AFRICA MIGRATION REPORT

SECOND EDITION

Connecting the Threads:

Linking policy, practice and the welfare of the African migrant

African Union

IOM UN MIGRATION

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African migrant

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Foreword

The world is moving away from the anxieties and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, though Africa is still confronted by remnants of the unprecedented scale of challenges that the pandemic brought. This second edition of the Africa Migration Report (AMR) highlights the fact that migration and human mobility were at the core of the global response, as border posts became a focus for health policy decisions and travel restrictions.

The theme for this edition is **Connecting the threads: Linking policy, practice and the welfare of the African migrant**, and it looks at the Africa policy landscape that both preceded and resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to migration. For a continent that bravely united to face the largest health crisis in recent history, and in many ways outperformed the world's expectations in its response, the report also outlines what tools are needed to better understand and protect people on the move.
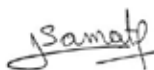
Building on the goal set by the first AMR to challenge the narrative on African migration, this edition looks at policy not as a static set of engagements but as a dynamic array of tools that can respond to ongoing and emerging challenges. The report invites us to think deeper about what already exists, how it was deployed during the pandemic, and what lessons can be drawn from that to enhance our collective capacity to manage human mobility.

The report reminds us not to underestimate what makes Africa resilient. Looking across local, national, and regional contexts, it reaffirms that Africa has a one of the world's most robust and human rights-centred migration policy landscapes. By highlighting the continent's long history of human mobility in cultural practices such as pastoralism and intracontinental trade, the report reminds us that Africa knows how to welcome mobile populations with dignity and respect. What remains is a full commitment to translate these histories of mobility and weave into a contemporary policy of managing human mobility that reflects distinct dynamics of the world's youngest continent.

The Africa Migration Report is a collaborative endeavor between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), reflective of our joint commitment to collaborating on a policy landscape for managing human mobility in view of the realities of life and history in Africa. It is one of the many joint initiatives that together aim to enhance migration governance on the continent, alongside the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, Joint Labour Migration Programme, the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the African Union Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants. Further, through its growing number of offices on the continent, IOM is expanding its work to assist with the migration policy landscape at the national level throughout Africa.

Both organizations remain committed to making migration work for African countries and their people, securing a peaceful, inclusive and prosperous future for all. These aspirations echo the promises contained in the African Union's Agenda 2063, the United Nations Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Compact for Migration and other international and regional commitments. Those promises can only be fulfilled, though, through a shared understanding of what migration represents and what tools are the best starting point for guiding our collective efforts towards realizing these ambitions. That is the core posture of this report – to layout the migration landscape and keep it rooted in the histories of the continent, in order to illuminate the path to a brighter shared future for all.

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INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

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At a time when an unwarranted fear of the African migrant in the Sahel and across the Mediterranean Sea had taken over public narratives on immigration, the first edition of the Africa Migration Report was published to change dominant discourses. The imperative was clear: we must "protect the millions of people who have been forcibly displaced by conflict and disaster and create opportunities for Pan-African solidarity rather than constrain them" (African Union and IOM, 2020:10). This urgency remains as critical today as it was then, because African people are on the move across the continent in search of both safety and opportunities. Beyond disasters and conflicts, migration has always been "woven into the DNA of African communities, economies and societies" (ibid.:3).

African mobility comes in a variety of forms. Millions of pastoralists criss-cross the continent every day in search of pasture for their livestock and trading opportunities. Vibrant trade routes that have survived centuries of change continue, bringing salt from northern Ethiopia into Egypt and camels from Morocco to Burkina Faso. Today, people keep moving in search of education and jobs, and away from conflicts and climate change. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), by 2050, there will be 2.5 billion Africans, one quarter of the estimated 9.8 billion inhabitants of the world (DESA, 2022). The implications for such a massive transformation compel us to understand and build policy around the reality of African mobility, with all its histories and complexities. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has alerted us to the risk of catastrophic consequences if human mobility is not managed in just and inclusive ways.

This second edition of the Africa Migration Report is about keeping history in focus as we develop policy to guide continental efforts to support human mobility. By mapping and analysing the interactions between policies developed at the continental, regional, national and even local levels, this volume will inform the policy conversation on the trends and patterns of migration on the continent, helping to frame creative long-term trajectories and actions.

Getting the correct data is a critical step towards this approach and in Chapter 2, Schöfberger, Nuwe and Ariño evaluate the current status of data on migration governance. This chapter also serves as a data repository for the rest of the report and gives context to the main arguments pursued by other authors. It demonstrates the impact of various policy interventions on migration outcomes in various countries and regions. Using DESA international migrant data estimates and IOM operational data, the chapter aids in the mapping of major migration trajectories and emphasizes the urgency of sharing protocols to support meaningful policymaking. The chapter also details current institutional mechanisms and the status of the implementation of the eight thematic pillars of the revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa, which is the African Union's strategic policy framework for migration. It provides graphic visualizations of important takeaways, offers exemplary practices and presents African regional comparisons with global data collected in 87 countries, of which 35 are African.

In Chapter 3, Nistri, Loudiye, Lee and Manke stress the necessity of collecting reliable quality, disaggregated and timely data, and putting them at the disposal of policymakers and decision makers. Those data should then be widely disseminated in universities, research institutions and local centres of knowledge production, requiring mammoth efforts to map out the major features, emerging needs and priorities of migration. They equally reaffirm that it is vital to inject more investment to reinforce data ecosystems and enhance innovation, closer collaboration and better coordination.

At the continental policymaking level, the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is essential for regional integration and can be harnessed to enhance both the protection of migrants and the rich contributions they make to the societies they leave and enter. In Chapter 4, Ndegwa, Atta-Mensah and Ndongo observe that migration policy is shaped at three levels: nationally; within the regional economic communities (RECs); and at the African Union Commission (AUC). By exploring the relationship between the AUC and the RECs, the chapter shows that greater cooperation at these levels has improved migration governance on the continent. Nevertheless, many obstacles to full integration persist. The authors flesh out the various policies of cooperation on migration governance to argue that the RECs can be useful spaces to articulate and implement better policies. They warn against excessive bureaucracy and vested interests, but believe that, if well managed, migration will contribute significantly to the development of the continent.

In Chapter 5, Ikome and Omolo note that nearly 85.5 per cent of Africa's employed population works in the informal sector, and that major strides have been taken to provide actors in the sector with the support they need. Informal trade is recognized in many African countries as a major area of economic activity. People create opportunities and markets by crossing borders with their goods and services. The chapter therefore urges those implementing the AfCTA to play a major role in boosting intra-African trade by reducing bureaucratic hurdles, with the long-term view of integrating the sector into the formal structures of the economy for sustainable economic growth.

In Chapter 6, Olivier and Mbokazi explore and analyse trends in labour migration against the backdrop of the evolving and complex policy landscape on the free movement of persons, free trade, and labour market access. Given that the free movement of people is a core ambition for the African Union, an elaborate policy space has developed around it that boasts numerous successes. However, a number of areas require further collaboration and effort. Labour migration governance is largely regulated through national policies, and national interests and priorities can become obstacles. Labour migration governance is a powerful instrument with direct impact on regional integration, though with exceptions for certain labour migration provisions contained in (rarely implemented) free movement instruments, and in bilateral arrangements. The authors pinpoint issues emerging from the weak implementation of existing regimes and the inconsistencies within these processes to argue that the overemphasis on temporary labour mobility leaves those who migrate permanently in a policy limbo.

In Chapter 7, Fumagalli argues that African countries must mobilize digital technologies for inclusive development. It is essential to take into account gaps related to income, gender and ethnic groups, with a view to mitigating inequalities and exclusions. Governments and continental institutions, as he discusses, should prioritize social and economic infrastructures over the top-down and blind adoption of technological innovation from outside Africa. For advances and innovation in digital technologies to benefit African migrants, migration management and development policies should align in an organic manner and reflect the African Union's Agenda 2063. Fumagalli reminds policymakers that data are not neutral, and that legislation and cooperation must be strengthened.

Climate change governance, particularly at the international level, has been key for African countries to advance the integration of human mobility in the global policy debates on environmental degradation and disasters. In Chapter 8, du Parc and Wanambwa explore the challenge of the climate crisis and how it is transforming human mobility. Arid and semi-arid areas cover large swathes of the continent, and in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Chad, for example, the nexus between climate change, conflict and migration is becoming a growing concern. The rate of climate-induced human mobility – caused by events such as floods, droughts and rising tides – is increasing, which exacerbates life outcomes for about 250 million people who rely and depend on rain-fed and climate-sensitive agriculture.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the glaring health gaps that exist across the continent. It illustrated the need for investments in health and health services and commodities to be extended to migrants as a form of social protection. In Chapter 9, Vearey and Martini examine the global policy landscape on health and migration, including World Health Assembly resolutions and the Global Action Plan on the health of migrants and refugees. They identify the connections between policy on the continent and the broader global context and argue that an evidence-based policy framework can support the successful development and implementation of migration-aware health policies. The ultimate challenge, as they identify, resides in establishing robust national health-care systems to support continental policies. Ultimately, effective, evidence-informed interventions to migration and health necessitate whole-of-government, whole-of-society and whole-of-route responses.

Unfortunately, missing migrants – that is, people who die or disappear in the process of migration, regardless of their legal status – remain a major policy thorn and an area of inaction that translates into thousands of deaths and disappearances. In Chapter 10, Black, Fonseca, Sorlin and von Koenig indicate that more than 12,000 deaths have been reported in Africa, and that at least 20,000 African citizens have died or disappeared worldwide since 2014, though they also point out that these numbers are certainly underestimations. Restrictive measures at borders and restrictive national laws cause migrants to use unsafe and risky routes. Internationally, the focus on deaths in the Mediterranean Sea has resulted from European governments' migration policies and their insensitivity to the histories of African human mobility. The authors urge policymakers to address the issue of missing migrants with more imperativeness, taking into account specific contexts. They deplore a lack of political resolve at national levels to tackle the issues of missing migrants. They emphasize three main areas in which States and policymakers can concentrate their effort and resources: prevention of further deaths and disappearances; resolution of cases of missing migrants; and support to families directly impacted by these tragedies.

Overall, the report argues that Africa has a robust policy context, especially at the continental level. However, all these policies must align with regional and national policies. A better policy regime around migration in Africa can only be enhanced by a deeper understanding of how policy is made and disseminated to manage mobility, and how it interacts with the long history of human mobility and the aspirations of the people. With an eye to these complexities, the AUC, RECs, national governments and international agencies and organizations have developed robust policies, but they sometimes lack the strategic partnerships, investments and political will to move the agenda forward. While Africa is home to some of the most promising developments in regional cooperation and collaboration, including the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, it is also home to some of the most intricate contemporary patterns of human mobility. There is no single solution that can address these layers of complexity, and it is crucial for policymakers to have a clear sense of the nature of the challenge in order to properly respond to it. The hardest but concomitantly most delicate task will be to fully understand and then manage mobility in ways that are just, inclusive and that place the welfare of the African person front and centre.

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* All hyperlinks were active at the time of writing this report.

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA:
INSIGHTS FROM THE MIGRATION GOVERNANCE INDICATORS DATA

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IOM staff oversee a local film production that is being led by Nour Abdi Garaad, a returnee himself.
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Chapter 2

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: INSIGHTS FROM THE MIGRATION GOVERNANCE INDICATORS DATA

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Contributors: Andrea Milan, Roberto Roca, Adriana Vides and Reshma Cunnoosamy

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the implementation of the African Union's revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and its eight thematic pillars by conducting a descriptive analysis of national and local data from the IOM Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) for 35 African Union Member States and for the years 2018–2022. The analysis identifies well-established policy areas as well as those with untapped potential for development. Areas that are well developed, in some cases with results better than global averages, include the adoption of national migration strategy documents and their harmonization with development-, gender- and environment-related efforts, the establishment of interministerial coordination mechanisms, and the creation of emigration- and diaspora-related structures (in line with the MPFA Pillar 1). Areas with the greatest potential for future development include the collection of migration-related questions beyond national censuses (Pillar 1), the improvement of migrants´ access to education and vocational training (Pillar 2) and the inclusion of displacement in national development plans (Pillar 7).

INTRODUCTION

The revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), adopted by the thirtieth Summit of the African Union in January 2018, serves as the continental strategic policy framework on migration. It offers guidance to Member States and regional economic communities (RECs) on managing migration, and provides policy recommendations and guidelines across eight thematic pillars and eleven cross-cutting issues.

Recognizing the need for a continental migration policy framework, in 2001, African Union Member States developed the first Migration Policy Framework for Africa, which Member States adopted in 2006. Following the evaluation of this policy framework in 2016, Member States then adopted the revised MPFA, along with a 2018–2027 Action Plan, in 2018. The revised MPFA aligns with the African Union Agenda 2063 in that it advocates for economic integration, political union and the free movement of people, capital, goods and services. It is also in line with the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (the

African Union Free Movement Protocol) and with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (both adopted in 2018). It is therefore a key framework for Africa´s integration.

This chapter examines the revised MPFA five years after it was adopted, with particular attention to the first thematic pillar, "migration governance". It does so based on MGI data that were collected between 2018 and 2022, through national and local assessments across 35 African Union Member States.[1] Developed by IOM and the Economist Intelligence Unit, the MGI Initiative assists States in assessing and enhancing migration governance. MGI data provide comprehensive insights into migration policies, data collection and institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The data analysed in this chapter were collected through MGI assessments at the national level conducted between 2018 and 2022 in 35 African Union member countries.[2] As the MGI framework is updated annually, data for 15 questions introduced over time were not collected in all 35 countries.[3]

The 94 MGI questions were assessed against their relevance to the eight thematic pillars and the 11 cross-cutting issues of the MPFA. This assessment led to the identification of 64 MGI questions that are particularly pertinent to the MPFA, each associated with a specific thematic pillar. This chapter analyses only the 29 most relevant questions. Additionally, correlations between specific question pairs were examined to understand the relationships between variables.

MGI questions primarily focus on policy frameworks, data and institutional mechanisms (see also IOM, 2022). They require categorical responses, often in the form of binary options like "yes" or "no". However, response options like "partially" – categories that provide for degrees of affirmation – are also available for some questions. Detailed justifications or qualitative data explaining these responses are also collected during the data collection process.

While MGI data offer valuable insights into policy inputs, institutions and processes, they have limitations. Notably, MGI data do not delve into policy implementation or assess policy outcomes comprehensively, due to the limited number of questions. Additionally, cross-country and cross-time comparability is hindered by national differences in policy and legal definitions, as well as by variations in data collection years across the 35 countries. Moreover, MGI data provide less information on internal migration (Pillar 7) and the nexus between migration and trade (Pillar 8).

The chapter divides countries into five geographic regions as per the 1976 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) designations, taking into account the specific MGI-covered countries in each region.[4]

ANALYSIS OF THEMATIC PILLARS OF THE REVISED MIGRATION POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR AFRICA

This section explores the eight MPFA thematic pillars according to the MGI data. Each subsection first provides a summary of the scope of the pillar and then presents key MGI data and evidence on the implementation of selected aspects of the pillar.

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1   Annex 1 provides a list of countries considered and an overview of their division into regions.

2   For more information about the MGI methodology, please refer to the global MGI report published in 2019 (IOM, 2019b:12–16).

3   The MGI methodology – which is grounded in SDG target 10.7 and in line with the Global Compact for Migration – follows a four step approach in each of the countries where data are collected. Each assessment starts with an introductory meeting between IOM country offices, the MGI and national authorities. Second, the Economist Intelligence Unit collects data through a desk review and interviews key stakeholders such as government authorities and IOM country offices and drafts a data matrix following the MGI indicator framework. It then produces a draft profile report, summarizing key findings on the priority areas identified by the government and the IOM country office. This draft report is then shared with national counterparts for their review and input. Third, the report and its findings are discussed in interministerial consultations across the country. Finally, the data matrix is shared with the government and the report, approved by counterparts, is published. This four step approach is guided by three principles: it is voluntary, consultative and sensitive to local specificities.

4   See Annex 1 for a breakdown of the regions and MGI coverage.

Pillar 1: Migration governance

Pillar 1 of the MPFA focuses on improving migration governance by complying with international human rights standards and laws, developing evidence-based policies, improving the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society, addressing migration aspects of crises and facilitating safe and dignified migration.

Thirty-one per cent of the African countries for which MGI data are available have already adopted a national migration strategy. Worldwide, 39 per cent of MGI countries have done so. In addition, some African countries are currently in the process of developing such strategies, though 49 per cent of the countries have not yet initiated efforts in this direction (Figure 1). In West Africa, Mali adopted the first national migration policy in 2014, and since then the adoption of national migration strategies has progressed rapidly. National policy priorities vary across countries. For example, Mali's national migration policy puts a focus on diaspora engagement, while in the Niger, the National Migration Policy (2020) establishes three strategic priorities: the exploitation of migration-related opportunities; protection and assistance to migrants, refugees and communities of destination; and migration management.

Figure 1. Is there a national migration strategy defined in a programmatic document or manifesto?
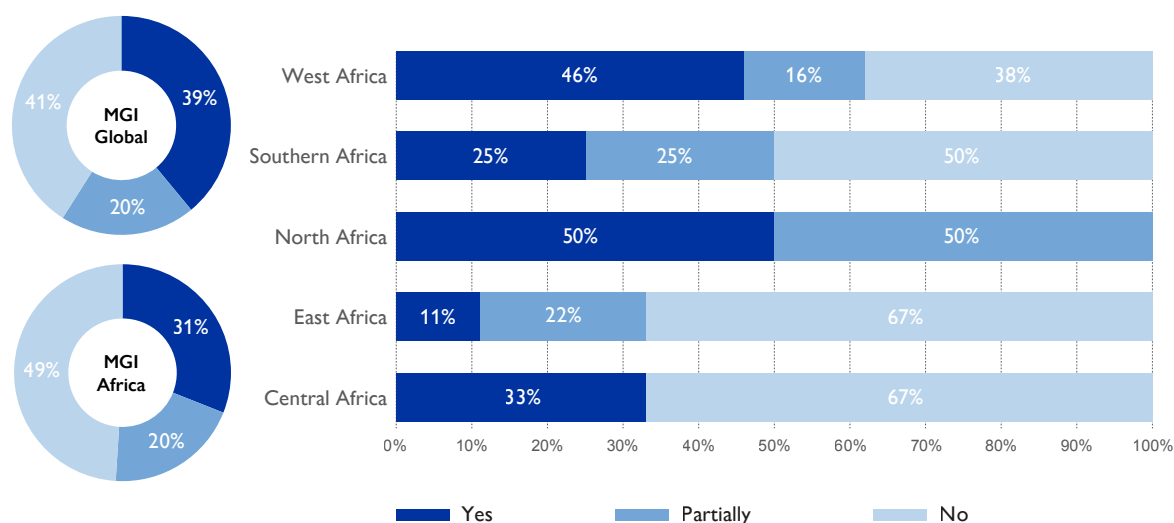
Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies if there is no implementation plan.

Thirty-seven per cent of the African MGI countries have established a national interministerial coordination mechanism on migration (Figure 2). Twenty per cent of the countries considered adopted both a national migration strategy and an interministerial coordination mechanism on migration. The proportion of African States with such a coordination mechanism adopting a national migration strategy is 20 per cent higher than those without such a mechanism. In Uganda, a National Coordination Mechanism for Migration was established in 2015 with the aim of strengthening coordination and partnerships. It is led by the Prime Minister's office and involves both State and non-State stakeholders. In Burkina Faso, an interministerial steering committee was created in 2017 to ensure coordination on the implementation of the National Migration Strategy. The committee meets twice a year and focuses on aspects such as migrants' rights and migration data.

Figure 2. Is there an interministerial coordination mechanism on migration issues at the national level?

MGI Global: 42%, 21%, 37%

MGI Africa: 37%, 37%, 26%

	Yes	Partially	No
West Africa	23%	23%	54%
Southern Africa	50%	25%	25%
North Africa	50%	50%	
East Africa	45%	33%	22%
Central Africa	33%		67%

■ Yes   ■ Partially   ■ No

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 84 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies, for example, if the coordination mechanism meets no more than twice a year, or if no more than three institutions or ministries are involved.

Migrants' contributions to socioeconomic growth are widely recognized (see, for example, de Haas, 2010; Quartey et al., 2020). These contributions are often differentiated into transfers of economic, human, social and cultural capital (see Schöfberger and Manke, 2023). Policymakers in countries of origin are increasingly adopting measures to harness benefits and reduce risks related to such contributions. "Migration and development" is also the first of the cross-cutting priority issues of the MPFA, calling for mainstreaming migration into economic development planning. This is in line with recommendations made in Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Agenda 2030 to align migration and development strategies.

Forty-nine per cent of African MGI countries have a national migration strategy that is at least partially aligned with development strategies. In 26 per cent of African MGI countries, the national migration strategy fully aligns with national development strategies (Figure 3). For example, in Namibia, the National Migration Policy (2020) is aligned with the country's long-term development plan, Namibia Vision 2030 (Government of Namibia, 2004).

Figure 3. Is the national migration strategy aligned with national development strategies?

MGI Global: 31%, 20%, 49%

MGI Africa: 26%, 23%, 51%

	Yes	Partially	No
West Africa	38%	24%	38%
Southern Africa	38%	24%	38%
North Africa	50%		50%
East Africa	22%		78%
Central Africa	33%		67%

■ Yes   ■ Partially   ■ No

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies if the two strategies/programmes are only vaguely aligned or if the national development strategy is vaguely defined.

Comprehensive and timely migration data are essential to inform evidence-based policymaking and programming, as well as to monitor their implementation (Azose and Raftery, 2019). Efforts to support evidence-based policymaking and programming have gained increasing attention in the past years in Africa and worldwide, and they are informed by changing policy priorities in migrants' countries of origin, transit and destination (see Schöfberger and Rango, 2023).

Enhancing migration data is essential to assess progress on the MPFA, Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. At the African Union level, the recent establishment of the African Migration Observatory and the African Migration Data Network testify to increasing awareness of the need to improve both the collection and the quality of migration data. Objective 1 of the Global Compact for Migration also focuses on migration data and provides recommendations to improve their collection, processing, analysis and dissemination. However, only 67 per cent of African MGI countries are collecting migration data through the inclusion of migration-related questions in the national census (Figure 4). For instance, in Mauritania, the 2013 and 2017 censuses featured a dedicated section on migration. Outside the census, only 14 per cent of countries collect and publish migration data on a regular basis. In Angola, the National Institute of Statistics 2018 report provides data on internal and international migration disaggregated by province and gender.

Figure 4. Are there questions on migration in the national census?
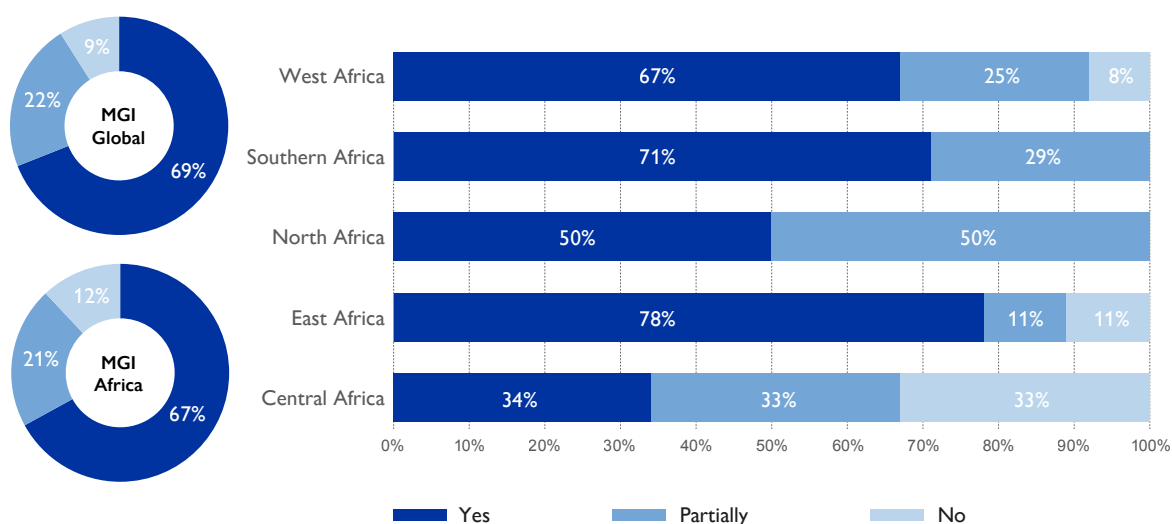
Note: MGI Global is based on data from 78 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 33 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 7 in Southern Africa and 12 in West Africa).
A score of "Yes" applies if there is a module in the census with migration-related questions.
A score of "Partially" applies if there are 1 to 2 questions integrated into other topics in the census.

The MPFA underscores the importance of "Inter-State and inter-regional cooperation" as a cross-cutting issue in the context of international migration. MGI data reveal that all African countries assessed are actively engaged in regional or interregional consultative processes and forums, such as those associated with RECs and the African Union. Additionally, most countries participate in bilateral migration negotiations with countries of origin and destination. However, the percentage of African States participating in bilateral negotiations (74%) is slightly lower than the global average (83%) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Does the county currently participate in bilateral migration negotiations, discussions or consultations with corresponding origin or destination countries?

	Yes	No
West Africa	54%	46%
Southern Africa	100%	
North Africa	100%	
East Africa	89%	11%
Central Africa	33%	67%

Donut charts: 83% / 17% and 74% / 26%

■ Yes ■ No

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.

MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).

The MPFA also encourages States to collaborate with non-State partners, including diaspora organizations, employers, civil society organizations and the private sector. For example, in East Africa, the Kenyan Government collaborates with the International Rescue Committee and the IKEA Foundation to support business opportunities for migrants in Nairobi. Such non-State actors contribute to migration governance in various ways, but MGI data show that only 20 per cent of African countries assessed formally engage with the private sector and social partners in setting agendas and implementing migration-related initiatives. This figure is lower than the global average (29%).

