



EU-Africa Cooperation on Mobility, Displacement, and Migration

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Migration: Challenges and Opportunities

Migration – movement of people within and across borders – is and has been a normal feature of human existence for millennia. Today, movement across borders continues for many reasons, including:

- As part of regular mobility
- As a coping mechanism in response to: sudden or acute events like conflict, disasters, abuses and repression, and destruction of livelihoods, or to chronic problems like climate change, inequality, and lack of economic opportunity.

Migration is often complex, and people may be on the move for many and sometimes multiple reasons. Such movement should be managed effectively for the benefit and safety of all involved, and in full respect of human rights and the specific rights of refugees; but never at the cost of stifling mobility or restricting people's access to protection from persecution or harm.

Mobility and displacement are both elements of migration – but only displacement is a genuine problem to be “tackled.” People are on the move for many reasons, including pursuing educational or career opportunities or reuniting with family. Moreover, the impact of migration is often favourable, with net benefits for the receiving countries in the areas of labour market, taxes and social contributions, and general economic growth¹. Migration also has some benefits for communities in countries of origin, including remittances, which while not a replacement for aid, have been shown to contribute to poverty reduction and development.² In this respect, migration is positively linked to development, rather than an issue that development helps to “solve.” Many of the reasons behind migration and its effects are therefore not problems that need to be “tackled.”

However, migration is also one way people may cope with genuine problems like conflict, the outcomes of inequality, and climate change. People who move in response to difficult problems can become part of complex situations for transit and receiving States, particularly when acute crises result in large and sudden movements as people flee. They may also

¹ OECD, “Is migration good for the economy?”, *Migration Policy Debates*, May 2014.

² United Nations Development Programme, “Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development”, *Human Development Report 2009*, pp.73

cause difficulties for their country of origin, depriving it of future and current professionals³ and even possibly resulting in loss of a generation. However a focus on stopping migration to address the challenges faced by transit and receiving States distracts from addressing the real root causes of threats to well-being, peace, security, and prosperity. It is these issues that require tackling in order to improve the safety and well-being of the people affected by them, regardless of whether they are attempting to cope through migration or by any other means.

Situations causing displacement require targeted responses to their root causes as well as interventions to provide for the safety, rights and dignity of the people affected by them. Nearly 60 million people worldwide are now displaced from their homes. There are many different causes, which can range from conflict in Syria and repression in Eritrea to climate change-related drying in the Sahel. The EU must avoid taking a Euro-centric view of these “root causes” which are many and diverse, and which principally affect the countries of origin of migrants and their neighbours. Addressing crises and chronic problems requires strategies aimed at dealing holistically with these situations and *all* their impacts, including, but not only, that of people being forced to flee.

EU-Africa dialogue on displacement must first of all recognise that the large majority of those displaced in African countries remain on the continent, and even in their own country or locality. Addressing the needs and respecting the rights of these displaced people and refugees is first and foremost the responsibility of the governments who host them. However, African and European leaders must work together to support durable solutions for people who have fled their homes, and while many African countries are host to the greatest numbers of refugees and internally displaced people, the EU must provide a fair share of support to meet their needs.

Development goes hand-in-hand with mobility. Development is not a “solution” to the “problem” of migration. In the first place, migration as a whole is not a problem in and of itself; secondly, evidence suggests⁴ that increasing human development in less developed countries is generally associated with higher, rather than lower, levels of mobility – both emigration and immigration.

More importantly, the ultimate purpose of development aid is to reduce and eradicate poverty.⁵ It aims to support the social, economic, political and environmental progress of a developing country over a relatively long period of time. The basic premise is that poor people should be put in a position to lift themselves out of their condition of poverty and inequality. Donors must not subordinate the ultimate goal of poverty eradication and reducing inequality to broader domestic or foreign policy interests. Development aid should therefore under no circumstances be used or instrumentalised to restrict any kind of mobility,

³ In 2010, the World Health Assembly adopted a new WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel. Ministers of Health agreed to stop recruiting health workers from developing countries unless agreements are in place to protect the health workforce, and to provide technical and financial assistance to these countries as they strengthen their health systems. See: http://ec.europa.eu/health/eu_world/docs/ev_20110915_rd02_en.pdf.

