Some activities on international migration steered by ECA are going on in Africa although international migration has no directly programmed activity in the Commission's regular budget. A step towards incorporating a specific activity on the subject in the regular budget, would be a move in the right direction.

---

### ENDNOTES

Economic Commission for Africa. 2004. *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa*. ECA Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Economic Commission for Africa. (forthcoming 2005). *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA II): Rationalization of the Regional Economic Communities*. ECA Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Israel Sembajwe . 2005. International Migration in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges. *Africa's Sustainable Development Bulletin 2005:Assessing sustainable Development*.