Meanwhile, environmental degradation and climate change are increasingly reshaping mobility and migration worldwide, including across Africa (Oakes et al., 2019). MGI data show that 32 per cent of African MGI countries have strategies to address migration associated with environmental degradation and climate change in place, whereas this is true for 21 per cent of MGI countries globally (Figure 6). In Kenya, the Mombasa County Climate Change Policy (2021) recognizes the impact of climate-induced population displacement and migration, especially in vulnerable areas such as informal settlements. The policy includes strategies like mapping climate risk areas, relocating settlements from high-risk zones, enhancing early warning systems and raising community awareness, with the County Chief Officer of Devolution and Public Service Administration overseeing their implementation.

Figure 6. The country has strategies in place for addressing migration linked to environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies when the strategy has not been updated in the last 10 years.

Pillar 1 of the MPFA recommends providing all migrants with access to basic health care, including reproductive health care, HIV medications and treatment for non-chronic diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of facilitating migrants' access to health care (WHO, 2021). Fifty-one per cent of the African MGI countries grant migrants the same status as citizens in accessing government-funded health-care services, while in 40 per cent of African MGI countries, access depends on migrants' legal status. In the remaining 9 per cent of countries, migrants have no access to health services. There are regional differences: Central and West African countries are more likely to grant migrants the same status as citizens, while in East Africa, 23 per cent of countries do not grant migrants any rights to access public health services (Figure 7). In Central Africa, Cameroon's Sectoral Strategy for Health ensures universal access to health services for all, including migrants.

Figure 7. Do all migrants have the same status as citizens in accessing government-funded health services?
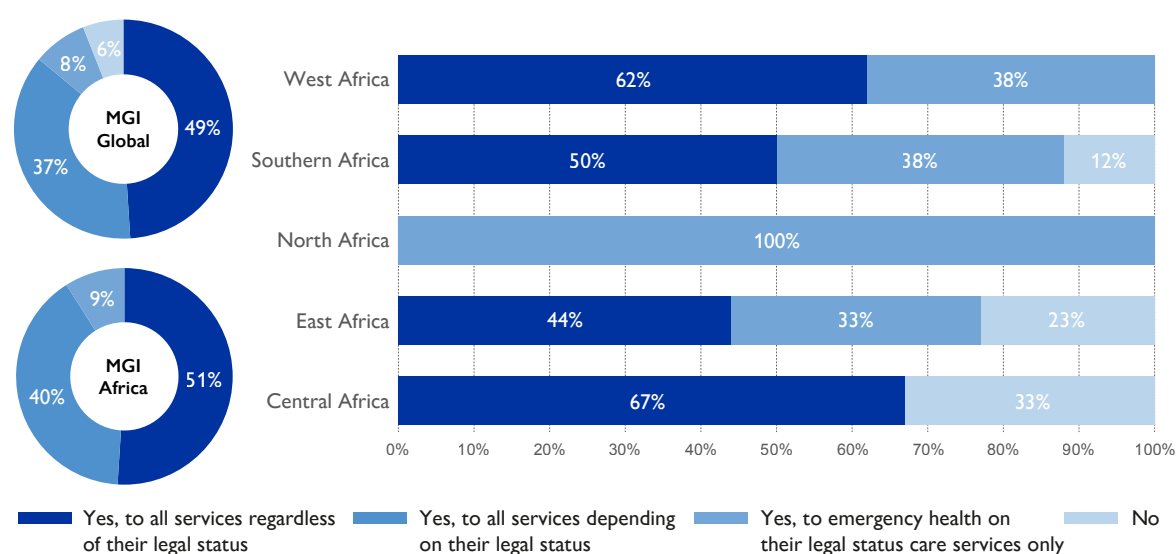
Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
If access to health care is dependent on migration status, but more than emergency services are available to irregular migrants, then the score should be "Yes, to all services depending on their migration status".

Pillar 1 of the MPFA also calls for States to facilitate family reunification. Pillar 6, on forced displacement, further recommends facilitating family reunification, particularly of refugee children and children of long-term migrants, in line with article 10 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNGA, 1989) and with article 23 of the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Studies suggest that family reunification can facilitate the integration of migrants (OECD, 2019). Eighty-eight per cent of the African MGI countries allow family reunification; 34 per cent allow it to all migrants in all visa or residency categories – for example, Rwanda allows it to all migrants and through a variety of permits – and 54 per cent of African MGI countries allow family reunification to migrants in some types of visa or residency categories (Figure 8).

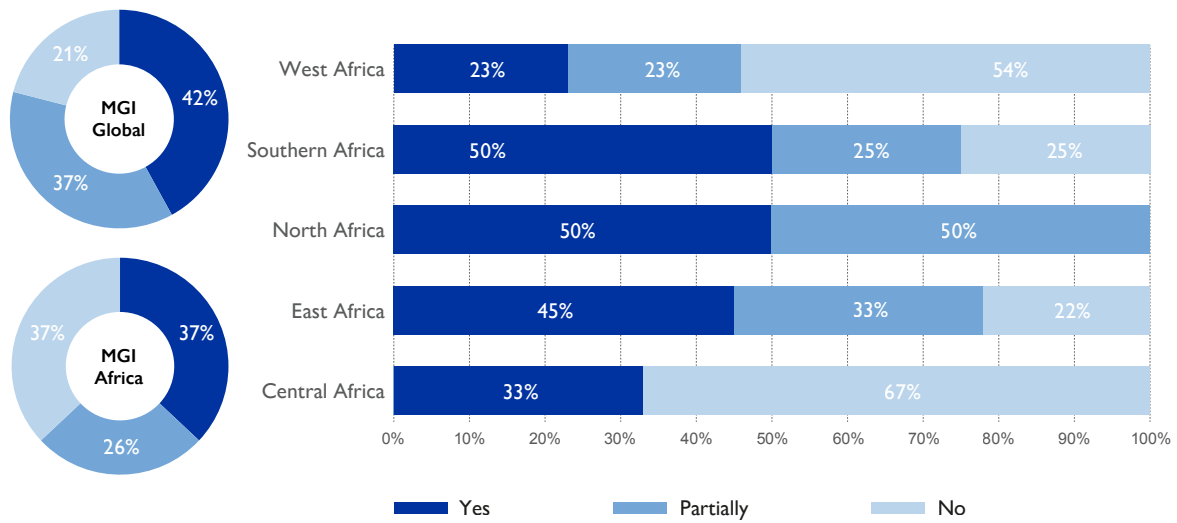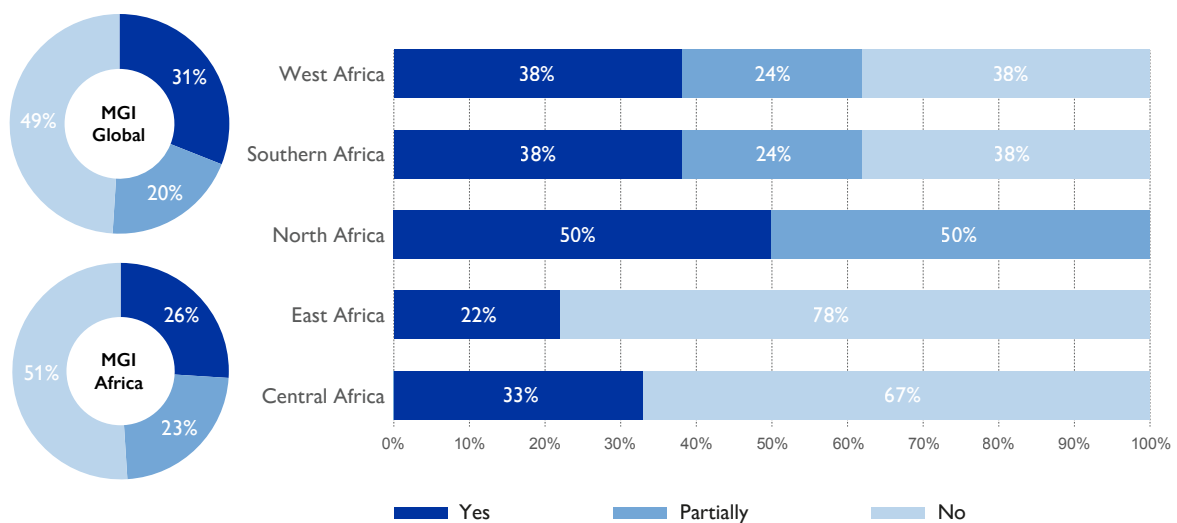**Figure 8. Family reunification is possible for which visa or residency categories?**

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 86 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).

Gender shapes migration experiences (IOM, 2021), as do other characteristics of migrants such as age and nationality. MGI data show that 22 per cent of the African countries considered in this analysis have a gender-responsive national migration strategy in place, that is, a strategy that considers differences between gender groups and promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women. This is slightly higher than for MGI countries globally (19%). While gender-responsive strategies are absent in the countries considered in Central Africa and in North Africa, they are present in 45 per cent of the countries considered in West Africa (Figure 9). For example, in Cabo Verde, the National Strategy for Immigration (2012) calls to mainstream gender throughout the policy cycle, and the second National Plan of Action on Immigration and the Social Inclusion of Immigrants (2018–2020) includes a section on immigration and gender.

Figure 9. Is the national migration strategy gender responsive?
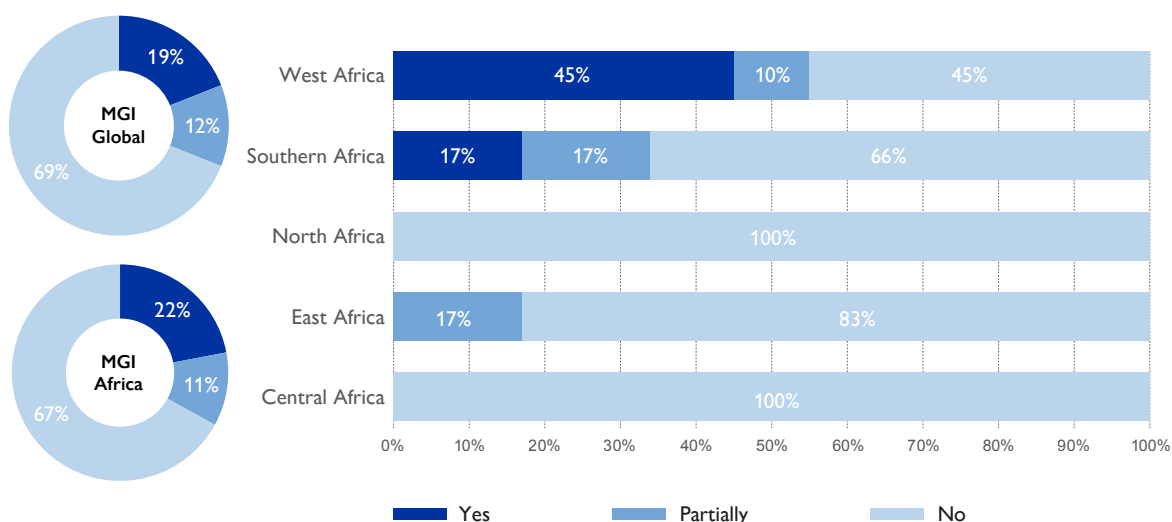
MGI Global: 19%, 12%, 69%

MGI Africa: 22%, 11%, 67%

	Yes	Partially	No
West Africa	45%	10%	45%
Southern Africa	17%	17%	66%
North Africa			100%
East Africa		17%	83%
Central Africa			100%

Legend: Yes, Partially, No

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 48 Countries.

MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 27 countries (3 in Central Africa, 6 in East Africa, 1 in North Africa, 6 in Southern Africa and 11 in West Africa).

The strategy is gender responsive if it considers and addresses the different situations, roles, needs and interests of different gender groups, and it promotes an active and visible policy of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. The score "Partially" applies if the strategy does not integrate any measures aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Afrobarometer reports that while two thirds of Africans recognize the strengths of diverse communities, discrimination is still widespread, primarily based on economic status rather than ethnicity or religion (Logan et al., 2020). The MPFA calls on countries to counteract xenophobia, racism and discrimination against all migrants, particularly labour migrants. However, only 19 per cent of African MGI countries, all of which are located in West Africa, have in place instruments and policies to combat hate crimes, violence, xenophobia and discrimination against migrants (Figure 10). For example, in Lesotho, the National Labour Migration Policy (2018) includes provisions on migrant workers´ rights and integration, as well as on protection against xenophobia and broader measures on integration and the rights of migrant and native workers.

Figure 10. Does the country have a policy or strategy to combat hate crimes, violence, xenophobia and discrimination against migrants?

MGI Global: 23%, 77%

MGI Africa: 19%, 81%

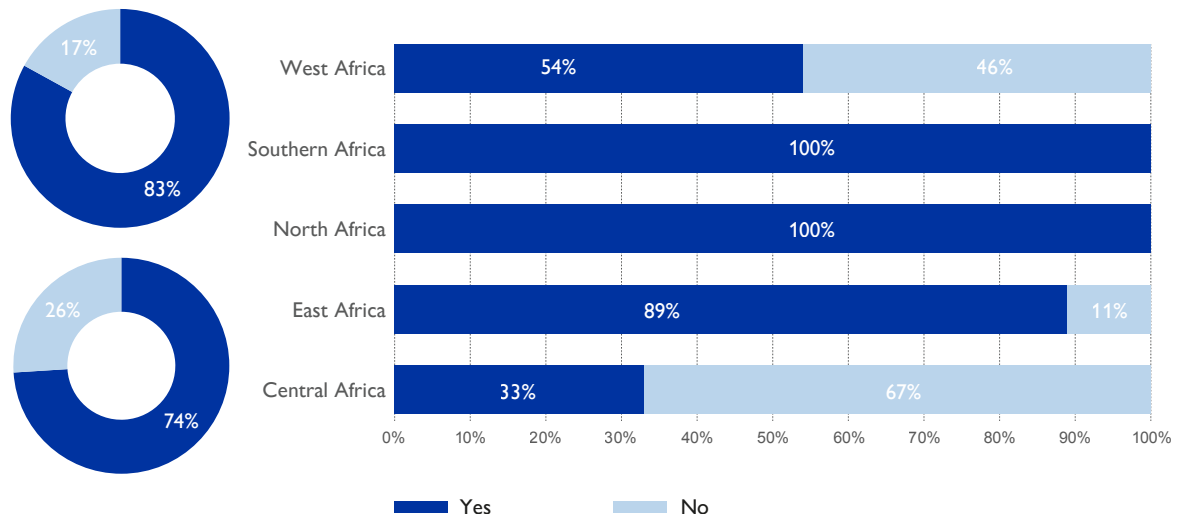|	Yes	No
West Africa	45%	55%
Southern Africa		100%
North Africa		100%
East Africa		100%
Central Africa		100%

Legend: Yes, No
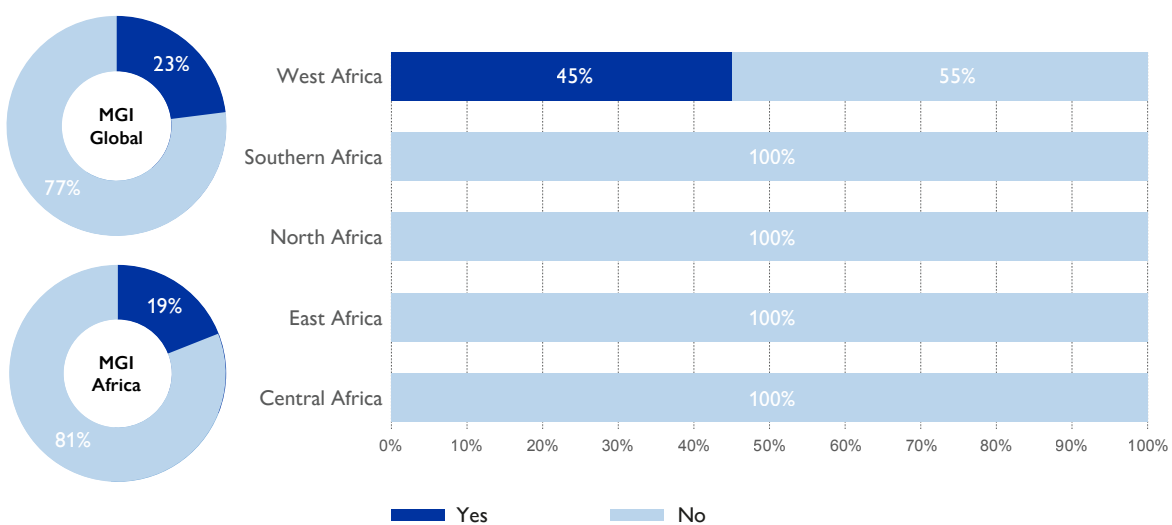
Note: MGI Global is based on data from 48 Countries.

MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 27 countries (3 in Central Africa, 6 in East Africa, 1 in North Africa, 6 in Southern Africa and 11 in West Africa).

The MPFA also emphasizes the importance of ensuring the portability of social security benefits for labour migrants. This aligns with the Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP), adopted by the African Union in 2015 to provide safe working environments, social protection and the recognition of skills and education for migrant workers (AUC, n.d.). According to the MGI data, 60 per cent of African countries have agreements with other countries regarding the portability of social security benefits. All North African countries and 12 out of 13 West African countries have adopted such agreements. In West Africa, Sierra Leone has agreements on the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits with some ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) member States. Further, in 2016, the country signed a memorandum of understanding with Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to identify policy areas affecting coordination and portability of social security benefits and to develop a social security portability policy. In 2008, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted a Code on Social Security to facilitate the portability of social security.

Pillar 2: Labour migration and education

Pillar 2 of the MPFA focuses on labour migration and education, with four subthemes: national labour migration policies, regional cooperation, brain drain and remittances.

Labour agreements are agreements or memorandums of understanding that ensure that labour migration takes place in accordance with agreed principles and procedures (IOM, 2016). MGI data show that 71 per cent of African countries engage in bilateral labour agreements, which is lower than the global average (84%). There are regional differences, with North African countries having the highest percentage (88%), followed by Southern and East African countries (78%), and Central African countries having the lowest percentage (33%) (Figure 11). In Southern Africa, Eswatini has signed bilateral labour migration agreements with various countries, including South Africa (dating from the 1960s and 1970s, particularly concerning the mining sector) and Mozambique (in 2017, which has facilitated labour market access for citizens of Mozambique who are living in Eswatini). Multilateral and regional agreements are also key for migrant workers' mobility rights. For example, the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment (1979) facilitates the regional mobility of West African citizens. The East African Community (EAC) and SADC have also adopted regional agreements on free movement of persons and goods.

Figure 11. Does the country have any formal bilateral labour agreements in place?
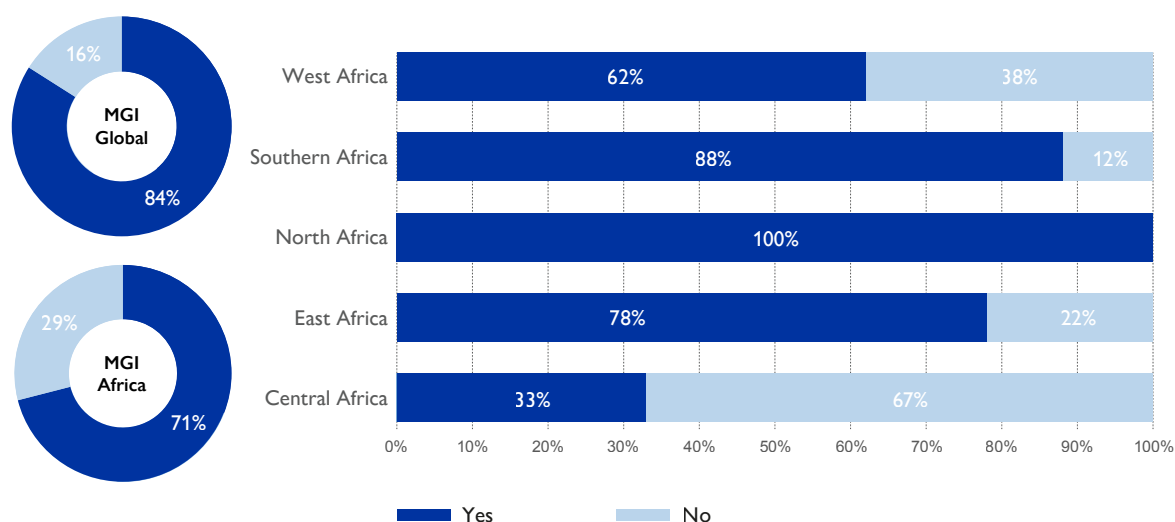
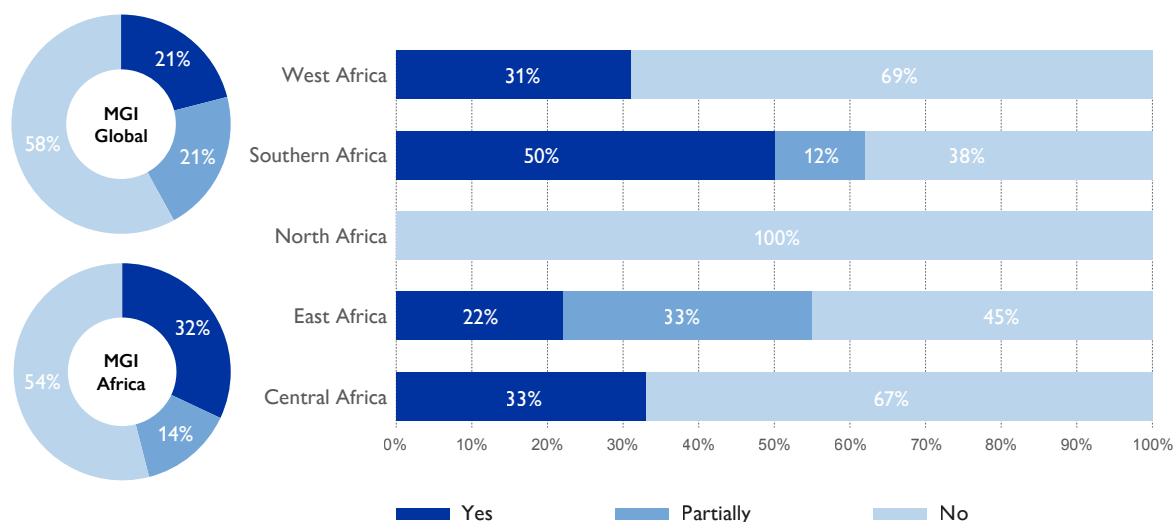*Note:* MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).

According to the African Union Commission's recent Report on Labour Migration Statistics in Africa (AUC, 2019), data on labour migration in Africa need improvement. Currently, only 18 per cent of African countries collect labour market data that is disaggregated by migratory status and sex, with these countries mainly located in East and West Africa. An additional 46 per cent of African States collect limited or unpublished data, or data that are not regularly updated or disaggregated by migratory status. None of the countries assessed in North Africa collect data on the labour market disaggregated by migration status and sex (Figure 12). In Côte d'Ivoire, the National Institute of Statistics collects labour market data disaggregated by sex and migration status, including variables such reasons for migration.

Figure 12. Does the country collect data on the labour market disaggregated by migration status and sex?
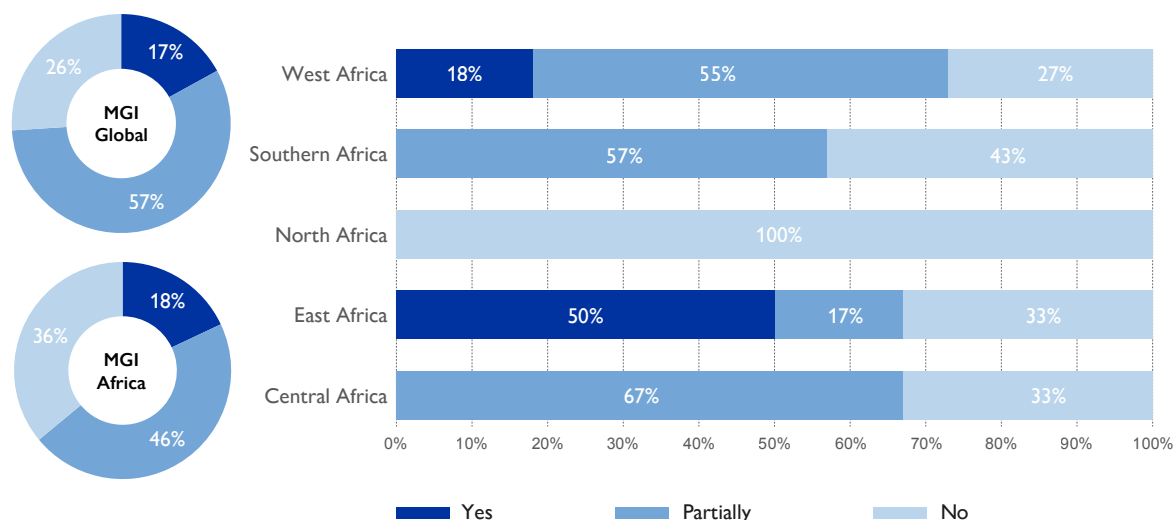
Note: MGI Global is based on data from 58 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 28 countries (3 in Central Africa, 6 in East Africa, 1 in North Africa, 7 in Southern Africa and 11 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies if data are not published, are very limited or not regularly updated, or if the labour market data are disaggregated by only migration status or only by sex, but not both.

The MPFA recommends improving migrants' access to education and vocational training. Education and skills improvement are also at the centre of goal 2 of aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063, that is, "A Prosperous Africa, based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development", and of SDG 4. Currently, migrants have the same status as citizens in accessing government-funded education and vocational training in 33 per cent of the African MGI countries. In an additional 61 per cent of these countries, migrants' access to education and training depends on their migration status (Figure 13). In Seychelles, migrants have equal access to public education at the preschool, primary and secondary levels. However, non-nationals are charged a fee for non-compulsory post-secondary education, and both nationals and non-nationals must pay tuition fees for tertiary education.