⁴ *Inter alia*: de Haas, Hein: “Migration transitions: a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration”, *Working Papers*, International Migration Institute. University of Oxford: 2010.

⁵ For the EU, this purpose is enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 208.

as this does not pertain to its central purpose of poverty reduction, and may even work counter to that purpose.

Recommendations for the Valletta Summit on Migration

In the EU-Africa Declaration on Migration and Mobility by the fourth EU-Africa Summit in April 2014, leaders acknowledged that “the benefits that migration and mobility can bring to both our continents, and that a comprehensive approach to migration and mobility are powerful vehicles for boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development for countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as to migrants themselves” and committed both to “strengthen international protection” for refugees and displaced persons and to “advance legal migration and mobility...between and within the continents.” When they meet again in Valletta in November, EU and African leaders must ensure that they adhere to the spirit of this declaration.

1. Recognise the distinction between “mobility” and “displacement”-- and therefore between people on the move voluntarily and those forced to move -- in national and regional policies as well as in Africa-EU cooperation on migration. Displacement is a negative impact stemming from many different causes which need to be addressed, while people who are displaced are given refuge, assistance, and support to find a durable solution to their situation, including opportunities to practice a livelihood and contribute to the economy.

Mobility contributes to innovation, economic growth and personal development and should not be stifled. Mobility and free movement is an important aspect of regional integration, as demonstrated by the European Union itself in the formation of its own internal market.⁶ Effective implementation of the existing regional free movement agreements like the ECOWAS Free Movement of Persons’ Protocols, and general support of the letter and spirit of Article 43 on free movement of persons of the African Economic Community Treaty, must not be infringed in any way by EU-Africa cooperation on migration.

While there is an important distinction between mobility and displacement which must inform how they are respectively addressed, these are both aspects of migration, and people may be on the move for many and multiple reasons. In this context, a focus on addressing “root causes” of migration as a whole is counter-productive and potentially harmful. **Decisions on cooperation between Africa and the EU must be “fit for purpose” to tackle the situations that cause displacement while respecting mobility.**

2. Aim to resolve genuine problems of fragility, instability and crisis for the benefit of affected populations. The Joint EU-Africa Strategy has achieving human security, political stability and effective governance as a strategic objective.⁷ African and EU leaders should continue to cooperate on joint actions to prevent and resolve conflict and instability,

⁶ In the EU, post-enlargement mobility has boosted the long-term GDP of the “older” Member States (EU-15) by 1%, according to a report by Holland, Dawn, Tatiana Fic, Ana Rincon-Aznar, Lucy Stokes, and Pawel Paluchowski, *Labour Mobility within the EU – The impact of enlargement and the functioning of the transitional arrangements*, National Institute of Economic and Social Research, 2011.

⁷ “To ensure a peaceful, safe, secure environment, contributing to human security and reducing fragility, foster political stability and effective governance, and to enable sustainable and inclusive growth.” http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/2014_04_01_4th_eu-africa_summit_roadmap_en.pdf

situations which put lives at risk and, amongst other negative effects, force people to flee. In doing so, they must recognise that insecurity and violence are causes of displacement, and not their effect. Cooperation to counter terrorism and instability cannot come at the price of scapegoating displaced populations or putting the security of states before that of people. In this respect, migrants should not be portrayed as a potential “threat” and should be considered first as people in need of protection and whose rights need to be respected.

The immediate needs of displaced populations and host communities require full support, and people who have fled across international borders must have their rights as refugees recognised and respected. While further onward movement may be at times a secondary coping mechanism for a small number of displaced people, the situations that cause displacement cannot be addressed appropriately through the lens of stopping migration to Europe. **Africa-EU efforts to contribute to prevention and resolution of crises must be driven by and focus on the causes of instability and conflict, not on perceived causes of migration.**