Figure 13. Do all migrants have the same status as citizens in accessing government-funded education and vocational training?

West Africa: Yes, regardless of legal status 50% | Yes, depending on legal status 42% | No access to any level of education 8%

Southern Africa: 13% | 74% | 13%

North Africa: 50% | 50%

East Africa: 25% | 75%

Central Africa: 33% | 67%

MGI Global: 38% | 56% | 6%
MGI Africa: 33% | 61% | 6%

Legend:
- Yes, regardless of legal status
- Yes, depending on legal status
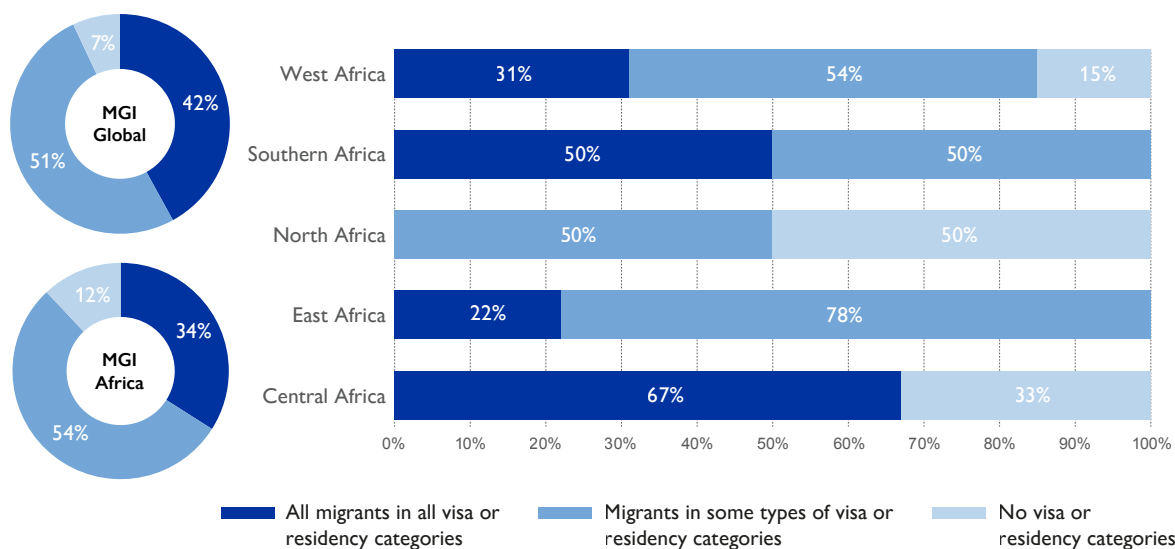- No access to any level of education

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 79 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 33 countries (3 in Central Africa, 8 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 12 in West Africa).

Remittances, both financial and non-financial, act as an insurance mechanism for households during times of crisis, such as economic downturns or the COVID-19 pandemic (Frankel, 2009). Remittances are also more resilient than official development assistance and foreign direct investment (Gagnon, 2020). However, there are challenges hindering the transfer of financial remittances, including high transfer costs, lack of financial literacy and limited digital transfer services (see Kalantaryan and McMahon, 2020). Target 10.c of Agenda 2030 aims to reduce the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate high-cost remittance corridors. In 26 per cent of the African countries assessed, the government promotes the creation of formal remittance schemes in line with international policy frameworks. This is 9 per cent less than the overall percentage recorded for all MGI countries. In the two North African countries that were assessed (Mauritania and Morocco), the government promotes formal remittances schemes (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Is the government actively involved in promoting the creation of formal remittance schemes?
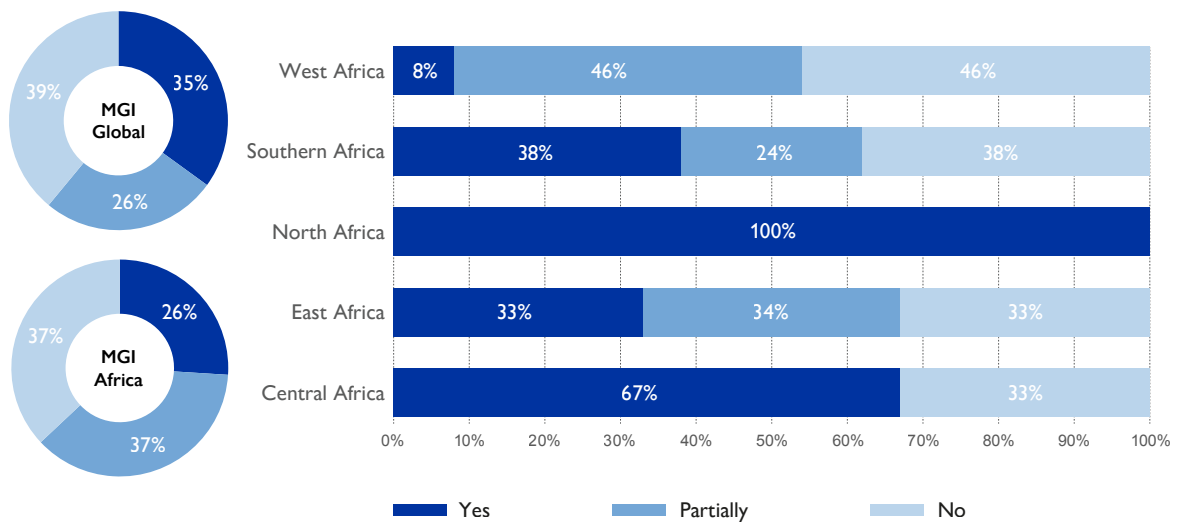
West Africa: Yes 8% | Partially 46% | No 46%

Southern Africa: 38% | 24% | 38%

North Africa: 100%

East Africa: 33% | 34% | 33%

Central Africa: 67% | 33%

MGI Global: 35% | 26% | 39%
MGI Africa: 26% | 37% | 37%

Legend:
- Yes
- Partially
- No

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies if the country participates in international processes that are not explicitly related to remittances.

Pillar 3: Diaspora engagement

Pillar 3 includes recommendations such as strengthening diaspora participation, establishing agencies or focal points for managing diaspora-related matters, collaborating with international partners on diaspora engagement strategies, passing dual-citizenship laws, implementing the Declaration of the Global African Diaspora Summit (African Union, 2012), facilitating remittances and establishing a diaspora database.

In Africa, 71 per cent of MGI countries have a dedicated government entity or agency responsible for enacting emigration and diaspora policies, which is slightly higher than the global average of 69 per cent. In Central and North Africa, all countries considered have established structures for enacting emigration and diaspora policies (Figure 15). Interestingly, most countries that have promoted the creation of formal remittance schemes also have institutions responsible for emigration and diaspora policies (see Figure 14, above). However, the majority of countries with these institutions have not yet developed formal remittance schemes. Only 17 per cent of the countries assessed have both institutions and formal remittance schemes in place.

Figure 15. Is there a dedicated government entity or agency responsible for enacting emigration policy and diaspora policy?

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies when these responsibilities are implemented by an entity with a different primary mandate or when there is an agency implementing this mandate, but its duties are not stated in legislation to guide its mandate.

Sixty-five per cent of African MGI countries have implemented mechanisms to protect the rights of their nationals working abroad, although some of these are only partial measures. However, 15 per cent of African MGI countries have developed more comprehensive mechanisms, such as dedicated policies, bilateral agreements, consular assistance and training. In East Africa, Ethiopia has introduced the Overseas Employment Proclamation (No. 923/2016) to safeguard the rights of its nationals working overseas. This involves sending workers only to countries with bilateral agreements and regulations governing employment agencies, as well as imposing certain conditions on prospective migrants.

Pillar 4: Border governance

Pillar 4 of the MPFA focuses on border governance, and provides recommendations such as ratifying the Niamey Convention, respecting human rights laws and improving border management capacities.

According to the MPFA, effective border governance is necessary for achieving seamless borders and managing cross-border resources in Africa. At the same time, transborder mobility and flows of persons and goods remain relevant to the whole continent (Walther and Retaillé, 2008). The majority of African MGI countries (83%) have a dedicated body responsible for integrated border control and security, including all Central African countries (see figure 16). In Uganda, the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC) is in charge of border control and enforcement. The country has implemented two border management systems, PISCES and MIDAS, which allow for electronic visa applications and the comparison of visa information and biometric data.

Figure 16. Is there a dedicated body tasked with integrated border control and security?
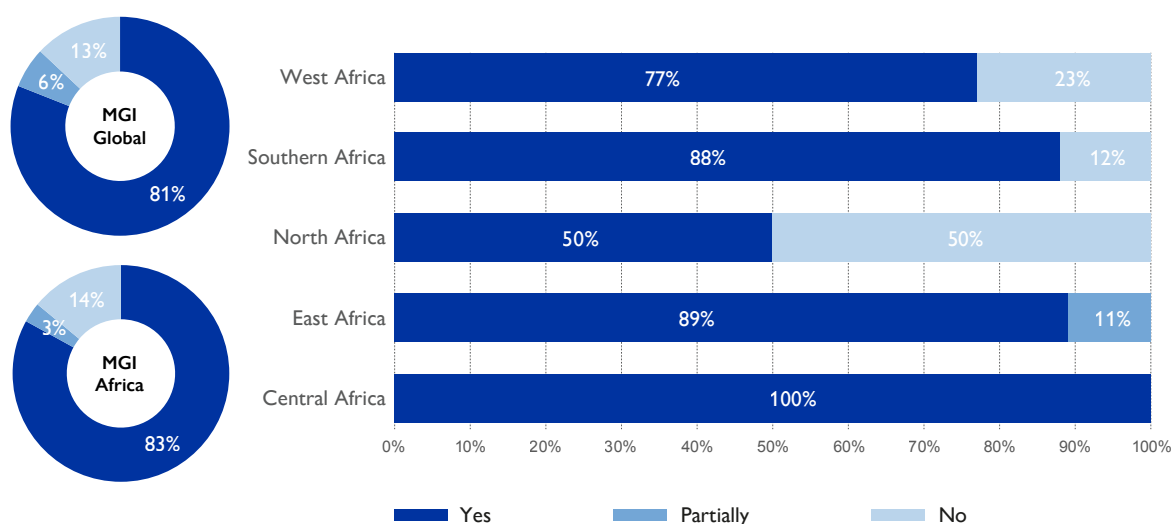
Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies when these responsibilities are implemented by an entity with a different primary mandate or when there is an agency implementing this mandate, but its duties are not stated in legislation to guide its mandate.
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However, only 20 per cent of African MGI countries have specific and regular training for border staff, which is lower than the global average (47%). Even so, an additional 69 per cent of African MGI countries provide ad hoc training for border staff.

Resolution 486, on missing migrants and refugees in Africa and the impact on their families (ACHPR, 2021), was adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in 2021, as well as objective 8 of the Global Compact for Migration, call on States to adopt and implement efforts to save lives and establish coordinated international efforts regarding missing migrants. Provisions on migrants´ right to life are also included in previously adopted international human rights conventions and laws. However, none of the African countries assessed has systems in place – such as formal cooperation agreements or arrangements with other countries – to trace and identify missing migrants within their national territory.[5] Only 15 per cent of the countries have either a national system in place, or they coordinate with international partners, or they adopt ad hoc measures. Worldwide, only 8 per cent of MGI countries have adopted measures to trace and identify missing migrants (Figure 17).

....
5   The Global Compact for Migration and ACHPR Resolution 486 both provide an overview of other measures that can be taken regarding missing migrants, beyond tracing and identifying.

Figure 17. Does the country have systems in place, including formal cooperation agreements or arrangements with other countries, to trace and identify missing migrants within the national territory?
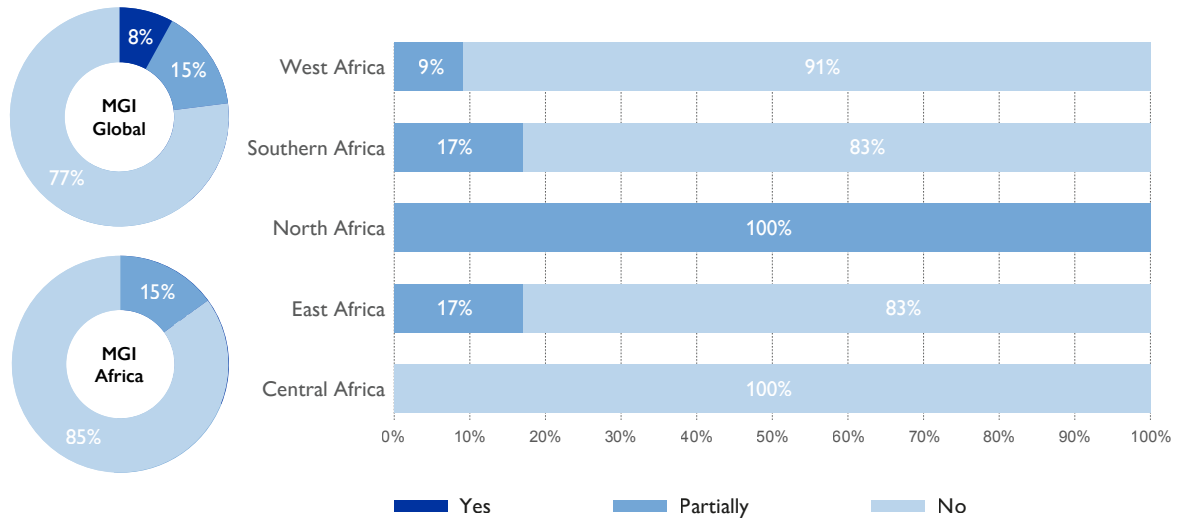
Note: MGI Global is based on data from 48 Countries.

MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 27 countries (3 in Central Africa, 6 in East Africa, 1 in North Africa, 6 in Southern Africa and 11 in West Africa).

The score "Partially" applies if the country either has a national system in place or formal cooperation arrangement or agreements with other countries (but not both). In addition, "Partially" also applies if there are ad hoc measures in place.

Pillar 5: Irregular migration

Pillar 5 of the MPFA addresses irregular migration, including migrant smuggling, human trafficking, return and reintegration, and national and international security and stability.

Migrant smuggling has been defined as "the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the irregular entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident" (IOM, 2019a). Forty-one per cent of African countries assessed have formal cooperation agreements or arrangements with other countries to prevent and counter the smuggling of migrants, and this percentage is lower than the worldwide figure. Both countries assessed in North Africa have adopted such formal agreements or arrangements (Figure 18). The recent establishment of the African Union Continental Operation Centre in Khartoum, which aims to "improve the overall migration governance regime in Africa, specifically the management of irregular migration", also testifies to increased efforts against migrant smuggling (African Union, 2020). For example, the Comoros and France have signed agreements on irregular migration, saving lives at sea and development.

Figure 18. Does the country have formal cooperation agreements or arrangements with other countries to prevent and counter the smuggling of migrants?
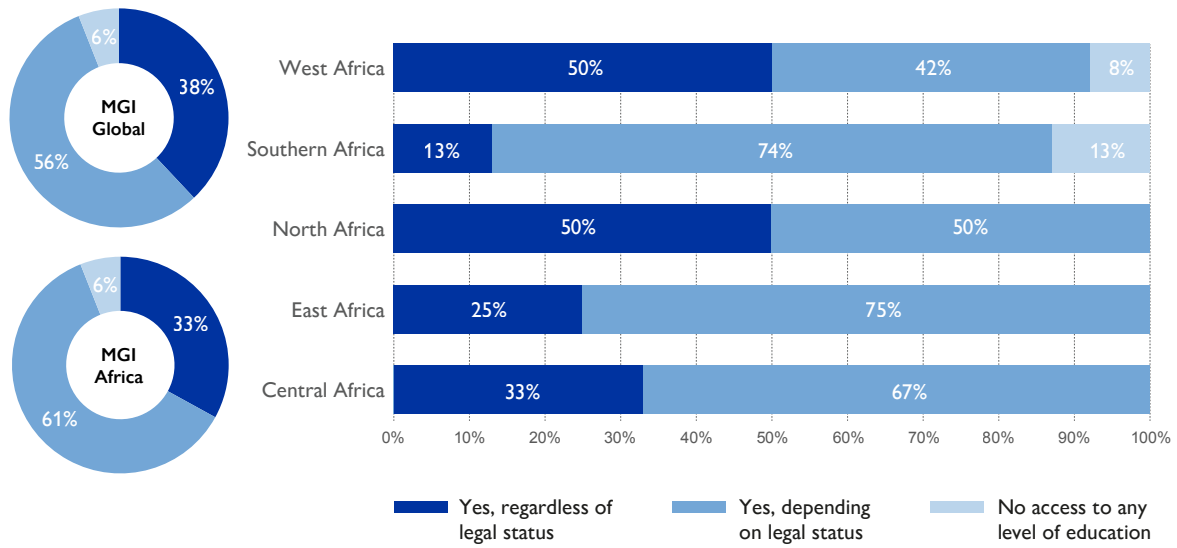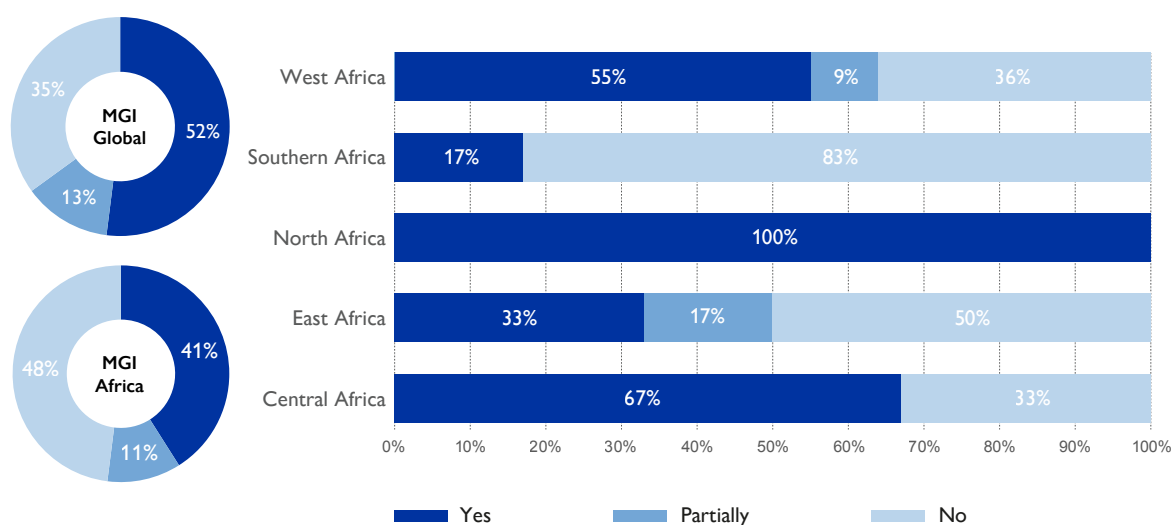

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 48 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 27 countries (3 in Central Africa, 6 in East Africa, 1 in North Africa, 6 in Southern Africa and 11 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies if there is an agreement that mentions smuggling of migrants in a limited manner, but the main focus of the agreement is another topic, such as prevention of human trafficking.

According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNGA, 2000), human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of individuals through force or coercion (see also Bauloz et al., 2021; US Department of State, 2022). Sixty-six per cent of African countries have adopted strategies to combat human trafficking: for example, Ethiopia has implemented laws and measures to protect migrants in transit and overseas workers, including establishing child protection units, providing training for law enforcement officers and introducing a national referral mechanism for trafficking victims. An additional 17 per cent of African MGI countries have limited or infrequently updated strategies.

As specified in Pillar 5 of the MPFA, reintegration refers to the process of reincorporating individuals into their community or country of origin. Fifty-four per cent of African MGI countries have a formal government programme or dedicated policy that focuses on facilitating the reintegration of at least some returning nationals, and this is slightly more likely than for MGI countries globally (52%). Twenty per cent of African MGI countries have a programme or policy that applies to all returning nationals. Further, some countries have engaged in bilateral agreements related to return with countries of destination. For example, Senegal has signed such agreements with France and Spain, and Nigeria has signed them with Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Return and reintegration is also increasingly an area of cooperation between European and African policymakers (Zanker et al., 2019).

Pillar 6: Forced displacement

Pillar 6 of the MGI focuses on forced displacement, addressing refugees, internally displaced persons, protracted displacement, crisis prevention, non-discrimination, integration, reintegration and stateless persons.

As disasters accounted for over three quarters of new displacements in 2020 (IDMC, 2021), State preparedness is increasingly key. MGI data show that in thirty-four per cent of the African countries assessed, the government has a national disaster risk reduction strategy with specific provisions for addressing the displacement impacts of disasters. For example, in 2018, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission of Ethiopia released a Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan, addressing the displacement impact of climate- and conflict-driven disasters. An additional 23 per cent of African MGI countries have a strategy that has not been updated for more than 10 years. Neither of the two countries assessed in North Africa have adopted such a national strategy yet (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Does the government have a national disaster risk reduction strategy with specific provisions for addressing the displacement impact of disasters?
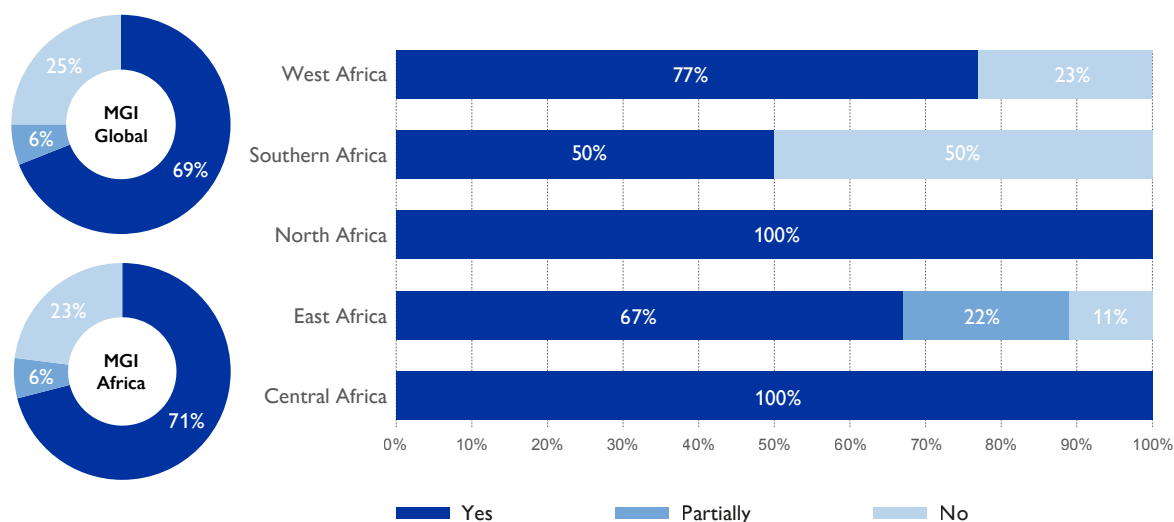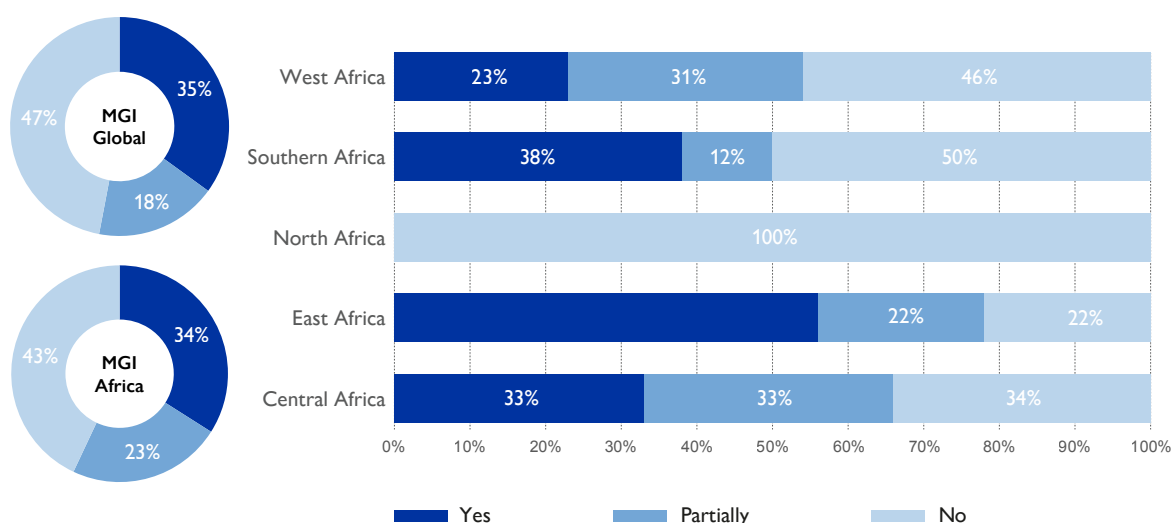

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies when the strategy does not have specific provisions on displacement, or it has not been updated in the last 10 years.

In terms of addressing the migration aspects of crises, the MGI data reveal that 60 per cent of African countries have adopted at least partial measures to exempt migrants from immigration procedures if their country of origin is experiencing a crisis.[6] This is in line with the guidelines developed by the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative in 2016, which call for addressing migrants' immediate needs and supporting them to rebuild their lives (MICIC, 2016). For instance, Angola and Uganda both have measures in place to grant exemptions from immigration procedures to migrants from crisis-affected countries. In Uganda, in particular, the Citizenship and Immigration Control Act (1999) foresees dedicated entry documents, and the Refugees Act (2006) introduced facilitations for asylum-seekers, specifically.

Pillar 7: Internal migration

Pillar 7 of the MPFA focuses on internal migration and includes recommendations for integrating migration policies into local governance, involving cities in migration management, improving data on rural–urban migration, protecting human rights, promoting gender equality and addressing poverty.

In 74 per cent of African MGI countries, the national development strategy does not have measures regarding displacement, higher than the global average (65%). Such measures have been included in only 12 per cent of the countries, and these are all located in Central, East, and West Africa (Figure 20). In addition, 55 per cent of the African MGI countries have ratified the Kampala Convention. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the National Strategic Development Plan includes measures on displacement specifically aiming to provide refugees and internally displaced persons with access to sexual and reproductive health, and to prevent gender-based violence against them.

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6   The score "Partially" applies if exceptions have been made to immigration procedures on an ad hoc basis in the past.

Figure 20. Does the national development strategy include measures on displacement?
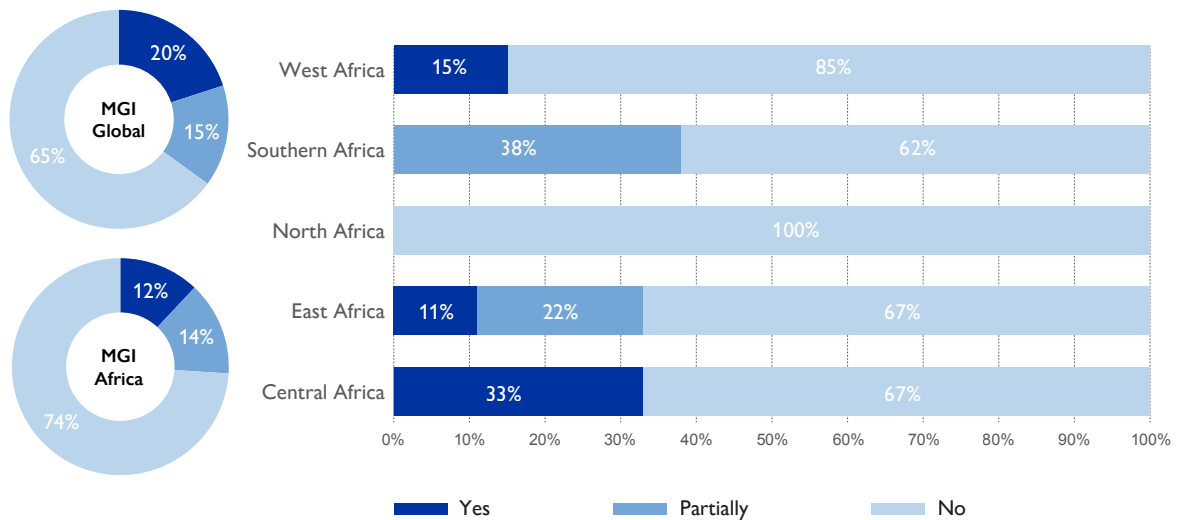
Yes — Partially — No

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 86 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa).
The score "Partially" applies if there is no plan of action in relation to displacement and displaced peoples in the plan or strategy. A score of "Partially" may also be appropriate if one category of displacement is integrated in the plan or strategy, but other relevant categories to a country's context are not.

Pillar 8: Migration and trade

Pillar 8 of the MPFA focuses on migration and trade. It recommends promoting economic growth, mainstreaming mobility of persons into trade agreements, strengthening coordination on migration and trade, and developing policies for cross-border traders. MGI data provide insights on intraregional mobility, which is particularly relevant to the recommendation to mainstream human mobility into trade agreements.

So far, 43 per cent of the African countries assessed have adopted formal arrangements for intraregional mobility as a result of regional or interregional consultative processes and forums. On average, more countries assessed in Central and West Africa have adopted them (Figure 21). For example, in 2021, Kenya and Ethiopia agreed on an operational procedure manual aimed at enhancing trade and mobility through the Moyale One-Stop Border Post between the two countries. The manual provides guidance to streamline and expedite border crossing.

Figure 21. Does the country have any arrangements for formal intraregional mobility achieved as a result of participating in regional consultative processes or interregional consultative forums?
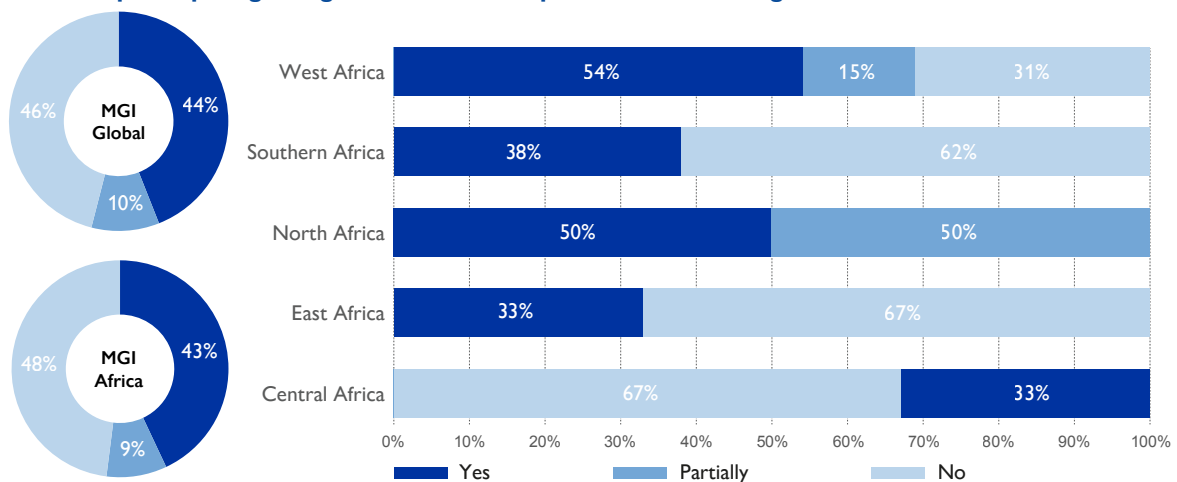
Yes — Partially — No

Note: MGI Global is based on data from 87 Countries.
MGI Africa and regional data is based on data from 35 countries (3 in Central Africa, 9 in East Africa, 2 in North Africa, 8 in Southern Africa and 13 in West Africa). The score "Yes" applies if the arrangements are between more than two countries. Intra-regional mobility schemes that are in planning stages but are not yet implemented are scored as "No".

CONCLUSION

From this analysis of the MGI data, it is clear that some of the areas addressed by the MPFA are well developed in African Union Member States, in some cases with results better than global averages. National migration strategy documents are key to the overall planning and implementation of all migration-related activities, and one third of the African countries assessed have already adopted one. In half of these countries, such documents are at least partially aligned with development strategies. One third of African MGI countries have furthermore adopted a strategy to address migration that is linked to environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change. Four out of ten of these countries have also established an interministerial coordination mechanism on migration, showing efforts towards stronger institutional mechanisms. Data-related efforts are also significant, given the 67 per cent of African countries that are collecting data through the inclusion of migration-related questions in the national census.

Equally well-developed areas include the establishment of government entities or agencies responsible for enacting emigration and diaspora policies, as well as of dedicated bodies tasked with integrated border control and security. In addition, African MGI countries grant migrants the same status as citizens in accessing all government-funded health services at a higher rate than the global MGI average. Cooperation with partners on migration management is another well-developed area: all African MGI countries participate in regional or interregional consultative processes and forums and most of them are involved in bilateral efforts.

Areas with potential for further development include the collection of data outside of censuses, as well as further disaggregation of migration data by age, sex and migration status, as an essential step towards evidence-based policymaking and the identification of measures to improve migrants' access to basic services. Countries could also do better at extending access to education and vocational training to migrants with different legal status, and at extending exemptions from immigration procedures to migrants from countries in crisis. They could also further promote formal remittance schemes and stronger engagement with diaspora members, social partners and the private sector in development planning and agenda setting. Areas with ample room for progress include having measures regarding displacement in national development strategies, and establishing systems to trace and identify missing migrants within the national territory. In addition, in Africa and globally, the percentage of MGI countries that have adopted a policy or a strategy to combat hate crimes, violence, xenophobia and discrimination against migrants remains low.

The MGI assists governments in evaluating the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures by taking stock of their migration policies. This chapter has used these insights to identify well-developed areas and areas with potential for development in the governance of migration among 35 African Union Member States. As a step forward, complementing MGI data with additional sources would allow an evaluation of the implementation of migration-related policies. This would be especially relevant for MPFA recommendations that fall outside the scope of the MGI, such as those related to the nexus between migration and trade (Pillar 8).

The MGI stands out for its unique and comprehensive methodology and its consultative approach, making it a rich data source for informing policy development and fostering cross-country dialogues on migration. The MGI initiative continues to grow, with more countries joining each year. Since the drafting of this chapter, five additional African Union Member States (Botswana, the Central African Republic, Burundi and Mozambique) have joined the initiative, and one more country (Ethiopia) has initiated a follow-up assessment to evaluate the progress made since its initial MGI assessment. With the inclusion of additional countries, opportunities for an enhanced understanding of migration management increase at the regional and global level. This is an important step towards evidence-informed migration governance in Africa, and the effective implementation of the MPFA.

ANNEX 1

MGI countries in Africa, by region, as defined by the OAU in 1976 and indicated on the African Union web page

Central Africa
- Cameroon
- Chad
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)

East Africa
- Comoros
- Djibouti
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mauritius
- Rwanda
- Seychelles
- Uganda

North Africa
- Mauritania
- Morocco

Southern Africa
- Angola
- Eswatini
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

West Africa
- Burkina Faso
- Cabo Verde
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Gambia (the)
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Liberia
- Mali
- Niger (the)
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone

MGI countries in Africa, by REC

Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)
- Morocco

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Comoros
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)
- Djibouti
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Rwanda
- Seychelles
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Community of Sahel –Saharan States (CEN-SAD)
- Burkina Faso
- Cabo Verde
- Chad
- Comoros
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Djibouti
- Gambia (the)
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Niger (the)
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone

East African Community (EAC)
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)
- Kenya
- Rwanda
- Uganda

Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- Angola
- Cameroon
- Chad
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)
- Rwanda

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Burkina Faso
- Cabo Verde
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Gambia (the)
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Liberia
- Mali
- Niger (the)
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- Djibouti
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Uganda

Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- Angola
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Namibia
- Seychelles
- South Africa
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

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HUMAN MOBILITY TRENDS IN AFRICA: A SNAPSHOT OF AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

3

Flow of migrants in transit in Dali, El Paraíso. © IOM 2023/Erick ESCOTO

Chapter 3

HUMAN MOBILITY TRENDS IN AFRICA: A SNAPSHOT OF AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

Building on various data sources, this chapter provides an overview of the main migration trends in Africa, examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human mobility across the continent, and analyses emerging and future needs to enhance the availability and quality of migration data. In 2020, in Africa, there were an estimated 25.1 million international migrants, which translated into having 1.9 per cent of the African population – or around one in 50 people – living outside of the country in which they were born. One of the key characteristics of African migration is that the majority of African international migrants do not leave the continent and mostly engage in intra-African migration. Refugee movements and internal displacements are also key features of African migration. The chapter further examines the need to enhance the collection and analysis of high-quality, disaggregated, accurate, timely and reliable data, which are crucial to ensure evidence-based policy and programming, and provide insights or predictions about future trends. In recent years, considerable progress has been made in this regard in Africa. However, more investment in strengthening data ecosystems is needed, while innovation, closer collaboration and better coordination remain essential to respond to emerging data demands.

INTRODUCTION

Migration has shaped the social and economic development of both origin and destination countries by bringing new ideas, perspectives, skills, opportunities and socioeconomic benefits. Migration in Africa remains a complex phenomenon, with multiple drivers that shape the decisions of people to move within and outside the continent. This chapter consists of three interrelated parts. First, it opens with an overview of key migration trends in Africa based on the latest data available to inform the analysis of human mobility on the continent, with a specific focus on international migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, and internal displacements. Building on various data sources, including IOM primary sources, this analysis provides an evidence base and helps contextualize the thematic analyses developed in the other chapters of the report. Next, this chapter examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human mobility through an analysis of internal restrictions and international travel measures. Finally, a brief overview of data needs and availability in Africa is presented, highlighting the priorities for developing systems and capacities related to data on migration and human mobility moving forward.

KEY MIGRATION TRENDS OVERVIEW

International migrants

In 2020, Africa was home to an estimated 25.1 million international migrants (or immigrants), which is a slight drop from the 26.6 million estimated in 2019.[1] This number represented 9 per cent of the 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, a decrease from 10 per cent in 2019. In other words, only 1.9 per cent of the 1.3 billion people who live in Africa – or around one in 50 people – lived outside the country in which they were born, which remained below the corresponding share globally (3.6%). Meanwhile, the estimated number of emigrants from Africa stood at 40.4 million in 2020, representing 3 per cent of the African population. Overall, African countries have more emigrants than immigrants, as well as a level of international migration lower than the world average. As a consequence, at the continental level, the balance of migrant stocks was negative, with emigrants outnumbering immigrants by 15.2 million, which contributed to a net emigrant stock that represents 1.1 per cent of the African population. In particular, North Africa stood out for the highest proportion of emigrants (4.9% of the population) and the lowest proportion of immigrants (1.3%), resulting in a strongly negative balance of migrant stocks (−3.6%), while all other regions had immigrant and emigrant stocks at similar relatively small and balanced levels.[2]

Table 1. Estimates of population and international migrant stocks, 2020

Region	Population (thousands)	Emigrant stock		Immigrant stock		Balance	
		Numbers	Population	Numbers	Population	Numbers	Population
Africa	1 338 827	40 357 515	3.0%	25 140 294	1.9%	−15 217 221	−1.1%
North Africa	245 635	12 087 693	4.9%	3 162 502	1.3%	−8 925 191	−3.6%
West and Central Africa	459 023	12 473 794	2.7%	9 803 923	2.1%	−2 669 871	−0.6%
East and Horn of Africa	330 674	9 065 652	2.7%	6 215 182	1.9%	−2 850 470	−0.9%
Southern Africa	303 494	6 730 376	2.2%	5 958 687	2.0%	−771 689	−0.3%

Source: DESA, 2021; DESA, 2022.
Note: DESA estimates are provided for the midpoint (1 July) of each year. Mayotte, Réunion, Saint Helena and Western Sahara are not included in this analysis. The geographic region classification used in this table is that of IOM.

One of the key characteristics of African migration is that the majority of African international migrants move primarily within the continent. More specifically, the number of intra-African international migrants (20.8 million) – those whose countries of origin and destination were both situated in Africa – was slightly higher than that of African migrants to non-African countries (19.7 million), but much higher than that of non-African migrants to African countries (4.3 million). In other words, African migrants do migrate outside the continent, although at a slightly lower extent than within Africa, while limited immigration to Africa from abroad occurs. In addition, migration in Africa is largely regular; a comparatively limited amount of migration from the continent is happening via irregular channels towards Europe or Gulf countries (de Haas et al., 2020).[3] In relative terms, intra-African migration represented 51 per cent of the total emigration originating from African countries and 83 per cent of the total immigration destined for African countries. This finding was common across all regions, except for North Africa, where emigrants mostly resided in non-African countries. Those originating in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia resided in Europe, while those from Egypt and the Sudan migrated to Middle Eastern countries.

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1   Data source used for this section: DESA, 2021 and DESA, 2022. DESA estimates of the number of international migrants are based on either the foreign-born population or, in the absence of such information, the population of foreign citizens. DESA estimates are provided for the midpoint (1 July) of each year. Mayotte, Réunion, Saint Helena and Western Sahara are not included in this analysis. Including these four territories or countries, the total number of international migrants in Africa reaches 25.4 million.

2   Terms for the geographic subregions of Africa used in this chapter follow the terminology used in the first edition of the Africa Migrant Report. Where other terms are used (such as "Middle Africa" rather than "Central Africa", or "Western Africa" rather than "West Africa"), the terminology of the source material is being followed, and will be noted as such.

3   In addition, according to unpublished data from the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, 106,000 arrivals from Africa to Italy and Malta, 73,000 to Yemen and 28,000 to Spain (including 16,000 to the Canary Islands) were recorded in 2022.

Figure 1. Distribution of international migrants residing in Africa and destinations of emigrants from Africa

DESTINATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS RESIDING IN AFRICA AS OF MID-YEAR 2020

North Africa
3,167,926
12%

West Africa
7,552,097
30%

East Africa
7,682,801
30%

15%

Central Africa
3,861,568

Southern Africa
3,125,072
12%
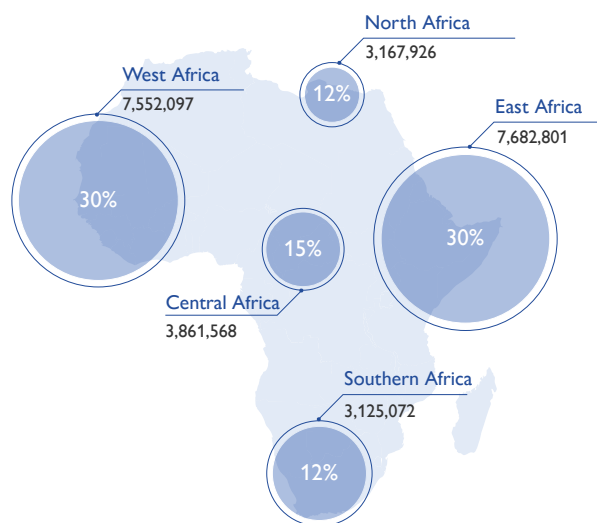
DESTINATIONS OF MIGRANTS FROM AFRICA AS OF MID-YEAR 2020
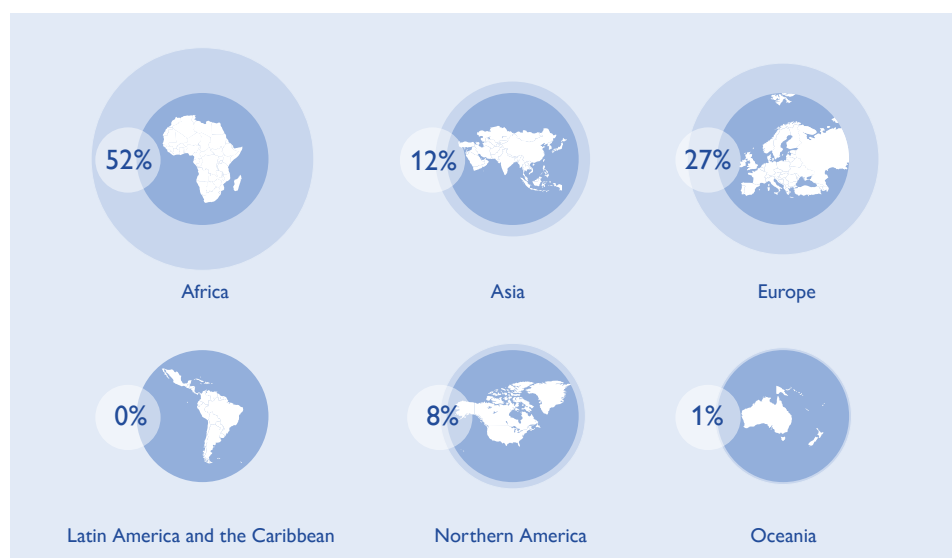
52%
Africa

12%
Asia

27%
Europe

0%
Latin America and the Caribbean

8%
Northern America

1%
Oceania

Source: DESA, 2021.
Note: DESA estimates are provided for the midpoint (1 July) of each year. Mayotte, Réunion, Saint Helena and Western Sahara are not included in this analysis. The geographic region classification used in this table is that of DESA.
Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

The largest corridors of intra-African migration are predominantly between countries that share a land border, highlighting how migration on the continent is characterized by short-distance mobility and is, therefore, more local than global. Migrants originating in West and Central Africa as well as in large parts of Southern and East Africa were mainly living in neighbouring or proximate African countries. Moreover, the bidirectionality of several intra-African corridors reflects the high prevalence of temporary or circular labour migration, such as between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, and of refugee movements, such as between South Sudan and the Sudan. This finding also supports the fact that return migration is an important dimension of mobility in Africa.

On the other hand, African emigration to other continents is determined by a combination of economic drivers and historical and cultural proximity. Pre-existing social ties, whether resulting from a common language – such as Egypt with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – or a shared political history – such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia with France – favour and facilitate migratory movements. Yet Africa currently receives little immigration from other continents, with the only large corridor being from the Occupied Palestinian Territory to Libya.

Figure 2. Largest migrant corridors from and to African countries, 2020

Intra-Africa corridors

Origin		Number		Destination
Burkina Faso	>	1 376 350	>	Côte d'Ivoire
South Sudan	>	1 022 433	>	Uganda
South Sudan	>	867 593	>	Sudan (the)
Zimbabwe	>	690 243	>	South Africa
Sudan (the)	>	587 668	>	South Africa
Côte d'Ivoire	>	562 117	>	Burkina Faso
Mali	>	522 146	>	Côte d'Ivoire
Somalia	>	425 284	>	Kenya
Somalia	>	411 152	>	Ethiopia
South Sudan	>	409 890	>	Ethiopia
Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)	>	397 638	>	Uganda
Benin	>	377 169	>	Nigeria
Sudan (the)	>	372 594	>	Chad
Mozambique	>	350 463	>	South Africa
Central African Republic	>	323 269	>	Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)
Central African Republic	>	303 005	>	Cameroon
Uganda	>	290 597	>	Kenya
Rwanda	>	251 333	>	Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)

Corridors from Africa to other continents

Origin		Number		Destination
Algeria	>	1 637 211	>	France
Morocco	>	1 059 918	>	France
Egypt	>	962 432	>	Saudi Arabia
Egypt	>	899 612	>	United Arab Emirates
Morocco	>	785 884	>	Spain
Sudan (the)	>	481 215	>	Saudi Arabia
Morocco	>	451 960	>	Italy
Tunisia	>	444 572	>	France
Egypt	>	421 025	>	Kuwait
Nigeria	>	402 186	>	United States of America
Somalia	>	280 940	>	Yemen

Corridors from other continents to Africa

Origin		Number		Destination
Occupied Palestinian Territory	>	305 476	>	Libya

Source: DESA, 2021.

Note: DESA estimates are provided for the midpoint (1 July) of each year. Mayotte, Réunion, Saint Helena and Western Sahara are not included in this analysis. International migration corridors from country or territory to country or territory display the number of international migrants (or immigrants) from the first-mentioned country or territory (i.e. the country or territory of origin) who are living in the second-mentioned country or territory (i.e. the country or territory of destination).

Refugees and asylum-seekers

Refugees and asylum-seekers represent a high proportion of all international migrants in Africa.[4] In 2020, 21 per cent of all emigrants and 30 per cent of all immigrants in African countries were refugees or asylum-seekers (DESA, 2021; UNHCR, 2023a).[5] Their distribution across the continent was notably uneven, with a particularly high prevalence of forced migration in the East and Horn of Africa subregion. Due to the prevalence of forced migration resulting from conflict, climate events and socioeconomic difficulties, the migratory landscape of this region is mostly humanitarian in nature, and refugees and asylum-seekers most recently contributed to nearly two thirds (61%) of the subregion's international migrant population (6.2 million) (IOM, 2023a).

In 2022, African countries received 8.1 million refugees and asylum-seekers, representing around a quarter (23%) of the global population of refugees and asylum-seekers (34.9 million). While this number nearly tripled between 2010 and 2017, the African refugee population has, since 2017, continued to increase, albeit at a slower pace, with yearly increases ranging between 7.3 and 8.1 million. Nearly half (48%) of all refugees and asylum-seekers on the continent were living in Eastern Africa, followed by Middle Africa (21%), Northern Africa (20%), Western Africa (8%) and Southern Africa (2%).[6] Uganda (1.5 million), the Sudan (1.1 million), Ethiopia (882,000), Chad (598,000) and Kenya (573,000) were the top destinations in 2022, with over half (57%) of the total refugee population in Africa. Uganda and the Sudan were also among the top 10 destination countries globally, ranking sixth and eighth, respectively. Uganda was mainly a destination for South Sudanese (57%) and Congolese (32%) nationals, while the Sudan was mainly a destination for South Sudanese (71%) and Eritrean (12%) nationals, most of whom were fleeing protracted conflict in their country of origin.

Meanwhile, there were 9 million refugees and asylum-seekers from Africa, mainly originating from South Sudan (2.3 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1.1 million), the Sudan (924,000), Somalia (847,000) and the Central African Republic (763,000). These five countries are some of the major conflict and climate hotspots in the world, where protracted and new crises continue to trigger significant refugee movements and internal displacements. South Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers, in particular, accounted for over a quarter (26%) of all African refugees and asylum-seekers, constituting the fourth largest group globally, following Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian nationals. Despite being the world's youngest country, South Sudan has a long history of conflict at the national level, communal violence and devastating floods that have pushed many to seek refuge and asylum abroad.

In Africa, as in the rest of the world, most refugees remain in close proximity to their countries of origin, as they commonly move to neighbouring countries. Nearly all (99%) refugees and asylum-seekers received in African countries were from Africa. Similarly, 86 per cent of all refugees and asylum-seekers from African countries of origin were received in Africa, with the remainder being received in Europe (9.6%), the Americas (2.7%), Asia (1.7%) and Oceania (0.1%). These findings also highlight a key characteristic of the African migratory landscape, wherein a particular country can be both a major origin of and destination for refugees and asylum-seekers. The Sudan, for instance, already had a large refugee population in-country and abroad in 2022. With the eruption of conflict in April 2023, the refugee situation has been exacerbated with over 1 million refugees, returnees and non-Sudanese international migrants fleeing the Sudan and crossing into neighbouring the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan (UNHCR, 2023b). Moreover, many of the South Sudanese, Eritrean, Syrian and Ethiopian migrants and refugees already present in the Sudan when the conflict broke out were forced to relocate to other camps or areas, while some were left with no choice but to return to their countries of origin and leave behind their livelihood and belongings.

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4   Data source used for this section: UNHCR, 2023a.

5   Given that the latest available estimates from DESA were as of mid-2020, this analysis combines DESA and UNHCR data for 2020 to allow for comparison.