3. Ensure that development aid is not diverted, distorted, reduced, or instrumentalised. Development aid is not a “solution” for the “problem” of migration; indeed, evidence suggests that mobility and development go hand-in-hand. Moreover, development aid has a sole purpose of reducing and eradicating poverty. The EU must adhere to the letter and the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty in this regard. Increased development assistance that respects this principle is needed and welcome. Stronger European support for third countries hosting internally displaced people and refugees, including in situations of protracted displacement, is also necessary. However further aid provided in the context of migration must be in alignment with the development needs of the recipient country and its people as laid down in the Busan development effectiveness principles – not aimed at addressing a perceived problem for Europe. In this respect, new and existing cooperation instruments must:

- **Allocate development aid in order to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, for the benefit of recipient populations which also adheres to development effectiveness principles**, recognising that overall migration may increase or decrease relative to development. “Tackling” migration is not an objective for development aid and development aid cannot be used to stop migration flows.
- **Ensure that geographic allocation of development aid continues in accordance with need in line with EU’s the Agenda for Change**; a country or region’s potential to be a source of migration to Europe is not an appropriate criterion.
- **Not be funded at the expense of official development assistance (ODA)**. The EU has collectively committed to achieve a target of 0.7% of ODA as a proportion of GNI. This commitment must be maintained and achieved with contributions that qualify as ODA for the purpose of fighting poverty and inequality in developing countries. Aid given for the wrong reasons - to help the donor more than the recipient country - is less effective at reducing poverty and inequality and addressing humanitarian need.
- **Not be used as a bargaining chip** to obtain agreements or concessions on areas of strategic interest to the EU. Development aid must not be linked to or conditioned by agreements on readmission, stronger border control or stifling of mobility within Africa, cooperation on organised crime, or other areas not directly associated with the efficacy of action to reduce poverty and fight inequality. Such instrumentalisation

of aid goes against key commitments signed under the Paris, Accra and Busan development effectiveness Agreements.

4. Put human security, human development and respect for rights at the centre of all policies and responses to movement of populations. Regardless of the reasons a person is on the move, national, regional and Africa-EU joint responses must respect fundamental rights as well as the specific rights of people in need of international protection. Security-led approaches to border control demonstrably fail to stem the movement of people while criminalisation of irregular migration has only increased the risks to people's safety and created incentives for smugglers and traffickers⁸. At Valletta, African and European leaders must instead take a people-centred approach to protecting migrants, granting international protection to refugees, fighting trafficking, and promoting safe and legal channels for migration. This includes:

- **Making cooperation on border control contingent upon demonstrated respect for human rights, mobility principles, and the rights of asylum-seekers.** Cooperation on security, border control and organised crime cannot be taken forward with governments that do not respect human rights and the rights of people on the move, including the Free Movement of Persons protocols and the rights enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention. Past experience with the shifting of border control to Libya, for example, has demonstrated that such short-term approach that disregards the respect for basic human rights is counterproductive.
- **Creating more and varied channels for regular labour migration.** Recognising the link between restrictive and security-focused immigration policies and the growth of smuggling and trafficking on the one hand, and the benefits of migration recognised by the EU and Africa on the other, the EU in particular must commit to broadening its labour migration policies beyond selected highly-skilled sectors and take a more progressive approach to creating safe, transparent, temporary as well as permanent option for migrants across sectors. Doing so is the only realistic approach to a well-functioning migration management system, but is also incumbent upon the EU in order to reduce the precarious and often exploitative conditions in which irregular workers find themselves when there is labour demand but insufficient legal channels.⁹
- **Find durable solutions to displacement and protracted refugee situations that respect human dignity and the needs of the most vulnerable.** Repatriation, integration and resettlement must all be considered as potential options for addressing the situations of displaced people. Europe in particular must do its fair share to resettle the most vulnerable refugees while supporting other solutions where appropriate.

⁸ *Inter alia*: de Haas, Hein, "The Myth of Invasion: The inconvenient realities of African migration to Europe" *Third World Quarterly*, Volume 29, Issue 7, October 2008, pp 1305-1322 and Massey, Douglas S, and Fernando Riosmena, "Undocumented Migration from Latin America in an Era of Rising U.S. Enforcement", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 630, no. 1, July 2010, pp 294-321.

⁹ B. Anderson, "Migration, immigration controls and the fashioning of precarious workers" *Work, Employment and Society*, Volume 24, Number 2, June 2010.