6   The names for geographic subregions used in this section follow DESA terminology.

Figure 3. Top 10 countries in Africa by total refugees and asylum-seekers, 2022
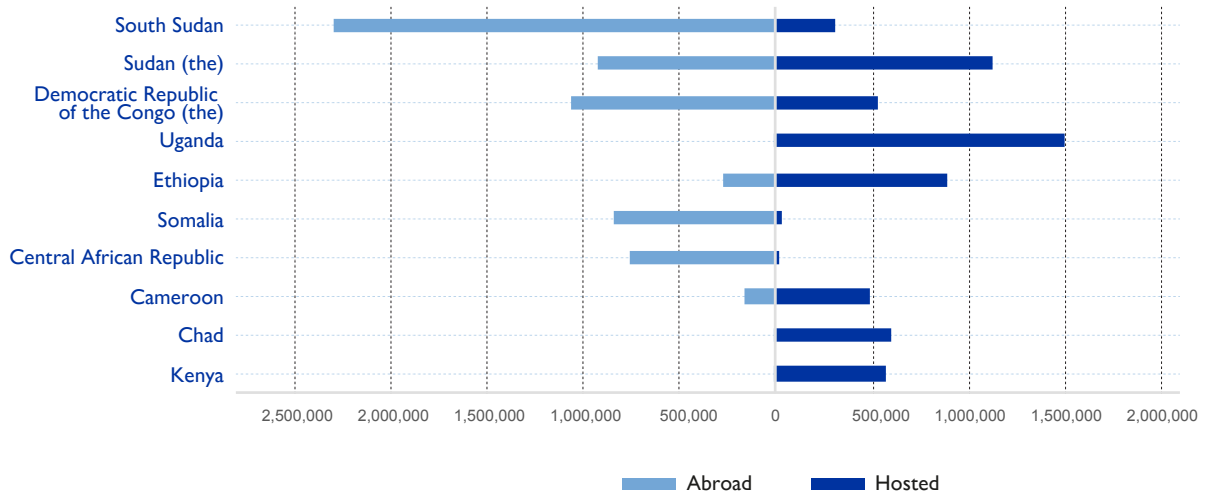
Source: UNHCR, 2023a.
Note: "Hosted" refers to refugees and asylum-seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country, while "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum-seekers from that country who are outside of their origin country.[7]

Internal displacements

There were 16.4 million internal displacements (or movements) recorded in Africa during 2022, which is over a quarter (27%) of all internal displacements recorded globally (60.9 million).[8] Internal displacements have nearly doubled since 2019 (8.2 million) and reached an all-time high in 2022, further increasing by 16 per cent compared to 2021. Of the 16.4 million internal displacements, more than half (9 million, or 55%) were triggered by conflict and violence, while the remainder (7.4 million, or 45%) were caused by disasters such as droughts, floods and storms.

Figure 4. Internal displacements in Africa due to conflict and violence and disasters, 2010–2022
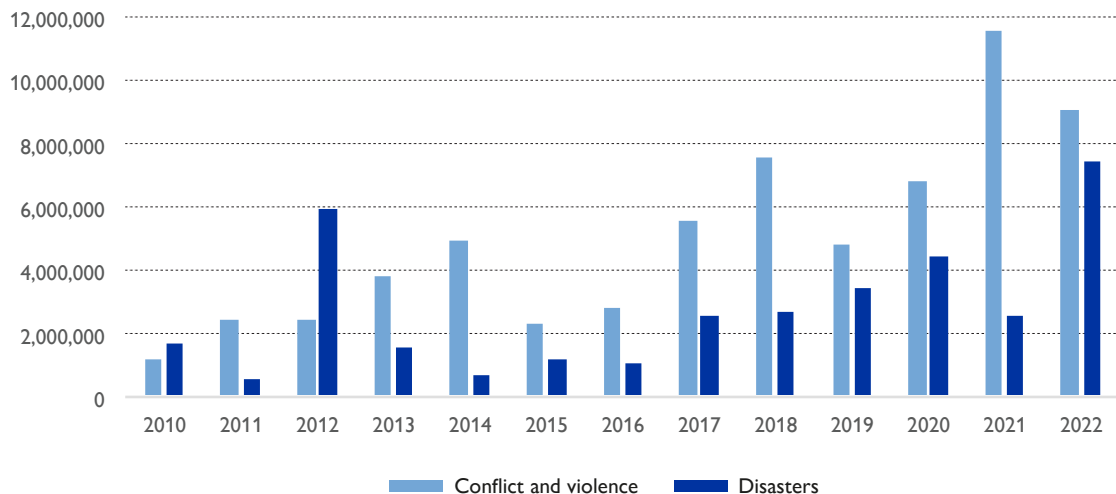
Source: IDMC, 2023a.
Note: IDMC reports separately on figures for the Abyei Area, which are not included in the Africa aggregate.

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7   The term "hosted" is used to conform with the terminology of the UNHCR source material, in this figure and all such figures hereafter.

8   Data source used for this section: IDMC, 2023a. Internal displacements (or flows) refer to the number of forced movements of individuals within their country's borders that occurred in a particular period, not to the total accumulated number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) resulting from displacement over time (or IDP stock).

In the last decade, conflict and violence were the leading causes of internal displacements across the African continent, whereas disasters consistently topped the list at the global level, including in 2022 (32.6 million or 53% due to disasters, versus 28.3 million or 47% due to conflict and violence). However, in absolute numbers, internal displacements due to conflict and violence dropped by 22 per cent from 2021 (11.5 million), whereas those triggered by disasters were nearly three times higher in 2022 than in 2021 (2.6 million). Although conflict and violence remain the main reasons that communities are uprooted, the impact of multiple climate shocks and hazards has dramatically increased and is shaping affected populations' future response needs and disaster risk reduction mechanisms. The unprecedented, prolonged drought in the Horn of Africa and severe seasonal flooding across the continent led to record internal displacements in 2022, adding to the fact that many African countries experienced conflict and climate events at the same time. The countries with the most internal displacements were the Democratic Republic of the Congo (4.4 million), Ethiopia (2.9 million), Nigeria (2.6 million), Somalia (1.7 million) and South Sudan (933,000).

Although conflict displacements dropped between 2021 and 2022, they remained significant due to new instances of violence and protracted tensions. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which contributed to 45 per cent of all conflict-related displacements in Africa, an escalation of violence in the eastern parts of the country exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation and forced many Congolese to flee their homes, increasing internal displacements by 48 per cent compared to 2021. Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan have long been the three major conflict hotspots in East Africa, where multiple crises strike simultaneously and displacement situations have become increasingly protracted. Meanwhile, tensions also continued elsewhere, such as in Burkina Faso, the Sudan, the Central African Republic, Mozambique, Mali and Nigeria, triggering further waves of displacements mostly linked to intercommunal violence and non-State armed group activity. In the Sudan, the number of internal displacements in the first 10 weeks of the recent conflict (2.2 million) was nearly as high as the past 10 years combined (IDMC, 2023b).

With 2.4 million, Nigeria recorded the highest number of disaster-related displacements in Africa in 2022 and ranked fifth globally, after Pakistan, the Philippines, China and India. Heavy rainfall from June to November resulted in the most severe flooding in a decade, claiming hundreds of lives and destroying homes, infrastructure and crops. Chad, South Africa and Mauritania were also struck by devastating floods that produced new records for the number of internal displacements (IDMC, 2023c). While parts of the continent experienced flooding, the Horn of Africa faced its longest and most severe drought in over 40 years, particularly affecting Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. These drought conditions not only impacted livelihoods, agricultural systems and food prices, but also triggered significant internal movements, as people moved in search of water, food, pasture and humanitarian assistance. In addition, tropical storms hit the southern parts of the continent in the first quarter of 2022, causing large-scale displacements, with Malawi being the most affected country, followed by Madagascar and Mozambique (ibid.).

Figure 5. Top 10 countries in Africa with most internal displacements, 2022
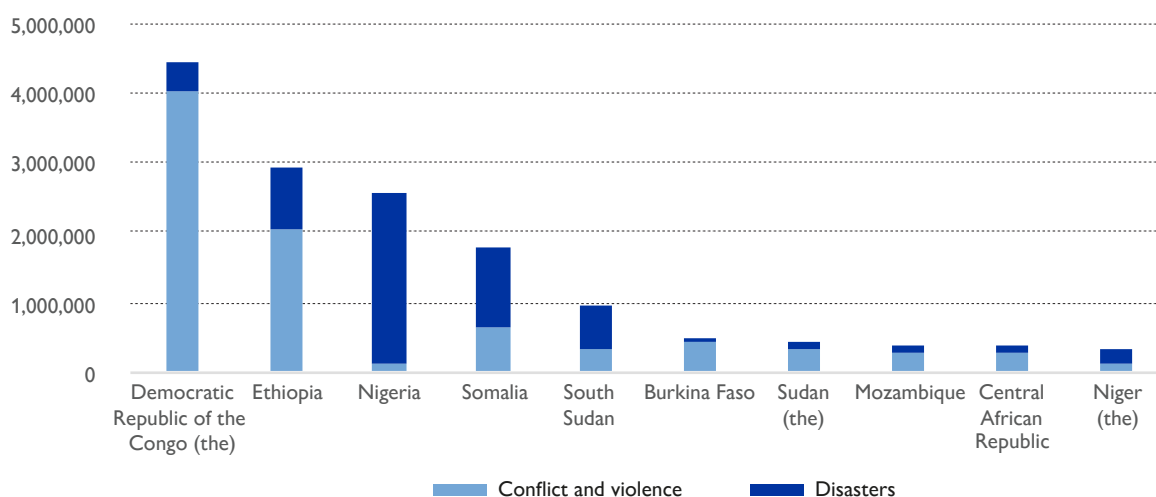
Source: IDMC, 2023a.
Note: IDMC reports separately on figures for the Abyei Area, which are not included in the Africa aggregate.

Across the African continent, internal displacement situations have become increasingly protracted, and a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have become highly dependent on humanitarian assistance. Finding durable solutions to prolonged internal displacement for IDPs, returnees and communities of destination is essential to overcoming displacement-related vulnerabilities and achieving self-sufficiency (IOM, 2023b). The recent IOM Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS), produced in collaboration with Georgetown University, emphasized that bridging the gap between the vulnerabilities of IDPs and those of the communities of destination was conducive to durable solutions for IDPs, such as through ensuring adequate housing, integrating IDPs into the community of destination and supporting inclusive development finance (ibid.).

Migrant workers

Regular and irregular labour migration flows are central in shaping mobility in Africa (see Chapter 6 for more details). In 2019, there were over 14.5 million migrant workers in Africa, mostly residing in South Africa (19%), Côte d'Ivoire (12%), Uganda (7%) and Ethiopia (5%).[9] Almost half (46%) of all migrant workers were aged between 15 and 35 years, totalling around 6.7 million, which means around 7.8 million (54%) of these migrant workers were over 35 years old. The number of migrant workers in Africa increased by 53 per cent from 2010 (9.5 million), with female migrant workers increasing more rapidly (+60%) than their male counterparts (+50%) over the same period. Male migrant workers (8.9 million) constituted 61 per cent of the African migrant labour force, while female migrant workers (5.6 million) constituted 39 per cent.[10] However, significant variations were observed at the country level. Gabon (98%), Angola (87%) and Libya (77%) were the countries with the largest share of male migrant workers and the largest gap between sexes. Meanwhile, female migrant workers outnumbered male migrant workers in Chad (57%), Burundi (56%), Djibouti (55%), Nigeria (54%) and Guinea (53%).

Figure 6. Migrant workers in Africa by sex as listed on an official document, 2010–2019
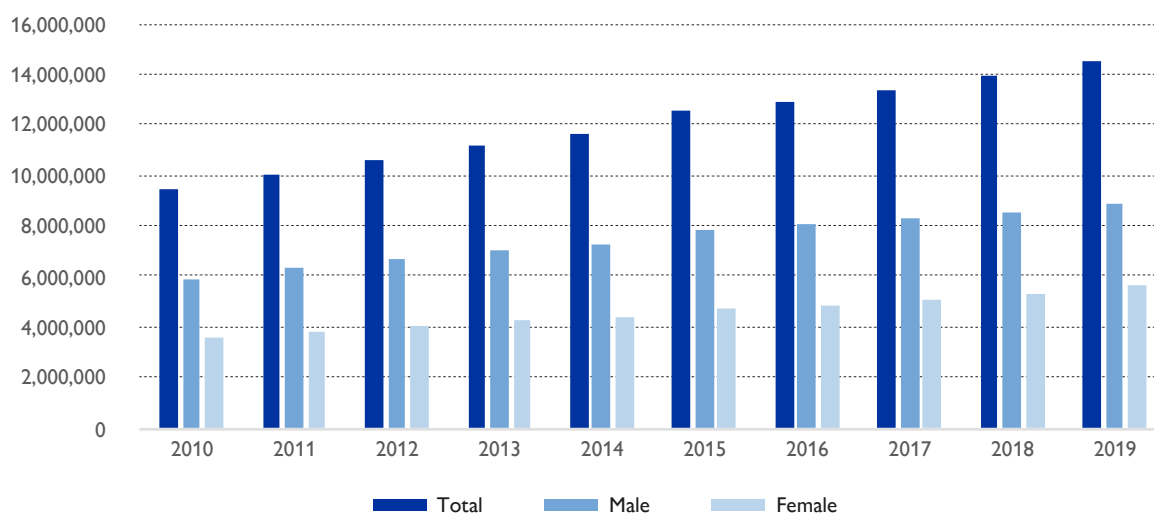
Source: STATAFRIC, n.d.a.
Note: Data were based on national sources and were supplemented by estimates for missing observations.

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9   Data source used for this section: STATAFRIC migration database. The latest available data on migrant workers were as of 2019. Data were based on national sources and were supplemented by estimates for missing observations.

10   There are very few cases where gender-disaggregated data is available; in most cases, where disaggregated data is available, it is disaggregated by sex rather than by gender. In general, sex-disaggregated data also does not include the option for an "another designation" category (e.g. O, T, or X rather than male or female). Throughout this chapter, therefore, analysis is of sex-disaggregated data, and not gender-disaggregated data. The data is therefore unable to offer insights into the migration experiences of people with diverse gender identities, and is able to address only the binary categories of female and male. For more on the importance of data disaggregated by gender and by sex, see IOM, 2023e.

HUMAN MOBILITY IN AFRICA WITHIN GLOBAL MEGATRENDS: COVID-19 AND BEYOND

When the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic in March 2020, global health, human mobility and people's lives were drastically disrupted and transformed. Mobility gradually decreased as more countries put in place various measures that restricted the movement of people in order to mitigate the further spread of the disease. These unprecedented interventions – namely border closures, travel bans and health control requirements – also left a significant number of migrants stranded, unable to move or return home and, in many instances, without access to consular or humanitarian assistance. In mid-July 2020, around 108,000 migrants were estimated to be stranded in Africa (IOM, 2020a).[11]

The COVID-19 pandemic worsened existing inequalities and heightened the vulnerability of migrant populations, especially those in irregular situations and those who migrate out of necessity, such as refugees, asylum-seekers and migrant workers in vulnerable situations. Many migrants were unable to work and support themselves and, therefore, had to rely on humanitarian assistance or support from the communities where they resided, which were already struggling with the socioeconomic burden of the pandemic. Irregular migrants became even more vulnerable to exploitation by smugglers and traffickers, as riskier migratory routes were used to avoid the heightened border controls and their services became more expensive, while other migrants were stigmatized as potential carriers of the virus. In addition, IDPs and refugees living in overcrowded camps, who already had limited access to health services and were particularly vulnerable to epidemics due to high population densities, were at a high risk of COVID-19 infection.

Internal restrictions such as lockdowns, curfews and closure of schools, businesses and public transportation were enforced as part of governments' COVID-19 response. However, some policies were more stringent than others. While African policies were slightly more lenient than global policies in the early days of the pandemic, they became slightly more stringent between mid-April and October 2020, after which they remained much more lenient than global policies until late 2021. By the end of March 2020, the countries that had taken the strictest measures were the Congo (with a stringency index rating of 97), Djibouti (94), Morocco (94) and Uganda (94), scoring higher than the global average stringency index (76) and the corresponding African average (74), while Burundi (14), Chad (28), Mozambique (47) and Zambia (47) had the most lenient measures in place (Blavatnik School of Government and University of Oxford, 2021).[12] By the end of December 2021, Uganda (73), Morocco (70) and Seychelles (69) still imposed the strictest measures, scoring well above the global (45) and African (39) average (ibid.).

Figure 7. African and global average COVID-19 government response stringency index, March 2020–December 2021
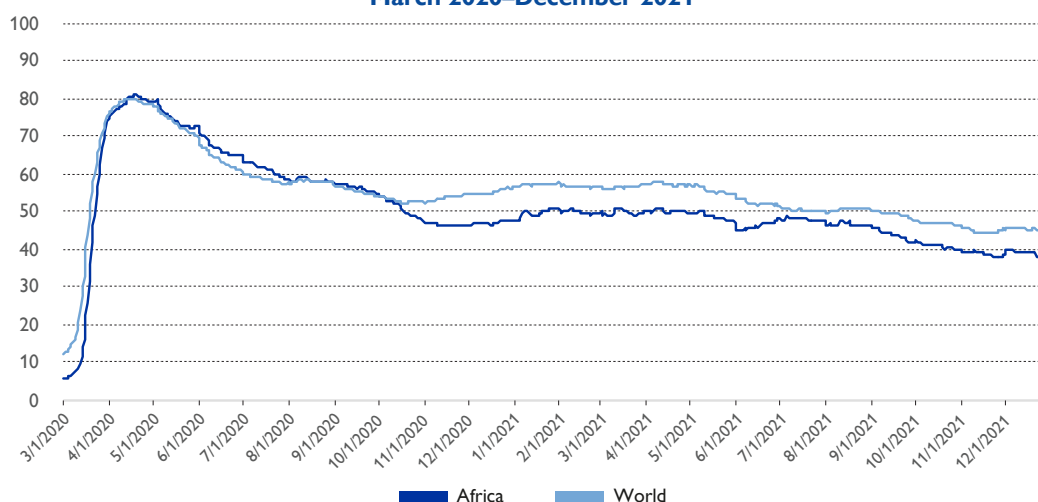
Source: Blavatnik School of Government and University of Oxford, 2021.
Note: The stringency index is a composite measure based on nine response indicators including school closures, workplace closures, and travel bans, rescaled to a value from 0 to 100 (100 = strictest).

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11   This number does not include Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia, which were included in the Middle East and North Africa aggregate (1.2 million stranded migrants as of mid-July 2020; "Middle East and North Africa" is the IOM designation for the subregion).

12   The stringency index is a composite measure based on nine response indicators including school closures, workplace closures, and travel bans, rescaled to a value from 0 to 100 (100 = strictest).

A shift in COVID-19-related international travel measures was also observed as the pandemic progressed.[13] In the early months of the pandemic, restrictions on mobility were the most common measures adopted by African governments, compared to health measures. Mobility restrictions peaked at over 80 per cent for the first time in April 2020 (83%) and then for the second time in June 2020 (81%). However, not all African countries imposed border closures in response to the pandemic, with the Comoros, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania, in particular, retaining an open-border policy in late March 2020, including for air travel (IOM, 2020b). Conversely, Angola, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau and Madagascar had fully closed their borders by late March 2020 (ibid.). In the second half of 2020, many African governments gradually eased mobility restrictions, as highlighted by the significant drop in these restrictions until October 2020 (16%), following which they remained relatively unchanged until the end of 2021 (12%, on average). Globally, COVID-19-related international travel measures remained steady between April and July 2020 (around 75%), after which they commenced to decline, albeit not as low as Africa (50% in October 2020) (IOM, 2021a).

The experience of the African continent was different to that of other geographical regions in the world due to the comparatively low numbers of COVID-19 cases and fatalities recorded. By 31 December 2022, Africa had recorded 9.5 million cases and over 175,000 deaths, which was around 28 times lower than in Europe (268.8 million cases and 2.2 million deaths) and six times lower than in South-East Asia (60.7 million cases and 803,000 deaths) (WHO, n.d.). Some of the reasons potentially explaining the lower impact of the pandemic in Africa were linked to the young age distribution of the African population (especially in sub-Saharan Africa), previous exposure to other coronaviruses and underreporting of cases and deaths due to governments' limited testing capacities (*The Conversation*, 2021). Even though the continent avoided a catastrophic scenario, the health emergency weakened its already strained health systems and had severe socioeconomic repercussions, as demonstrated by the decline in economic growth, rise in food prices and increase in food insecurity in many countries.

As shown in Figure 8, governments progressively introduced new health-related measures to combat the pandemic. These measures sharply increased from June 2020 (19%) to November 2020 (84%) and surpassed mobility restrictions from August 2020, as opposed to October 2020 globally.[14] Health measures then remained at a high level (88% on average) until the end of 2021. While medical restrictions were initially implemented to stop mobility, they have, since 2021, gradually been used as conditions for entry and, therefore, as measures to facilitate mobility through pre-travel testing and vaccination certificates. However, testing capabilities and vaccine access remained limited across the African continent, in addition to the fact that many migrants do not have access to digital health records. As a result, the distinction between those who can move and those who cannot became even more pronounced.

Between late 2021 and early 2022, more countries moved towards easing or completely lifting all COVID-19-related travel bans and testing or vaccination requirements, despite the spread of the Omicron variant. The gradual removal of entry restrictions was observed from April 2022 and, by December 2022, more than half (53%) of all countries, territories and areas removed all COVID-19 entry restrictions and conditions for entry (IOM, 2023c). In particular, around mid-December 2022, Algeria, Botswana, the Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Lesotho, Namibia, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan and Togo were fully open and had no measures in place (ibid.).

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13 Data source used for this section: IOM COVID-19 Global Mobility Restrictions database (last updated October 2023). Raw data not available online, but for analysis based on this data see IOM, n.d.b.

14 McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021.

Figure 8. COVID-19-related international travel measures imposed in Africa, March 2020–December 2021
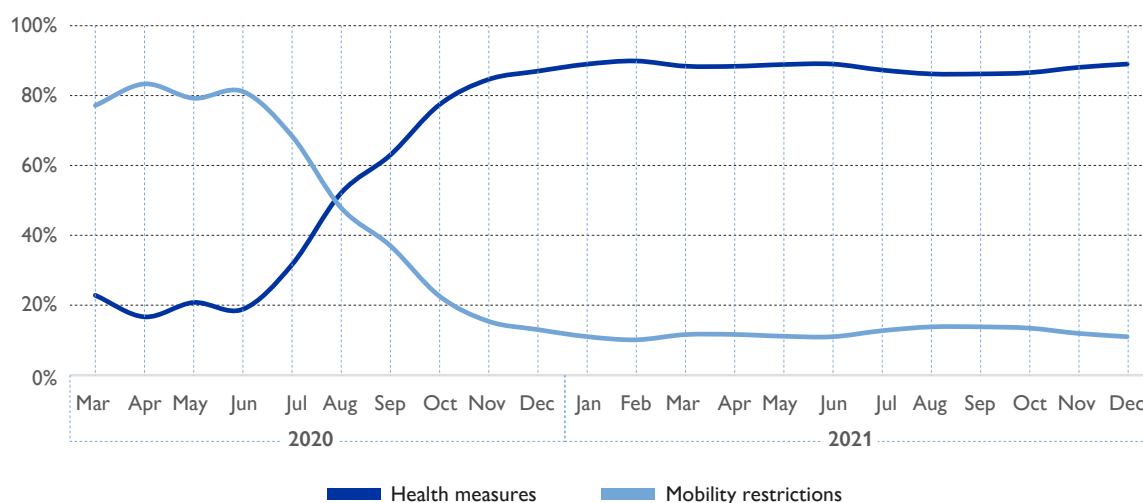
Source: IOM COVID-19 Global Mobility Restrictions database (accessed 5 October 2023).
Note: COVID-19-related international travel measures refer to the air travel restrictions put in place that limited the entry of passengers, which were categorized as either health related or mobility related. Health measures refer to medical measures (such as quarantine, self-isolation, pre-travel testing, health screening, health declaration forms) and location surveillance. Mobility restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality, immigration status or arrival from a specific geographic location as well as border closures, changes in visa policy, new requirements on travel documentation and other specific requirements for entry.

MIGRATION AND HUMAN MOBILITY DATA IN AFRICA: EMERGING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Data needs

Migration data are defined as "all types of data that support the development of comprehensive, coherent and forward-looking migration policies and programming, as well as those that contribute to informed public discourse on migration" (IOM, 2021a:2). High-quality, accurate, reliable, consistent and relevant migration data are essential to make evidence-based decisions and conduct meaningful analyses of emerging issues, including those that are examined in detail throughout other chapters of this report, such as health, missing migrants or labour mobility. Recent years have seen an unprecedented increase in the complexity and frequency of external shocks and factors that influence human mobility, namely demographic imbalances, climate change, disruptions to existing supply chains and established migration ecosystems, on top of high levels of displacement due to conflict and violence. All these elements create considerable challenges for data analysis, calling for innovation, collaboration and integration of existing data sets often spread across multiple stakeholders and countries. Migration data are needed to generate action, insight and increasing foresight to guide solution-driven approaches. Precise analysis and projections of human mobility patterns into the future are often hindered not only by the quantity of data, due to the fragmentation of data sources and general paucity of relevant data, but also by their quality; for instance, data are often not disaggregated by migration and other relevant characteristics (IOM, 2021b). The call for investment into enhanced data collection and analysis is becoming vociferous, in the context of the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (UNGA, 2022:para.48), including the boost to data literacy and capacities, the upgrade of outdated, incompatible or inadequate sources and systems, and improving disaggregation by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and other relevant characteristics (ibid.). Efforts to revise international guidance on migration statistics have been underway since 2018, including new definitions, indicators, and standards;[15] these efforts are expected to be concluded by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2025 (UNESC, 2022:para.11), providing United Nations Member States with guidance that has the potential to expand

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15 The five task forces of the United Nations Expert Group on Migration Statistics are: (1) data and indicators set on international migration; (2) key concepts and definitions on international migration; (3) data integration for disaggregated statistics on international migration; (4) data sources for international migration statistics and operationalization of revised conceptual framework; and (5) global programme on migration statistics (UNEGMS, n.d.a)

the evidence base for governments to make informed programme and policy decisions.[16] The need for closer coordination and collaboration on data collection and analysis in Africa is now even more pertinent than ever (for more, see UNEGMS, n.d.b).

Data sources: A snapshot

Over the past decade, a number of national, regional and continental initiatives have emerged, striving to enhance the quality and availability of data on migration and human mobility in Africa.[17] In collaboration with the African Union Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC) and other partners, the African Migration Data Network (AMDN) was established in 2021 as a follow up to the discussions held at the sidelines of the Second International Migration Statistics Forum (IFMS) in Cairo in 2020 (for more on the AMDN, see IOM, n.d.a). The AMDN is a voluntary technical network among national statistical offices (NSOs) in several countries in Africa that has received capacity development support from various technical initiatives of the African Union, IOM, OECD and Statistics Sweden. In order to take stock of existing capacities and gaps in migration data in Africa, IOM conducted a needs assessment study in 2021–2022, which resulted in brief unpublished data capacity profiles of 12 countries. Key findings of the study were:

- In half of the surveyed countries, population censuses were not the main source of migration statistical data.
- Most available statistics on international migration come from surveys, both those dedicated to migration as well as other national surveys conducted by statistical offices. Survey questionnaires not dedicated to measuring migration often would include questions designed to measure migrants; however, these results often could not be used to produce statistics due to insufficient sample sizes.
- Administrative records are generally underutilized as sources of mobility data, except for residence permits and consular records.
- Due to gaps in available data on migration, more data are available on migrant stocks rather than flows, and on immigration rather than emigration.
- Very limited information is available concerning the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of migrants, thereby making it challenging to make informed policy decisions based on evidence such as their contributions to the economy and society, or access to basic services such as health and educational services.

Table 2. A snapshot of migration data availability and sources in 12 countries in Africa, 2010–2020

Source or availability	Source available and provides data on migration	Source available but does not include data on migration	Source not available
Statistical sources			
Population census	6	1	5
Migration survey	4	0	8
Demographic survey	2	6	4
Labour force survey	7	4	1
Income and expenditure	1	6	5
Multisector household	1	5	6
Establishment survey	1	3	8
Youth survey	2	4	6

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16 See also the International Conference of Labour Statisticians, which also offers frameworks for collecting and analysing data on migrant workers, and is working to revise its guidelines to make them coherent with the revised conceptual framework on international migration statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

17 For example, the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP), the establishment of the African Migration Observatory (AMO), the African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration (ACARM), and the Continental Operational Centre for Combating Irregular Migration in Khartoum, the Sudan.

Source or availability	Source available and provides data on migration	Source available but does not include data on migration	Source not available
Other	4	2	6
Administrative sources			
Residence permits	4	1	7
Border records	0	5	7
Work permits	2	3	7
Health records	0	1	11
Education records	1	1	10
Consular records, etc.	3	1	8
Other	1	0	11

Source: IOM Africa migration data profiles, 2022 (unpublished).
Note: Countries include Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Libya, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

Another important source of migration-related analysis is the Migration Governance Indicator (MGI) assessment. An analysis of the responses to this question in 35 countries that have conducted MGI assessments in Africa corroborates the findings above: governments generally do not collect and publish migration-related data on a regular basis beyond the census, with just 14 per cent countries responding "yes" to this question. Over half (51%) indicated that they publish data on migration, but that the data are limited and not regularly updated.

Table 3. Responses as of 2020 to MGI question "Does the country collect and publish data on a regular basis (e.g. on a quarterly or annual basis) on migration (outside the census)?"

Response	Subregion					
	Northern Africa	Eastern Africa	Middle Africa	Southern Africa	Western Africa	Total
No	0	6	1	0	5	12
Yes	0	2	2	1	0	5
Partially*	1	4	1	3	9	18
Total	1	12	4	4	14	35

* Indicates that the data produced is limited and not regularly updated.
Source: Migration Governance Indicators (IOM internal database).
Note: Countries include Angola, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Gambia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Quality and availability of migration data in Africa: A call for investment

There have been multiple calls for governments and international agencies, including development partners, to step up investment into efficient, robust and integrated national statistical systems as a necessary condition for ensuring evidence-based policies and programming (for example, IOM and McKinsey and Company, 2018a). Data-based insights enable policymakers to set priorities in development plans, to provide public services effectively and to be accountable to citizens, while tackling misperceptions and allowing them to track the implementation of global

commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Migration,[18] as well as regional ones, such as Agenda 2063 (AU:2013) and the African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030) MPF (AU:2018).[19] High-quality data also allow governments and humanitarian actors to take informed action through effective programming.[20] They also better prepare governments and migrants themselves to navigate issues such as climate change, remittances, labour mobility or political instability.

The investment in statistical systems and broader data ecosystems can take various forms, such as including migration-relevant questions in censuses and other regular surveys and ensuring timely analysis and dissemination of results disaggregated by relevant characteristics including migratory status; leveraging the use of administrative records to produce migration-related statistics (see for example African Union, 2022; African Union et al., 2020); ensuring household surveys include questions on country of birth and citizenship, and sharing public-use microdata files for secondary research, programming and policy purposes; creating partnerships between NSOs and relevant stakeholders to, among other things, leverage big data to complement official sources in measuring migration and understand the drivers and consequences of migration; and developing and implementing (including through capacity development activities) a comprehensive strategy to enhance national capacities for the collection and use of migration-related data and indicators to support evidence-based policymaking (for example, the Capacity Development Strategy (UNECA, 2014), which builds on Africa's Capacity Development Strategic Framework (African Union and NEPAD, 2010; IOM, 2018). Many of these recommendations are also reflected in the actions under objective 1 of the Global Compact for Migration ("collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies"; UNGA, 2019:para.17).

The importance of high-quality migration data for evidence-based policy and programmes has been recognized by multiple African institutions, such as the African Union Commission, which augmented existing entities such as the African Union Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC, n.d.b) through the establishment of a dedicated observatory on migration data (the African Migration Observatory, 2018; African Union, 2018b:para.23), as well as two other centres on the topic: the African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration (ACARM), and the Continental Operational Centre for Combating Irregular Migration, in Khartoum). At the global level, the international development cooperation community recognized the need to strengthen capacities of national statistical systems for the effective use of high-quality data for development through the Bern Call to Action in 2022 (GPEDC, 2022). That document highlighted that data are required to achieve effective development cooperation (ibid.:2), and encouraged development partners and NSOs to utilize national strategies for the development of statistics as a basis for investments, ensuring that they adhere to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNGA, 2014).[21]

CONCLUSION

Africa is a continent of origin, transit and destination of migrants. The main migration drivers are highly intertwined and interchangeable, including the search for better economic opportunities due to widespread economic disparities, political instability triggering conflict and violence, and the increasing impact of climate change and environmental degradation. Current dialogues to enhance regular migration pathways, expand climate change adaptation programming and addressing climate-related mobility dynamics, coupled with renewed calls for peace and security, are crucial to determining the future migration landscape of the continent.

Considerable progress has been achieved in recent years in Africa in terms of enhancing the availability and quality of migration and human mobility data. However, much more work needs to be done by governments,

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18 For example, migration and remittance household surveys conducted in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda reveal that households receiving international remittances from OECD countries have been making productive investments in land, housing, businesses and agriculture (Global Migration Group, 2017).

19 Agenda 2063 is the African Union's strategic framework for socioeconomic transformation over 50 years (African Union, 2013). It emphasizes the importance of data-driven policymaking to achieve its goals, which are aligned with the SDGs. The African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030) provides comprehensive guidelines for migration management in Africa (African Union, 2018a). It aligns with the Global Compact for Migration, emphasizing the role of data in managing migration effectively.

20 For example, the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix and UNHCR data were used to supplement South Sudan's population census that was conducted over a decade ago (2008) to generate a more accurate population distribution accounting for displacement mobility (IOM, 2023d).

21 These are the set of principles to govern the field of official statistics, last revised by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2014.

regional economic communities, the African Union, global donors and development cooperation partners. The solution may often lie not (only) in establishing new data collection processes, but rather building on existing ones (including through strengthening coordination between stakeholders at the national, regional and continental levels to overcome the current fragmented state of migration data sources) and ensuring that the collected data are analysed and used in practice. New complexities and crises call for more comprehensive and timely data, including data to inform anticipatory actions and foresight. Statistical systems are struggling to catch up with the emerging data demands and evolving landscape, and to respond to new concepts and definitions affecting time series data, especially in light of the constraints on human resources and financial capacities. Innovation, collaboration and better coordination can create important efficiencies and strengthen the impact of existing initiatives.

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REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

4

Chapter 4

REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Cooperation on migration governance in Africa has been shaped through key policies adopted by the African Union, regional economic communities (RECs) and national governments. The three levels at which migration governance policies are framed and implemented are through cooperation between African Union Member States, between REC member States, and through relations between respective governments. The importance of migrations is indicated by the fact that free movement of persons is one of the eight dimensions used to rank the progress of RECs and African countries in regional integration in the Africa Union's Multidimensional Regional Integration Index (African Union, 2021). This chapter summarizes and analyses the various governance policies in place, explores some of the emerging opportunities and challenges presented by rising international migration within and from Africa, and suggests policy options to take advantage of the opportunities and confront the challenges presented by greater volumes of migration.

INTRODUCTION

The African Union has provided overarching continental level migration governance policy frameworks to guide RECs and Member States' work. At the subregional levels of East Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa and North Africa, the RECs provide policy guidelines on migration governance.[1] They have also created Regional Consultative Processes on migration (RCPs) that provide a platform for dialogue on migration issues of common interest to Member States to help them bridge the gap between policy and implementation. Most of the intra-Africa migration across national borders occurs within each of the eight RECs, where there is greater freedom of movement than there is between regions.

The need for regional approaches to migration governance is spurred by increasing volumes and complexity of migration flows. The resulting migration trends, their underlying drivers and the effects within the continent as well as on other regions of the world have received close attention from the African Union Commission (AUC), the RECs and Member States that are aware of the challenges and opportunities that the trends present for the continent.

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1   The eight RECs are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Community of Sahelo–Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

The magnitude of both the challenges and opportunities presented by migration is revealed by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) data, provided in the IOM *World Migration Report 2022*, showing that in 2020 an estimated 21 million African migrants were living in an African country other than their country of birth. This represents a huge increase from 2015, when the number was 18 million. The number of migrants born in Africa but residing in countries outside the continent had also increased, from 17 million in 2015 to 19.5 million in 2020 (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021:60–61). DESA international migration stock data from 2020 show that most African migration occurs within the African continent. As shown in Figure 1, the data show that relatively fewer migrants originate from the North Africa and Southern Africa regions. East Africa, as a region of origin for migrants, shows the greatest increase over this period, from 6.6 million in 2015 to 8.2 million in 2020. West Africa shows the next greatest increase, with an increase from 6.9 million in 2015 to 7.4 million in 2020. Central Africa recorded an increase of migrants from 2.9 million in 2015 to 3.3 million in 2020. The number of migrants from North Africa increased from 1.4 million in 2015 to 1.5 million in 2020, while Southern Africa had an increase from over 414,000 migrants in 2015 to almost 437,000 in 2020.

Figure 1. Number of migrants from major regions of Africa, 2015 and 2020
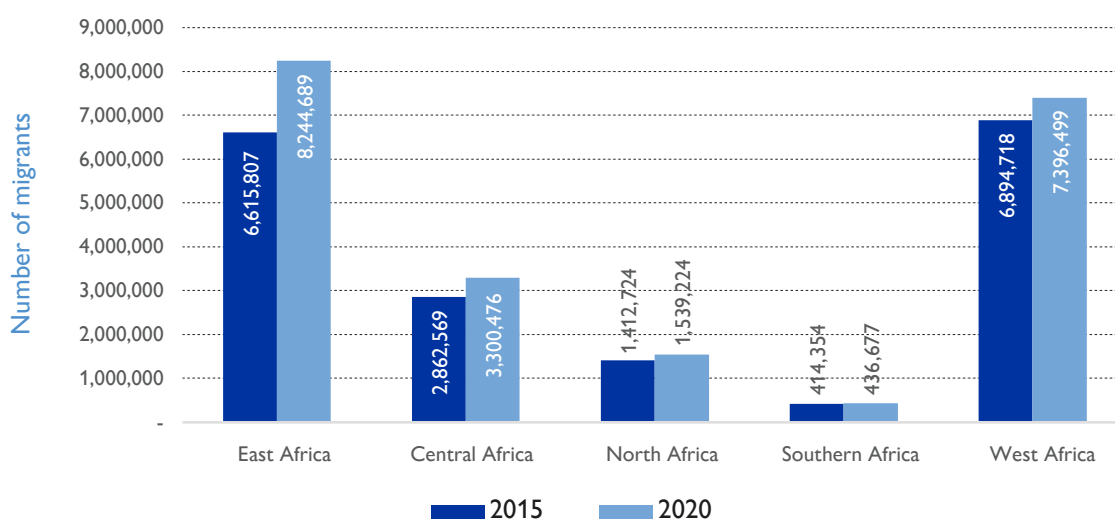
Source: DESA, 2020.

THE MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

Migration plays a major role in the development of countries of origin. This is because migrants continue to maintain strong relationships with family and friends back in their countries and communities of origin, and contribute to development there. Migrants' role in development comes in the form of remittances, as well as through the sharing of knowledge and ideas between receiving and origin countries. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) finds that migration primarily produces economic growth in destination countries and that migration on its own cannot create the conditions for sustainable, equitable economic growth and human development (ECA, 2019). The McKinsey Global Institute (2016) observed that migration contributes between 40 and 80 per cent of labour force growth in destination countries and generates a net productivity increase of USD 3 trillion worldwide,[2] without disrupting the long-term employment or wages of native workers.

The World Bank (2023) suggests that remittances have become more resilient to shocks and more important as a source of external financing. Despite the triple shocks of the coronavirus pandemic, the Russian Federation–Ukraine conflict and climate shock, the World Bank estimates that, in 2022, remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) increased by 8 per cent, reaching USD 647 billion. Remittances are expected to

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2   All currency values are given in United States dollars (USD).

continue to grow at a moderate rate of 1.4 per cent in 2023, reaching total inflows of USD 656 billion. Globally, remittance flows are expected to reach USD 840 billion in 2023 and USD 858 in 2024. These international figures indicate that remittances represent a larger source of external finance for LMICs, relative to foreign direct investment (FDI), official development assistance (ODA) and portfolio investment flows, than they do for high-income countries. This was confirmed by data on international remittances published by the World Bank's Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) in 2019. The data showed that, by 2018, remittances to LMICs (excluding the People's Republic of China) had become the largest source of foreign change and that remittances had risen to more than three times the size of ODA, and reached the level of FDI flows (World Bank, 2019:1).

The World Bank (2023) also finds that the flow of remittances to sub-Saharan Africa reached USD 53 billion in 2022, a 6.1 per cent increase from 2021. The Bank expects the flows to the region to increase more moderately, by 1.3 per cent in 2023 and 3.7 per cent in 2024, because of the expected slowdown of economic growth from 2.6 per cent in 2022 to 0.7 per cent in 2023 in major developed countries, where a large population of remittance senders live. The slight moderation in flows only affects the volume, while remittances remain countercyclical and resilient to such shocks. Remittance flows support the current accounts of several African countries. Growth in remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa in 2022 were driven by Nigeria (USD 20.1 billion), Ghana (USD 4.7 billion), Kenya (USD 4.1 billion), the United Republic of Tanzania (USD 0.7 billion), Uganda (USD 1.3 billion), and Rwanda (USD 0.5 billion). It must be noted that remittances have become the most important foreign exchange earner in several countries. The remittances to Kenya, for instance, are larger than the country's key exports, including tourism, tea, coffee and horticulture (World Bank, 2023).

A study by UNCTAD (2018) examines migratory pattern in Africa and finds that 53 per cent of Africa's international migrants in 2017 remained on the continent, with more than 80 per cent of the migrants from the continent going to eastern, central and western parts of Africa. The study also shows that intra-African migration positively impacts structural transformation in destination countries, growing GDP per capita in Africa from an average of USD 2,008 in 2016 to a projected USD 3,249 in 2030, a compound annual growth rate of 3.5 per cent from 2016. UNCTAD (2018) also finds that migration contributes to improved labour productivity in destination countries, particularly in the agriculture, manufacturing, mining, construction and service sectors, as well as increasing manufacturing value addition. Migration also contributes to destination countries' development through taxes and consumption, with migrants spending approximately 85 per cent of their incomes in their destination country (UNCTAD, 2018). Thus, besides contributing to current output, migration boosts the existing and future labour force in destination countries.

Migration contributes significantly to trade. This is because immigrants continue to maintain links to their countries of origin and consequently foster bilateral trade flows between the origin and destination countries. Migration also contributes to lowering the cost of trade because of the immigrants' superior knowledge of markets, language, customs, business practices, laws and other trade-related issues. Genç (2014) suggests that this direct trade-stimulating impact is greatest when the origin and destination countries have very different cultures, languages and institutions, and when alternative sources of information are lacking. Transaction costs are expected to affect both exports and imports. Immigrants could also boost trade through "nostalgic" preference effects. In general, immigrants crave products, mainly consumption goods, from their country of origin, leading to the importation of those goods by the destination country. Genç finds that demand for such goods increases among the destination country population as well, through a demonstration effect influencing the preferences of native-born residents. Over time, there could be a substitution effect, as firms in the destination country begin to produce the nostalgic products for the immigrants (ibid.).

The role migration plays in boosting trade is another reason why the African Union (2018a) Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Right of Establishment must be ratified by the Member States of the African Union and fully implemented. The ratification of the protocol will complement the boosting of trade within Africa through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which was established by an agreement approved by African Union Member States in 2018. The AfCFTA promises to deliver African prosperity by fuelling economic growth, expanding decent jobs and raising living standards for all Africans through integrating and consolidating Africa into a single market with a

USD 2.4 trillion value, and thereby eliminating many of the barriers to trade present across the continent. The Agreement, if fully implemented, would raise incomes in Africa by 9 per cent by 2035 and lift 50 million people out of extreme poverty. Under the Agreement, it is expected that FDI into Africa would increase by between 111 and 159 per cent and wages would rise by 11.2 per cent for women and 9.8 per cent for men, by 2035. Africa's exports to the rest of the world would also go up by 32 per cent by 2035, and intra-African exports would grow by 109 per cent, led by manufactured goods. Overall, the Agreement would make Africa very attractive for investment, expand trade, provide better jobs, reduce poverty and increase shared prosperity for all Africans (Echandi et al., 2022), thereby accelerating the attainment of both Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In a report prepared for the World Economic Forum, El-Houry (2018) touts the advantages of migration. Drawing on the example of the Schengen area, the report points out that the Schengen visa, combined with good air, rail and road connectivity, has made Europe the biggest destination for tourists in the world. In 2014, there were almost 1.7 million people living in Europe working in another Schengen-area country, and about 3.5 million people were reported to have crossed internal Schengen-area borders each day. The report also observed that, in 2014, around 24 million business trips and 57 million cross-border goods movements were recorded in the Schengen area. These factors have contributed to bilateral net trade increasing between members of the Schengen area. In addition, it is noted that since Seychelles adopted a visa-free policy, it has witnessed international tourism into the country rise by an average 7 per cent per year. Rwanda has also benefited from abolishing work permits for East African citizens, with its trade with Kenya and Uganda increasing by at least 50 per cent because of easier entries and exits for migrant workers.

THE AFRICAN UNION'S POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

The main treaty on which regional integration in Africa rests is the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty) adopted on 3 June 1991 in Abuja, Nigeria, which entered into force on 12 May 1994. The foremost objective of the community is "to promote economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance and promote an endogenous, self-sustained development" (OAU, 1991:8). Since the adoption of the Abuja Treaty, several other key policy documents have been adopted to guide regional integration and migration governance in Africa. The key migration governance policies, agreements and declarations among those listed here are discussed below in the context of regional integration.

- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981).
- Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (adopted on 3 June 1991, entered into force on 12 May 1994).
- African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (adopted on 23 October 2009, entered into force on 6 December 2012).
- The African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (January 2015).
- The Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (28 January 2018).
- The Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA (21 March 2018).
- The African Union Convention on Cross Border Cooperation (27 June).
- The 2018 Migration Policy Framework for Africa and its Plan of Action 2018–2030 (May 2018).
- The African Common Position on Migration and Development (3–5 April 2006).
- Common African Position on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (16–21 October 2017).
- Decision of the African Common Position on Climate Change (1 July 2009).
- African Union Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication, and Inclusive Development (8–9 September 2014).

These treaties, policies and common positions are being implemented through a series of complementary continental programmes and initiatives. These include the Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration (JLMP), adopted in 2015 and jointly implemented by AUC, the International Labour Organization

(ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the ECA ; the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children (2006); the African Union–Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants (2014); the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 ; and the African Union Strategy for a Better Integrated Border Governance, more commonly known as the African Union Border Governance Strategy (AUBGS).

Key policy instruments

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was the predecessor to the African Union, in 1991 adopted a treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) (the Abuja Treaty, adopted in 1991 and entered into force 1994). As part of the conditions of achieving the AEC, the Abuja Treaty called on member States of the Union to gradually remove obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and the right of residence and establishment. Furthermore, member States are expected to implement employment policies that allow for the free movement of persons within the AEC and to promote labour exchanges aimed at facilitating the employment of available skilled manpower from one member State in other member States. These core principles are repeated and reinforced in the 2018 African Union Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment.

In July 2001, during its seventy-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers, the OAU called for the development of a migration policy framework, to address migration-related challenges confronting African countries. This led to the formulation of the African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), which was adopted in Banjul, the Gambia, in 2006 (African Union, 2018b:8). The MPFA was revised in 2018, following an evaluation of the 2006 framework that revealed that migration in Africa had become more dynamic, reflecting changing trends and patterns that required a new policy framework. More than its predecessor, the 2018 MPFA stresses the multidimensional character of migration. It emphasizes the need to connect migration governance with labour migration, border governance, diaspora, internal migration and trade to effectively harness the benefits of migration for the continent. The MPFA also recognizes the links between migration and relevant cross-cutting issues such as data collection, gender, environment, health and inter-State and interregional cooperation.

The Common African Position on the Global Compact for Migration was adopted during the second common ordinary session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons held from 16 to 21 October 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda. The Common African Position underscored the MPFA and other policy and legal frameworks adopted by the African Union Member States on the governance of migration and mobility. The resolutions of the Common African Position were in line with the six thematic areas of the Global Compact for Migration: addressing migration drivers; addressing human rights of all migrants; smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery; supporting international cooperation and governance of migration; irregular migration and facilitating regular migration pathways; and the contribution of migrants and the diaspora, including women and youth, to origin, transit and receiving countries.

The aspirations of African Union Member States regarding the free movement of people on the continent are reflected in the African Union Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2015a:17–22) which proposes as one of its flagship programmes the introduction of an "African passport and free movement of people" within the first ten years of its implementation. It explicitly states that "there will be free movement of goods, services and capital; and persons travelling to any member state could get the visa at the point of entry" (African Union, 2015a:22). Progress toward the free movement of people in Africa was further strengthened In January 2018, when the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (the African Union Free Movement Protocol) was adopted in Addis Ababa during the thirtieth ordinary session of the Assembly of African Heads of State and Government. The Protocol is anchored by the principles of economic integration expressed in the Abuja Treaty, as well as the continent's shared values, unity and solidarity (African Union, 2018a). The Protocol's implementation is scheduled to occur in three phases, with target dates set for the first phase (though no target dates have been set for the implementation of the second and third phases). These dates are ambitious: although the target date for implementation of the first phase, in which entry restrictions for all signatories will be removed, is 2023, only 32 countries had signed the protocol by 2022, while only four countries (Mali, the Niger, Rwanda and São Tomé and Principe) had ratified it, and only three

countries (Seychelles, Benin and the Gambia) offered visa-free entry to citizens of all African countries (African Development Bank, 2022:21). However, an increasing number of African countries are offering e-visa entry options, and others are offering visa on arrival for visitors from other African countries. Progress in the ratification of the protocol therefore appears to be falling behind actual improvement in visa openness and other free entry steps taken by some African Union Member States.

The Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA was adopted during the Assembly of African Heads of State and Government held in Kigali, Rwanda on 21 March 2018. The African Union's extraordinary summit on the AfCFTA in Niamey, the Niger on 7 July 2019 concluded with resolutions for the operationalization of the AfCFTA, which legally entered into force on 30 May 2019. The implementation of the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA is seen as a critical requirement to achieving the goals and objectives of Agenda 2063. The official commissioning and handing over of the AfCFTA secretariat building in Accra, Ghana, took place on 17 August 2020, and formal trading under the AfCFTA commenced on 1 January 2021.

Border management is another area in which regional integration is key to good migration governance. The main African continental instruments that define border governance are the African Union Convention on Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) of 2014, the African Union Border Programme (AUBP), and the already mentioned AUBGS. The AUBGS was prepared in 2017, and comprehensively deals with the persistent need to maintain cooperation, peace and security, and with emerging issues such as cybersecurity, terrorism, trafficking in human beings, and commodity and drug smuggling. The AUBGS seeks to transform borders from points of separation, division and conflict into points of integration, as specified under the third pillar of the strategy on the governance of mobility, migration and trade facilitation. The goal, as stated there, is to turn borders "from barriers into bridges by facilitating legal cross-border mobility, migration and trade" (African Union, 2020:30). The other pillars of the strategy are the development of capabilities for border governance (pillar 1); conflict prevention and resolution, border security and trinational threats (pillar 2); cooperative border management (pillar 4); and borderland development and community engagement (pillar 5).

The African Union's Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development was adopted at the twenty-fourth African Union general assembly held in January 2015. At that same assembly, the JLMP was endorsed, which focuses on "Skills recognition for better labour mobility in Africa Initiative". The Plan of Action specifies under each key priority area the strategic actions needed from Member States, the RECs and the African Union. Priority Area 5 focuses on labour migration and regional integration, with the expected outcome of its implementation being the realization of "improved labour migration governance within Africa for regional economic integration and with the other regions" (African Union, n.d.:8). Priority Area 5(c) specifically addresses fair and ethical recruitment, requiring Member States to "develop regulatory frameworks to ensure that the private placement agencies engaged in international recruitments are operating according to national and international standards, in consideration of international ethical recruitment in order to guarantee availability of skills pool required for the development of African countries" (ibid.) Under Priority Area 5(e), Member States are encouraged to "Create institutional mechanisms for regular dialogue on migration, between countries of origin and countries of destination; and create structured recruitment management systems in both the countries of origin and destination" (ibid.).

The African Union Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, under the section on responsibilities of the African Union in Key Priority Area 5(e) also instructs the African Union Commission to "Create an African Labour Migration Advisory Committee to assess labour shortage, demographic and other workforce-related data, to advise for a better monitoring of migrants inflows and outflows across and outside the continent, in coordination with member States and the RECs" (African Union, n.d.:10). Consequently, the AUC established the Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment which set up the African Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LSAC) according to the recommendations in the Plan of Action. The Committee's main objective is to "promote and protect the rights of migrant workers and members of their families" (African Union, 2015b:2).

In order to make practical the provisions of the JLMP, the continent faces hurdles regarding how to ensure that education, skills and qualifications are recognized, compatible and comparable across national borders (ILO, 2015:46). The African Union has spearheaded efforts to increase labour and skills mobility on the African continent.

Other African Union instruments designed to promote economic integration on the continent, as well as labour and skills mobility, include the Youth and Women Employment Pact (2013), the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025, and the Technical Vocational Educational and Training Continental Strategy.

The centrepiece of Africa's efforts to combat people smuggling and trafficking in persons is the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, adopted to strengthen national and regional efforts for implementing the Palermo Protocol. The Ouagadougou Plan of Action was adopted in Tripoli Libya on 22–23 November 2006, and was then endorsed in 2007.

Regional integration and skills portability will also be further enhanced by the formation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area, which brings together the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). At the African continental level, the African Union Social Policy Framework of 2008 also recommends regional integration and collaboration of social security schemes, to increase the positive outcomes of labour circulation.

Air transport is an element of the migration landscape that facilitates mobility and complements other instruments. The Yamoussoukro Declaration on a new African Air Transport Policy was adopted in October 1988 (ECA, 1991) to facilitate mobility and complement other instruments, by easing air transport through better connectivity and improved affordability. This mandate was further extended by stakeholders of the Yamoussoukro Decision of November 1999, signed by 44 African countries. ECA was made the secretariat of the monitoring body of the Yamoussoukro Decision in 2020 (ECA, 2020:1). The objective of the Yamoussoukro Decision is to promote liberalization of air transport in Africa and therefore lower the cost of air travel (ECA, 1999:2). However, deregulation has been slow, as States fear that competition would lead to the demise of their national carriers.

THE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE WITHIN SUBREGIONS OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES

The increasing numbers of migrants within subregions in Africa, shown in Figure 1, can be attributed to the increasing freedom of movement within the RECs. The progressive implementation of provisions that require member States to cooperate in migration governance – through their founding treaties and specific protocols on the free movement of persons – appear to be facilitating greater freedom of movement. The 2021 African Union Regional Integration Report findings, as discussed later in this section, seem to bear this out.

In 1979, ECOWAS (established in 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria) became the first REC to adopt a Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, soon after its establishment. Until then, there was little cooperation in migration governance at the subregional level. Since then, the other RECs have formulated treaties and free movement protocols to regulate cooperation on migration governance. In 2008, ECOWAS prepared the ECOWAS Common Position on Migration (ECOWAS, 2008).

Although the EAC had been founded in 1967, it had not implemented free movement agreements by the time of its collapse in 1977. The EAC was re-established in 1999 in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, and it passed the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market in 2009. The EAC is currently preparing a migration policy for the region, where there is technically free movement between the member States with varying provisions: some offer visa free travel and others provide full free movement provisions including for labour.

SADC was formally established in 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia, changing from the previous Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which had been formed in 1980 and was comprised of front-line States,[3] with a focus on economic liberation in the region. The SADC Protocol on Facilitation of the Movement of Persons was adopted in 2005 in Gaborone, Botswana. As Mudungwe (2016:34) notes, the ratification of the SADC protocol would help to implement the objectives of greater continental integration.

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3   Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland (now Eswatini), Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Community of Sahelo–Saharan States (CEN-SAD) was established in 1998 in Tripoli, Libya. CEN-SAD is currently drafting its free movement and rights of establishment protocol, but has provision for free movement of persons and capital within the region in its founding treaty.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), established in 1983 in Libreville, Gabon, has provision for free movement of persons and capital within the region in is founding treaty. The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), which was established in 1989 in Marrakesh, Morocco, likewise has in its founding treaty a provision for free movement of persons and capital.

The Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) was established in 1996 in Nairobi, Kenya, replacing the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development, that had been founded in 1986. IGAD adopted the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD region on 26 February 2020 in Khartoum, the Sudan. Article 4 of the Protocol, offers a road map to the progressive realization and implementation of the Protocol, spelled out in more detail in an annex to the Protocol. In terms of the road map, the first phase, providing for the right of entry and abolishment of visa requirements by member States, is to be completed by 2028. The second phase, which would implement the rights to movement of workers, would be completed by 2031. The third phase, giving rights to residence in any member States, is to be implemented by 2034, and the fourth phase, implementing the right to establishment, by 2037 (IGAD, 2020).

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was established in 1993 in Kampala, Uganda, and ratified in 1994 in Lilongwe, Malawi. COMESA has a Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Rights of Establishment and Residence, which was adopted in 2001.

The African Union's Regional Integration Index uses eight dimensions to measure the level of integration on the continent and in the RECs. It generates from those eight dimensions an overall African Multidimensional Regional Integration Index (AMRII) score, using a scale of 0 to 1, where 1 indicates the highest level of integration. In the 2021 Regional Integration Report (African Union, 2021), EAC, ECOWAS, COMESA, SADC and ECCAS all had AMRII scores higher than 0.6, while IGAD, CEN-SAD and AMU had an overall AMRII of just above 0.5. On the specific dimension of the free movement of persons, the average value of the AMRII index is 0.68, with ECOWAS and EAC leading in implementation, with ratings of 100 and 96 per cent, respectively. The scores for all the other RECs are below 65 per cent, which is attributed to the slow pace of the abolition of visas, as well as hurdles in the implementation of the free movement protocol in the Member States in those subregions. These obstacles and others are discussed in the next section.

POLICY CHOICES TOWARD INTEGRATED MIGRATION GOVERNANCE: OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the progress achieved since the late 1960s, efforts at the continental and regional levels toward greater integration face several obstacles, particularly with regard to facilitating the free movement of persons. Some of the obstacles include the security concerns of Member States; some Member States not realizing the benefits of the African Union Free Movement Protocol to them; lack of awareness of the Protocol; inadequate capacity for the management of migration and cross-border mobility; lack of strong political will among States; continued visa restrictions; States' and special interest groups in member countries' heightened fear of mass migration, especially in relatively prosperous economies; delay and lack of ratification of free movement treaties and provisions on the right to residence and establishment by Member States;[4] and lack of adequate infrastructure and connectivity at REC and continental level (ITC, 2019).

The obstacles to regional integration have implications for migration governance and delay the realization of the African Economic Community. In addition, prevailing political instability resulting from conflicts in some Member States (such as Burkina Faso, the Niger, Mali, Guinea, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique),

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4   While 44 African Union Member States have signed the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, only 32 signed the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right to Residence and Right to Establishment.

and the hesitancy of countries experiencing net migration to allow free movement of persons, lead to delays in the implementation of the African Union Free Movement Protocol. Easing restrictive immigration and visa practices can help to reduce irregular migration, boost circular migration for trade and allow the poorest and more vulnerable members of societies access more economic opportunities through cross-border trade.

At the same time, the implementation of the African Union Free Movement Protocol and greater integration will require integration of social security systems to allow for the transfer of earned benefits and pensions for migrants where they already exist, allow for skills transfers and recognition of qualifications and competencies including on-the-job prior learning, and greater harmonization of border procedures for easier movement of persons, goods and services. The outbreak of COVID-19 challenged the continental capacity to respond to public health emergencies of international concern and to manufacture and roll out mass vaccination campaigns that include migrants. Environmental factors such as climate change are also poised to contribute to greater migration. Low completion rates of birth registration, and low rates for issuing vital registration and valid identification and travel documents are yet more major hurdles. The rise of militant extremism and jihadist movements threatens to negatively impact countries such as Mozambique, Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria, Egypt and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as some subregions. Asymmetrical combat tactics deployed by militant groups pose a significant medium-term threat of further destabilization and population displacement, especially when enhanced by new and increasing sophisticated modern technologies such as improvised explosive devices, ballistic missiles and drones.

Implementation of African Union policies on regional integration and migration governance encounters the hurdles common to all policies enacted by the African Union. Funding of programmes and projects is almost all dependent on donor support rather than Member States' contributions. In addition, in most Member States, tax revenue targets remain elusive, and high levels of inequality remain, meaning that targets for inclusive growth and development are not met. Another aspiration only poorly realized in most Member States is the goal of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law (African Union and AUDA-NEPAD, 2022:2). Because of dependence on external support – mainly from the European Union and the United States – donor-driven processes remain prominent, in contrast to initiatives that are aligned with African priorities and objectives reflected in the key policies discussed above. This is especially the case with the migration of skilled workers: on the one hand, the African strategic direction is to retain skills; on the other hand, the donor nations' objectives are to attract skilled workers in fields such as health.

Another challenge internal to the African Union is the lack of robust processes for updating and adapting policies to reflect emerging migration dynamics. This is largely due to resource and capacity constraints, which recently led to the introduction of reforms aimed at enhancing policy coherence and coordination. Migration governance is expected to also benefit from the implementation of the institutional reforms proposed in The Kagame Report (Kagame, 2017) that include focusing on fewer key priorities, realignment of key African Union institutions, ensuring that the African Union is connected to Member States' citizens, efficient and effective management of African Union institutions and financing of African Union sustainably.

In addition to addressing these priorities, there are notable opportunities to improve migration governance and regional integration in Africa. Some of the good practices include advancing better labour migration governance through the JLMP, and signing bilateral labour agreements and memorandums of understanding between African countries of origin and destination countries, mainly in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. The JLMP was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in January 2015. Its overall goal is to strengthen the effective governance and regulation of labour migration and mobility in Africa through an inclusive approach, to be achieved through two key objectives: strengthening the effective governance and regulation of labour migration and mobility in Africa; and supporting the implementation of labour migration standards and policies. Some of the achievements realized since its inception in 2015 include the publication of the second report on labour migration statistics in Africa, the production of numerous strategic briefs on COVID-19's impact on African migrant workers, the implementation of numerous capacity-building workshops targeting workers, employers and national labour statistics officials, and other interventions aimed at strengthening capacity for labour migration governance in Africa (African Union et al., 2020). The implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and regional trade cooperation through the AfCFTA are also advancing rapidly with promising results. The longer running RCPs led by the RECs have also increased stakeholder involvement in migration policymaking and governance decisions.

There are also vast gains in the utilization of emerging digital technologies for the transfer of remittances (such as M-PESA), which have reduced the cost of sending remittances for migrants and diaspora members. The efforts toward harmonizing statistics and establishing the African Statistics System (underpinned by the African Charter on Statistics and the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa) will improve access to vital registration documents and valid travel documents for migrants. The establishment of The African Union Institute for Statistics known as STATAFRIC in Tunis, Tunisia, the African Migration Observatory in Rabat, Morocco, and the African Centre for Statistics at ECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, will strengthen regional capacity for improving the collection and analysis of migration data.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter has demonstrated a need for the Member States of the African Union to accelerate the implementation of the African Union Free Movement Protocol. The benefits of the protocol, if fully implemented, include an increase in trade and tourism, enhanced transfer of knowledge in science, technology, education and research, as well as infrastructure, as countries allow migrants to fully settle in their communities, bringing in their skills and knowledge. Furthermore, the implementation of the protocol would speed up and transform the continent from a free trade area to a common market. There are significant policy tools and initiatives to support regional integration and migration governance in Africa. However, some of the main remaining obstacles to the full implementation of the African Union Free Movement Protocol include the following.

First, there are continued visa restrictions that often allow those who are relatively economically privileged to move freely while disadvantaging those who are unable to access international borders easily, curtailing the circulation of migrants for economic activities.

Second, some States' and special interest groups in member countries' have a heightened fear of mass migration, especially in relatively prosperous economies. This is because of the perceived difficulty in reconciling the interests of net emigration countries with the interests of net immigration countries. As in other regions, economically powerful States within Africa are generally more eager to support free trade than they are to support liberalizing immigration policies. Important origin countries are generally in favour of more regular emigration opportunities for their citizens; destination countries are often more reluctant because of the domestic political sensitivity of the immigration issue.

Third, there are delays to the – and, in some instances, lack of – ratification of free movement treaties and provisions on the right to residence and establishment by Member States at the continental level and at the level of RECs. For instance, while 44 African Union Member States have signed the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, only 32 had signed the African Union Free Movement Protocol, by 2020. In addition, while four African Union Member States have ratified the provisions of the latter agreement, only Rwanda has taken steps to implement its provisions. This exemplifies that free movement of persons is a more thorny issue than is free trade, as is the case in other world regions. In addition, intraregional tensions, nationalism and xenophobia regularly stand in the way of liberalizing immigration regimes.

Fourth, as identified by the International Trade Centre, there is lack of adequate infrastructure and connectivity at REC and continental level (ITC, 2019). The successful implementation of all the instruments geared toward stimulating the free movement of persons, goods and services and increased intra-Africa trade is heavily dependent on accelerated improvement in the issuing of vital registration documents that are required administratively for States to issue valid legal identity and travel documents. These include valid birth certificates and other forms of official national identification. The next critical requirement is to ensure that those documents are digitized and that systems for their validation at border crossings are interoperable. Systems for handling such documents will need to be put in place to ensure that the privacy, confidentiality and security of migrants is observed. The Fourth Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, which was held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, in December 2017, recognized the link between the provision of legal identity documents and improvements in the civil registration systems, and focused on improving African civil registration systems in relation to Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNICEF, 2020:7).

This chapter closes with the following areas for further attention or action :

Advocacy for, sensitization to, and popularization of the Free Movement Protocol

Within the Member States of the African Union, RECs, organs and agencies of the African Union, civil society and the private sector, there is room for increased sensitization to the Protocol, which would promote the economic benefits that can be derived for the continent from its implementation. Faster ratification of the Protocol and its effective implementation at the regional and continental level would help in promoting free movement, especially if complemented with a supportive media campaign, including digital and print media, radio and television.

Signature, ratification, and accession of the Protocol

The Protocol minimum threshold of 15 Member States required for it to come into force is still to be achieved.

Coordination of the Protocol's implementation

Since the implementation of the Protocol is a flagship project of Agenda 2063, continued discussions during the mid-year African Union and RECs coordination meetings remains essential, and it will be helpful for the chief executives of RECs to include it on the agenda of their meetings.

Visa openness

Some Member States have positively provided visa free travel to African visitors even before the full implementation of the African Union Free Movement Protocol, which is indeed a best practice to be emulated. There are promising indications that more countries will remove the need for all Africans to obtain entry visas, as Seychelles, the Gambia and Benin have done. An African Union common African passport would further facilitate the travel of Africans freely on the continent.

Infrastructure improvement and connectivity

It is hoped that the Member States will find the resources to put in place the infrastructure and systems that would enable citizens to access services seamlessly, wherever they may choose to settle, as part of facilitating the enjoyment of the rights provided by the free trade and free movement protocols. This may require continent-wide strategic funding partnerships with development finance institutions such as the African Development Bank and other regional development banks.

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FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, INFORMAL TRADE AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

5

Somali migrants restart their lives after Libya.
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Chapter 5

FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, INFORMAL TRADE AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

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ABSTRACT

Nearly 85.8 per cent of Africa's employed population works in the informal sector. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the informal sector accounts for over 90 per cent of employment, while informal output is as high as 62 per cent of official GDP. Despite this large size and its contribution to the growth of African economies, the sector remains significantly untapped. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can play a significant role in optimizing the benefits of informal trade, particularly informal cross-border trade. For this to happen, however, the AfCFTA would need to be accompanied by the liberalization of the movement of persons across borders through the elimination or at least the reduction of the stringent travel requirements. This chapter analyses how the AfCFTA impacts informal trade, particularly informal cross-border trade. It also highlights how the free movement of persons can help Africa maximize the benefits of informal cross-border trade and, in the long run, integrate the sector into formal structures of trade for sustainable economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the nexus between trade, free movement of persons and economic development in Africa is uncontested. In recognition of the importance of free trade and the free movement of persons for Africa's economic growth and development, the African Union and the regional economic communities (RECs), as well as several African Union Member States, have adopted legal instruments, policies, systems and practices aimed at reducing barriers to mobility across borders, to enhance intraregional trade and promote regional integration. The 1980 Lagos Plan of Action – an initiative of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to promote self-sufficiency – called for the adoption of "employment policies that permit free movement of labour within sub-regions, thus facilitating employment of surplus trained manpower of one country in other Member States lacking in that requisite skill" (OAU, 1980:para.111.iii). The right to free movement was also enshrined in the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (OAU, 1981) and in the 1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (the Abuja Treaty), as well as the African Union's founding treaty, the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Other continental instruments include the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, and the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, adopted in 2006. In 2018, African Union Member States adopted the Protocol to the

Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and the Right of Establishment, to facilitate and promote free movement of persons on the continent. The Protocol aims to lower and ultimately remove barriers to Africans moving across borders to visit, to trade, to live, to work and to establish business in other African countries (African Union, 2018b).

At the subregional level, various RECs have adopted several legal and policy instruments embedded in their founding treaties or in separate protocols. Notable among these are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement of People and the Right of Residence and Establishment (1979); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Protocol on the Gradual Relaxation and Eventual Elimination of Visa Requirements (the Visa Protocol; 1984); the COMESA Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence (2001); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region (2020, and as well the IGAD Protocol on Transhumance from the same year) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005). While it has not developed a distinct framework in the form of a separate protocol exclusively governing free movement of persons, the East African Community (EAC) has free movement of labour covered under the provisions of articles 76 and 104 of its founding treaty and under its Common Market Protocol (EAC, 2009).

At the country level, while most of the free movement initiatives are attributable to their membership in RECs, several countries have taken unilateral decisions to reform or develop their own. Notable progress has been made regarding the development and adoption of visa-openness solutions for African nationals. These include visa-free access, visa-on-arrival, visa-free regional blocs, regional bloc visas, multi-year visas (on a case-by-case basis), the promotion of positive reciprocity between African countries in the relaxation of visa requirements, unilateral opening up on visas, simplifying visa processes and improving access to information online in different languages (Hirsch, 2021). According to the 2022 Africa visa openness report (African Development Bank, 2022), 48 out of the 55 African countries now provide visa-free access to nationals of at least one other African country, while 42 countries offer visa-free access to nationals of at least five other countries, and three African countries offer visa-free travel to citizens of all other African countries (ibid.). The report shows that 29 African countries (more than 50% of the continent) now offer visa on arrival to citizens of at least 1 other African country, while 24 countries offer visa on arrival to nationals of 5 or more countries, and 14 countries offer visa on arrival to nationals of 35 or more African countries (ibid.). Other countries are also making attempts to adopt regional passports and national identification cards for regional travel. Other initiatives aimed at easing free movement in Africa include attempts to adopt an African passport, and the adoption by certain States of special travel regimes for people residing in border areas, as well as the provision of eVisa facilities. At a subregional level, ECOWAS is currently in the process of implementing a joint visa (Eco-Visa) for non-ECOWAS citizens that covers the whole region. With this, nationals of non-ECOWAS member States will be able to move around the ECOWAS region with a single visa.

The African Union recognizes the instrumental role the recently launched AfCFTA can play in the development of a single African market for goods and services. Free movement of persons, along with the African passport, is recognized as crucial for the realization of the African Union's Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2019). The three rights posited by the Agenda 2063 – right of entry, right of residence and right of establishment – underscore the opportunities for workers and for border communities as workers cross borders and can trade and transfer skills and services. The IOM and African Union study on the benefits and challenges of free movement of persons in Africa (African Union and IOM, 2018) and the African Integration Report (African Union, 2021) both show that the free movement of persons across the continent is an accelerator to integration and development. Similarly, the Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) Initiative, which foreshadowed the AfCFTA, underlines the importance of enhancing the intraregional and interregional flexibility of factors of production (such as land and capital, as well as labour) in promoting the economic development of African Union Member States and the welfare of African citizens (African Union, 2011). Many of the obstacles to intra-African trade that the BIAT initiative was intended to address have persisted, ten years after its adoption, and they have continued to contribute to pushing many African cross-border traders into informal trade or informal movement. The successful implementation of AfCFTA, alongside the priority interventions identified in the BIAT Initiative, would significantly enhance intra-African trade, including pulling many informal cross-border traders into formal practices, and by so doing would enable them to meaningfully contribute

to the continent's economic integration. Through its provisions on non-tariff barriers, trade facilitation and customs operations, the AfCFTA could address several challenges facing informal cross-border trade (ICBT). This chapter examines how liberalizing the movement of persons could help incentivize Africa's huge network of informal trade operators to integrate into formal trade practices.

INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE AND THE AFRICAN ECONOMY

The informal sector has been a major sector of employment in sub-Saharan Africa. A report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 85.8 per cent of Africa's employed population works in the informal sector, with informal employment in some countries south of the Sahara accounting for over 90 per cent of total employment (ILO, 2018). The report further shows that informal output in some countries is as high as 62 per cent of the official GDP ((ibid.). The share of informal employment is estimated at 78.8 per cent in the Central Africa subregion, 76.6 per cent in East Africa and 87 per cent in West Africa (UNCTAD, 2019a). A more recent survey by UNECA (2021a) indicates that the share of informal employment between 2019 and 2021 was as high as 90 per cent in some African countries such as Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal (see Figure 1). Women dominate informal employment in sub-Saharan Africa, except in Southern Africa. More than 90 per cent of female workers are believed to be engaged in informal employment (UNCTAD, 2019a).

Figure 1. Percentage share of informal employment in Africa between 2019 and 2021, by country
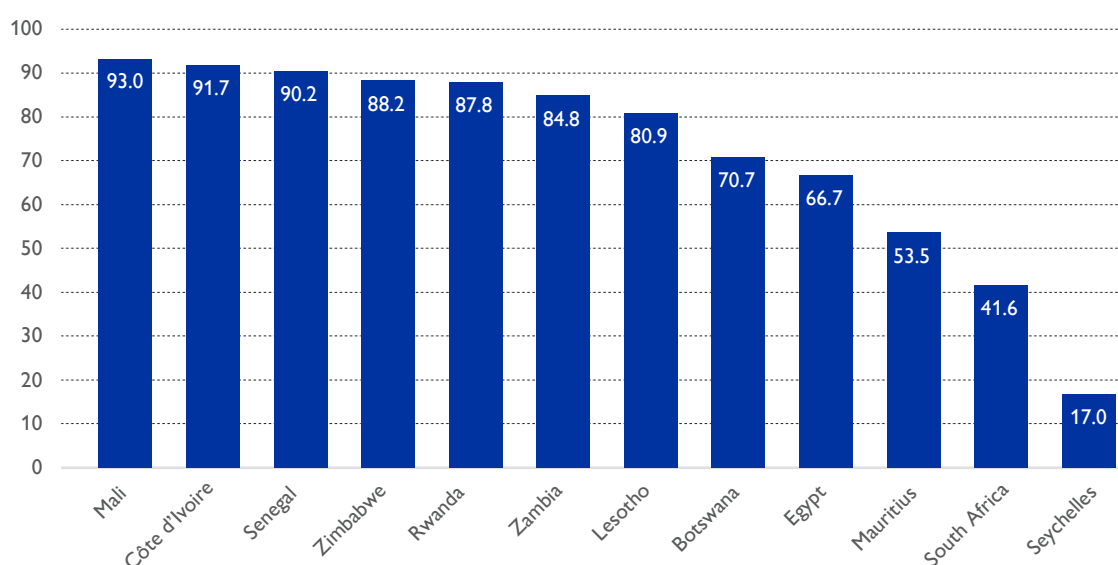
Notes: Survey period: 2019 to 2021. The year varies across countries: 2021: South Africa; 2020: Botswana, Egypt, Mali, Rwanda, Seychelles, Zambia; 2019: Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, Mauritius, Senegal.
Source: UNECA, 2021a.

ICBT – the value of which for certain products and countries is estimated to meet or even exceed the value of formal trade – is a notable feature of African economies. Performing the basic market function of arbitrage (reacting to price signals by moving goods from areas where they are abundant and prices are low to areas where they are scarce and prices are high), informal cross-border traders respond to fluctuations in supply and demand, and often shift from one set of goods to another or from one trading route to another, depending on market conditions (Afreximbank, 2020). These market fluctuations can be seasonal, as in the annual rise in demand for livestock products from the Horn of Africa during the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, or the annual or biannual spike in supply during major crop harvests (ibid.). They can also be long term and gradual, like in the case of the gradual increase in meat consumption in urban areas, or sudden and unexpected, as when governments impose import or export restrictions, close borders or change reference prices. ICBT plays an important role in food distribution, particularly in conflict-affected regions, and in price arbitrage, between countries with liberal trade policies and subsidies and those without (ibid.).

INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICAN ECONOMIES

Statistics show that ICBT accounts for more than 40 per cent of intra-African trade, contributes positively, at least in the short term, to both the country of origin and the country of destination, and is a major source of income to an estimated 43 per cent of Africa's population (Afreximbank, 2020). The share of ICBT contribution to GDP in Africa is believed to be larger than formal trade. A study by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in 2021 estimated the overall value of ICBT in Africa as between USD 5.1 billion and USD 15.0 billion, equivalent to 16 per cent of formal intra-African trade flows, and between 30 per cent and 72 per cent of formal trade between neighbouring countries (UNECA, 2021a). Another study, commissioned by UNECA and the African Export Import Bank (Afreximbank, 2020), indicates that informal exports accounted for 40 per cent of Ghana's total exports, and 39 and 15 per cent of total exports for Togo and Nigeria, respectively (UNECA, 2021b). Informal imports accounted for 38 per cent of both Ghana's and Togo's total imports, and 18 per cent of Benin's total imports (ibid.). In Rwanda, informal exports are estimated to make up about 12 per cent of total exports, while informal imports constitute around 3 per cent of total imports (IMF, 2022), with more than half of imports from Burundi and a quarter of imports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo accruing from ICBT (World Bank, 2020). In Uganda, it is estimated that, in 2017, ICBT accounted for 30 per cent of exports to neighbouring countries, with informal exports to the Democratic Republic of the Congo amounting to almost 60 per cent of Uganda's total exports to the country (ibid.).

Table 1. Estimates of informal sector exports, by country (2021)

Country	Percentage boost to intra-African exports from informal exports	Percentage boost to intra-African imports from informal imports
Benin	4	18
Côte d'Ivoire	2	3
Ghana	40	38
Nigeria	15	3
Rwanda	12	3
Togo	39	38

Source: UNECA, 2021b.

TYPES OF GOODS TRADED IN INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE

ICBT in Africa is generally dominated by non-processed goods (foodstuff such as beans, maize; non-foodstuff such as hides, paintings and handicrafts), processed goods (industrial products such as sugar, edible oils, clothing, dairy products, packaged beverages, soft drinks and juices) and manufactured and re-export goods (low quality processed goods from Asia such as electronic appliances, apparel and shoes, and contraband and counterfeit goods including fuels, cosmetics, pharmaceutical drugs and electronics) (Afrika and Ajumbo, 2012). But differences exist. For example, ICBT in the West and East Africa subregions is dominated by livestock, while in the Central and Southern Africa subregions it is dominated by minerals and handicrafts (see Table 2 for ICBT product categorization according to subregion) (ibid.). A common feature of ICBT across Africa is the dominance of entrepôt trade, that is, the re-exporting of goods imported from other continents, from countries with liberal trade policies and "light touch" regulatory regimes, into countries with more stringent customs and protectionist trade policies. Entrepôt trade often targets large consumer markets and economies like Kenya in East Africa, and Nigeria and Senegal in West Africa. But ICBT has also been crucial for moving essential goods such as fuel from countries where they are heavily subsidized, such as oil exports from oil-rich countries like Algeria, Angola, Libya and Nigeria to import-dependent countries which do not subsidize oil products, such as Cameroon, Mali and Tunisia (Afreximbank, 2020).

Table 2. Informal cross-border trade product categorization according to regions

Subregion	Non-processed goods	Manufactured goods	Re-exports
North Africa	Fuel, foodstuff and non-foodstuff	Low quality manufactured and processed goods	Low quality goods from Asia, contrabands, counterfeits and substandard goods
East Africa and Horn of Africa	Foodstuff and non-foodstuff, livestock		
West Africa	Foodstuff and non-foodstuff, livestock		
Central Africa	Minerals, jewellery, forest products, foodstuff and non-foodstuff		
Southern Africa	Minerals, jewellery, forest products, foodstuff and non-foodstuff		

Source: Afrika and Ajumbo, 2012:1–13.

INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE DOMINATED BY WOMEN

ICBT is also dominated by women. Mwanabiningo's (2015) study across two borders in the Great Lakes region – Goma–Rubavu and Bukavu–Rusizi – shows that women accounted for 83 per cent of small-scale traders in the region. Across Africa, women cross borders daily, informally trading goods such as groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables, new clothes and shoes, household items, second-hand clothes and shoes, meat and fish products, blankets, bed sheets and curtains, and food items such as dried fruit and juices (UNCTAD, 2019b). Some also trade electrical items, handicrafts and furniture. The dominance of women in informal employment is attributed to the flexibility it affords, the small startup capital it requires, and the opportunities for earnings that it offers in border areas characterized by lack of alternative sources of livelihood.

BENEFITS AND COSTS OF INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE

The popular view of policymakers is that ICBT has positive impact on the economies of African countries. If the challenges and constraints facing the sector are addressed, ICBT can provide an opportunity for rural Africa to generate non-agricultural income, reducing rural unemployment and rural–urban migration, and empowering women. ICBT provides a vital source of livelihood for a big portion of Africans, particularly for low-income and low-skilled women living along African borders. The application of different subsidies and price differentials due to different application of customs duties and taxes (a major driver of ICBT across Africa) between countries in North Africa has provided opportunities to informal cross-border traders to import and export several processed and non-processed as well as manufactured products across the region. The Afreximbank's African Trade Report 2020 shows, for example, how informal cross-border traders in Algeria and Libya have exploited fuel subsidies in their countries to undercut fuel sales in Tunisia (Afreximbank, 2020). Traders plying the Ras Ajdir border between Libya and Tunisia have also taken advantage of price differentials to import and export other goods such as apples, bananas, textiles, clothes, bedsheets, shoes, carpets, kitchenware, household electrical goods, refrigerators, air conditioners and car tyres (ibid.). Generous subsidies in Algeria for fuel and foodstuffs such as semolina, milk, flour and sugar contributed to significant price differentials with Mali, enabling informal cross-border traders from Algeria to export these goods to Mali (ibid.). In West Africa, ICBT has largely reflected government policies such as subsidies, import bans and related export restrictions (Hoffmann and Melly, 2018). The demand for informal goods in the region has also resulted from the many bureaucratic hurdles, as well as differences in national fiscal policies and in the efficiency and cost at ports. Some reports show how informal traders from entrepôt countries like Benin, Togo and the Niger have navigated the restrictive trade measures imposed by the Nigerian Government on the importation of various goods such as food products, including tomato paste or concentrate; poultry, pork and beef; vegetable oils and fats; sugar; cocoa butter, powder and cakes; spaghetti or noodles; fruit juice, bottled water and other beverages; as well as white goods – such as air conditioners, fridges and freezers – used motor vehicles that are more than 15 years old, and other consumer products such as carpets, footwear and bags, to re-export these products informally to Nigeria (ibid.). Thus, ICBT ensures that millions of people in Nigeria are still able to access such products at affordable prices, despite the Government's restrictive customs measures. An interesting study by Ayilu and Nyiawung (2022) shows that a "substantial amount" of processed low-cost pelagic fish is traded informally along the Ghana–Togo–Benin border, mainly from Ghana's three biggest fish markets – the Tuesday Market in Accra,

the Dambai Market in the Oti region, and the Denu Market in the Volta region – to neighbouring Togo and Benin. Likewise, a study by Mwanabiningo (2015) has shown that ICBT generally contributed positively to the food security and income of poor households in Rwanda, in the short term. The study found that 65 per cent of small-scale cross-border traders in Rwanda relied on their trade for their income and as the primary source of food for their families (ibid.).

However, some studies have also shown that while ICBT might have, in the short term, positive impacts on poverty alleviation and on food security, it also has the potential to weaken prospects for economic growth and development in the long run, because it negatively affects investment in the formal sector and, particularly, public revenues (Bouet et al., 2018). This is because ICBT is often characterized by underreporting at official border posts of substantial shares of goods traded by informal cross-border traders. Much ICBT goes unrecorded, especially due to smuggling (evasion at customs), through practices such as underinvoicing, misclassification or misdeclaration (Bensassi et al., 2019). Because of this, ICBT affects the ability of governments to raise revenues as traders evade customs and sites for taxation, and consequently starve governments of the public sector resources required for development in various sectors including infrastructure and health.

Apart from seeking to evade taxes and fees imposed by governments at borders, informal cross-border traders also try to avoid administrative formalities in areas such as health, agriculture, security and immigration, which they find to be costly, complex and often time consuming. Bouet et al. (2018) note, for example, that even though ICBT accounted for almost 10 per cent of cross-border trade between Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, it also had negative effects, as it had the potential to introduce pests, diseases and low-quality products into each country. Lesser and Moisé-Leeman (2009) have also pointed out that ICBT, when practised on a large scale, can lower the efficiency of health, safety and environmental practices, especially since much ICBT merchandise, often traded in small quantities, escapes sanitary and phytosanitary controls at the border. In such cases, ICBT constitutes a threat to local food safety and contributes to the proliferation of human, animal and plant diseases across the borders (ibid.).

ICBT starves governments of public revenues crucial for long-term growth. Trade liberalization initiatives at both regional and continental levels have aimed both to create an environment in which the benefits of ICBT can be enhanced and tapped into (in the short and medium term) and to facilitate the integration of informal traders into formal trade (in the long term). If the recently launched AfCFTA is to fully achieve its objectives, policymakers must focus on supporting and formalizing ICBT. Informal cross-border traders could benefit immensely from the goals of the AfCFTA – to lower tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade across the continent – if combined with adequate reforms to the trade environment and the adoption of regional and continental free movement of persons regimes, particularly the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol.

THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA, FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS AND INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE

AfCFTA seeks to create the world's largest free trade area by bringing together 55 countries. It aims to gradually eliminate tariffs on 90 per cent of goods and to reduce barriers to trade in services, thereby increasing Africa's income by USD 450 billion by 2035 (African Union, 2023). Furthermore, UNCTAD forecasts show that the AfCFTA has the potential to boost intra-Africa trade by about 33 per cent and cut the continent's trade deficit by 51 per cent (UNCTAD, 2021). Statistics show that Africa exports more to the rest of the world than to other countries within Africa. The share of exports from Africa to the rest of the world ranged from 80 to 90 per cent between 2000 and 2020 (mainly primary commodities and minerals), only matching Oceania in export dependence on the rest of the world (UNCTAD, 2019a). On the other hand, intra-African exports only accounted for 16 per cent of total exports in 2019, way below the figures for Europe (68%), Asia (56%) and America (53%) and just above the figure for Middle East (15%). The share of Africa's intraregional imports was even lower than the other regions, at 12 per cent on average, compared with Europe (66%), Asia (56%), and America (39%) (Hartwich and Hammer, 2021). Intra-African trade only accounted for 15.2 per cent of Africa's total trade volume during the period 2015–2020, below the figures for America (47%), Asia (61%), and Europe (67%) (UNCTAD, 2019a; see Figure 2). The AfCFTA is expected to change this dramatically. The United Nations Economic Commission for

Africa (UNECA) predicts that the AfCFTA could increase African exports by 3 per cent, augmenting the value of intra-African trade by between 15 and 25 per cent by 2040 (Maunganidze, 2022).

Figure 2. Share of intra-African trade, exports and imports (2019)
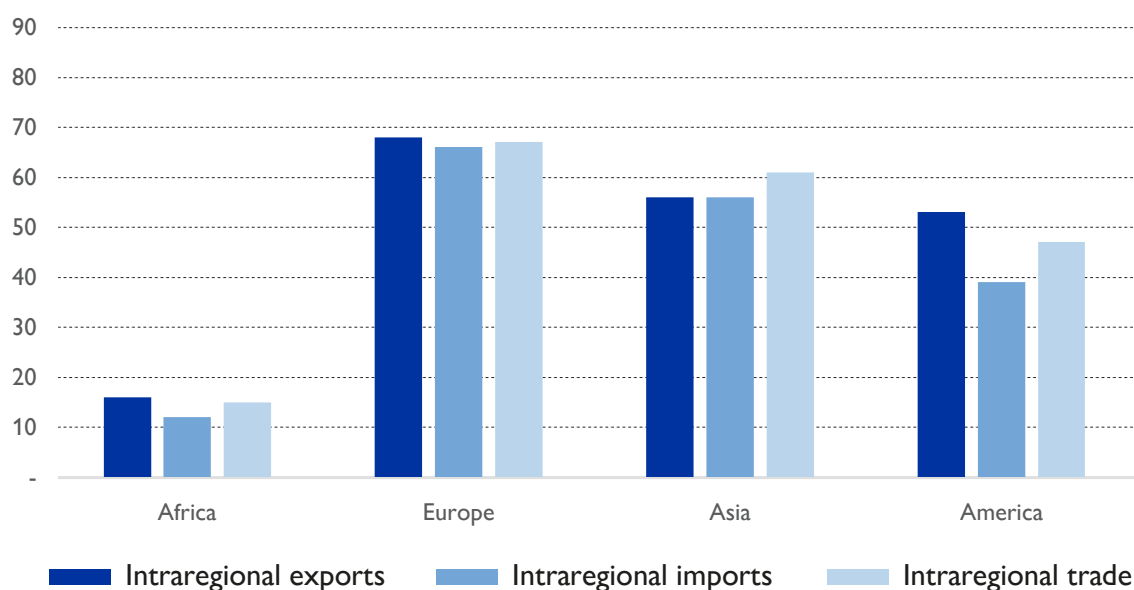
Source: UNCTAD, 2019c.

Several experts and policymakers recognize that the free movement of persons is essential for intraregional trade in Africa (Kimenyi and Smith, 2012), and for achieving the objectives of the AfCFTA (see Trade Unions in the AfCFTA, 2023; Maunganidze, 2022; Bisong, 2022;). Bisong (2022), for instance, identifies a strong link between trade and labour mobility on the African continent: the AfCFTA was envisaged to also "promote the 'movement of business persons across fifty-four African countries with a combined population of more than one billion people'" (African Union and IOM, 2018, quoting African Union, n.d.).

The AfCFTA is recognized as one of several African Union flagship projects, identified under the Agenda 2063 as key to accelerating Africa's economic growth and development (African Union, 2015a). The African Union recognizes that for the AfCFTA to effectively deliver on its objectives, it must be complemented by similar progress in the other African Union flagship projects such as the adoption of the African passport and the removal of restrictions on Africans' ability to travel, work and live within Africa (African Union, 2015b).

The adoption of free movement regimes – such as the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol – could help in the reduction and eradication of barriers to cross-border movement, such as extortion and abuse at the borders which are disproportionately experienced by women and youth in ICBT. Moreover, free movement of labour would lead to a more optimal utilization of human capital, as skills go to regions, industries and countries where they command the highest value (Kimenyi and Smith, 2012).

It is important to note that the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA does not explicitly mention or make provision for ICBT. Some analysts have, in fact, indicted the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA for failing to expressly articulate the full meaning and implication for ICBT of the liberalization of the markets for trade in goods and services. Moyo (2023) notes, for example, that it is not enough to assume that the liberalization of the market for goods and services envisaged in the AfCFTA protocols on trade in goods and on services, respectively, will have the same impact on ICBT that it has on the formal economic sector. The AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services sets out "to create a liberalized single market for trade in services" (AU;2018). It makes a passing reference to service traders in the informal sector, calling for technical assistance and capacity-building as well as cooperation in improving the "export capacity of both formal and informal service suppliers, with particular attention to micro, small and medium size; women and youth service suppliers" (African Union, 2018a:article 27). However, the provisions of this protocol

are mainly directed at businesspersons, professionals and the intracorporate transfer of executives, managers and trainers.

The objective of the Protocol on Trade in Goods, on the other hand, is to create a liberalized market for trade in goods and thereby to boost intra-African trade in goods. (African Union, 2018a:19). Like the Protocol on Trade in Services, the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods also makes no explicit provisions for ICBT or labour mobility. But, as Bisong (2022) has noted, the exclusive list in the schedule on trade in goods covers goods that dominate ICBT in most African countries, which could potentially generate significant benefits for promoting ICBT.

The provisions of the AfCFTA on the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers, if complemented with improvements in the trade environment – such as transport and telecommunications infrastructure, access to finance and domestic and cross-border security – would lead to seamless mobility of informal traders across African borders. Opening the continent, as envisaged under the AfCFTA, will also allow traders to access a larger and more diverse market of goods and services. On the other hand, by reducing the monetary and non-monetary barriers associated with formal trade, the AfCFTA will incentivize informal traders to opt for formal trade.

The African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol explicitly offers protection against discrimination for any African seeking to enter, reside in or establish in another African country. Thus, the Protocol makes broader provisions for mobility. The African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol provides for rights of entry, stay and exit to all categories of persons. These provisions complement the provisions of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services, which cover the movement of businesspersons. But the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol makes further provisions covering the movement of workers and their rights, including the right to seek employment in other African countries, the right to move with their families and spouses, and the right to be issued residence and work permits and all other permits required for entry, residence and establishment in another member country (AU:2018). Also included in the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol are provisions for the portability of workers' social benefits, for the facilitation of remittances and for the protection of workers from arbitrary repatriations and forceful acquisition of property (ibid.).

EFFECTS OF FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS ON INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE

As noted above, governments and policymakers have adopted a dual view of ICBT. On the one hand, ICBT is considered to constitute a "creative ecosystem responding to inefficiencies in trade regulation" (Olafuyi, 2019), and a necessary component of intra-African trade with the potential to alleviate poverty and contribute to food security at border communities and enhance each country's economic growth, at least in the short term. On the other hand, it is also seen as carrying certain risks for long-term economic growth and development, especially because it negatively affects investments in the formal sector. From the perspective of the first hand position, policy interventions should aim at helping Africa harness the maximum benefits from the sector. Such measures should address the challenges faced by informal cross-traders, including the lack of finance, arbitrary taxations, the lack of appropriate border infrastructure, the complicated administrative procedures at the borders, and security issues such as harassment and human trafficking. The Afreximbank's African Trade Report 2020 shows that informal cross-border traders typically lack access to credit facilities offered by formal banking and microfinance institutions, as they are regarded as high-risk borrowers due to lack of collateral, financial history, reliable forms of identification and other evidence demonstrating their repayment capacity (Afreximbank, 2020). Thus, informal cross-border traders are often compelled to rely on their own limited resources and small loans from relatives and acquaintances, or to borrow from expensive informal money lenders such as "shylocks" in Kenya (ibid.). This exposes them to huge risks, like exorbitant interest rates and the confiscation of valuable household items and property when they fail to repay the loans. Furthermore, because borders are often located in remote areas, far away from urban areas where financial institutions and banks are located, informal cross-border traders are mostly excluded from formal payment systems and face several payment challenges. Traders are exposed to risks associated with cash-based transactions and informal foreign exchange dealers (ibid.).

Informal cross-border traders also face infrastructure constraints, including inadequate public and private transportation systems, especially owing to poor road conditions; the absence of efficient border personnel, institutions and agencies; lack of financial, legal, insurance and health services at the borders; insufficient electricity

infrastructure for the effective delivery of customs service and management of financial services; lack of proper warehouse facilities, including storage space and facilities to store perishable goods; unstable and unreliable mobile network connectivity; and inadequate sewerage systems at the borders (ibid.). They also must deal with technical barriers to trade, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures in which they incur disproportionately high trade costs, especially since they are less able to comply with the requirements due to their small scale. Traders lack sufficient information or the capacity to interpret technical requirements, and this renders them vulnerable to exploitation by customs and border officials who may subject them to arbitrarily applied non-tariff measures (ibid.). Other challenges to ICBT that require policy interventions include exploitation and harassment by border officials who solicit bribes and sexual favours by issuing threats to confiscate traders' goods and to detain traders, and security threats resulting from pervasive insecurity of the borders due to the presence of several insurgent groups operating outside the reach of the State, and due to their remoteness and vastness (ibid.). Resolving all these challenges is key to enhancing the potential of the ICBT sector to contribute to the growth of African economies.

The overarching challenge faced by informal and small-scale cross-border traders is that of market access. Informal traders are driven to cross borders by the need to expand their trade. The AfCFTA presents an opportunity for traders to easily access a market of 1.3 billion people with a combined GDP of USD 3.4 trillion (World Bank, 2020). Informal cross-border traders will immediately benefit from the provisions of the AfCFTA for the reduction of tariffs on AfCFTA imports – many of which are scheduled to be phased out within a period of five years – and the elimination of non-tariff barriers because of harmonization of trading frameworks. The AfCFTA proposes substantial reductions in tariffs for several sectors: the largest reductions are for chemical, rubber and plastic products, which are scheduled for an 85 per cent reduction in tariffs by 2035 (ibid.). But several of the goods that dominate the informal trading market are also lined up for significant tariff reductions. Wood and paper products, textiles and wearing apparel and several products in many subcategories of manufacturing are expected to experience tariff reduction of upwards of 75 per cent, while processed food and petroleum and coal products will see tariff reductions of 64 and 60 per cent, respectively. Tariffs for agricultural products and fossil fuels are expected to be reduced by 55 and 40 per cent, respectively. Other sectors will also enjoy modest but sizeable tariff reductions. Only natural resources and minerals are not expected to experience tariff reduction during the same period (ibid.).

Figure 3. Trade-weighted tariffs imposed on African Continental Free Trade Area imports by sector, 2020 and 2035
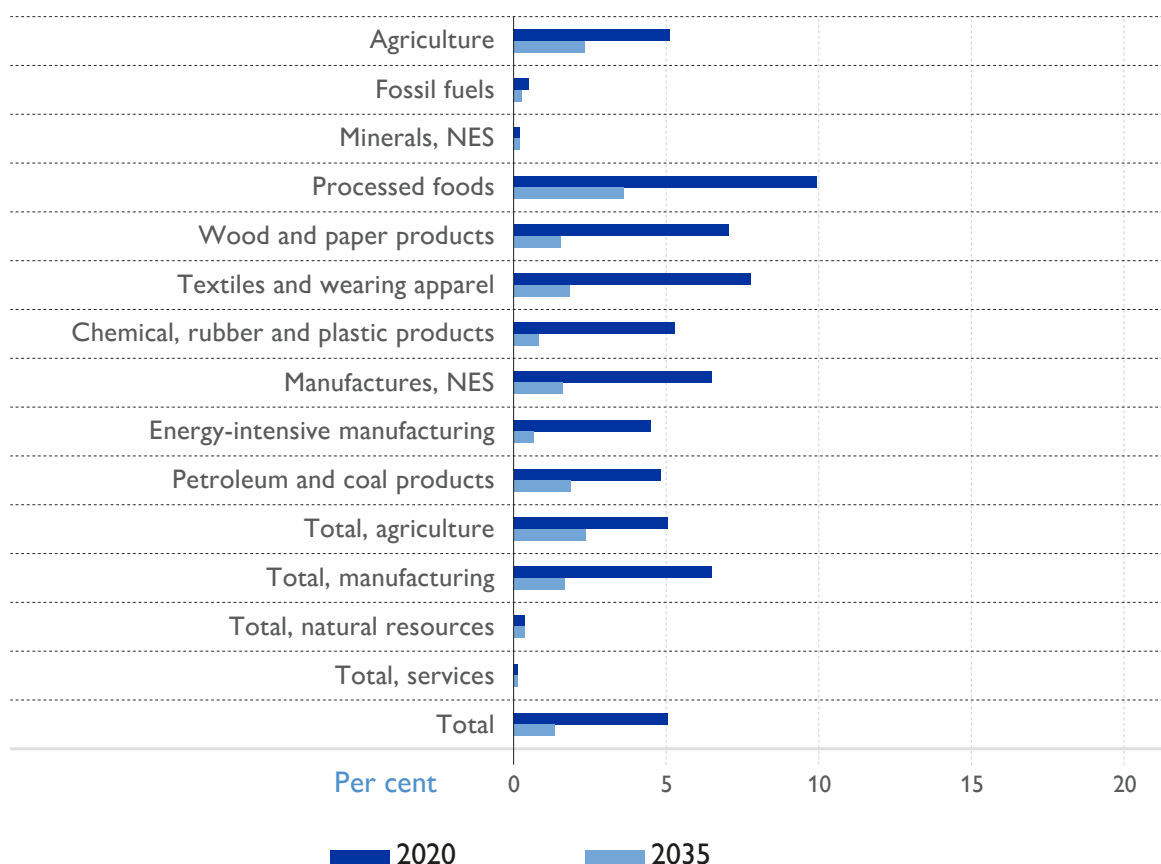
Note: NES signifies "not elsewhere specified."
Source: World Bank, 2020.

The AfCFTA expects between 35 and 50 per cent reductions of non-tariff barriers in most sectors, with only the natural resources and service sectors projected to experience less reduction, at 34 and 21 per cent, respectively (World Bank, 2020). Particularly important for informal cross-border traders is the set of provisions outlined in the AfCFTA trade facilitation annexes. Some of the measures outlined in the annexes – simplification of trading formalities and reduction of documentation requirements; reduction of import and export fees; expedition of the release and clearance of goods; and enhancing transparency and predictability of trade-related process as well as improving border agency cooperation – could ease the costs of cross-border trade for small-scale cross-border traders, especially those operating informally (ibid.). These provisions have the potential to incentivize informal cross-border traders to move into formal trade.

Yet, with all these provisions, the AfCFTA objectives could be better enhanced if they were complemented by a strong set of free movement of persons policies, and more specifically by the ratification and subsequent implementation of the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol. Complex immigration processes have also served to drive several small-scale cross-border traders into informal trade. Informal cross-border traders residing in border towns are often required to travel long distances to cities to obtain the relevant documents; and as well, those documents tend to be too costly to be accessible.

Though it has been widely recognized that the free movement of persons is crucial for the achievement of the full potential of free movement of goods, and for the promotion of investments in Africa, this recognition has not been matched by sufficient efforts to eliminate barriers to cross-border mobility. Despite notable initiatives such as visa-free travel, visas on arrival and several other relaxations of travel restrictions, States have been rather slow in their ratification of the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol. The level of enthusiasm that States have shown in ratifying and implementing the AfCFTA (54 of the 55 African Union Member States have signed the

Agreement, while 44 have deposited their instrument of ratification) has not been witnessed when it comes to the Free Movement of Persons Protocol. As of October 2023, the African Union Free Movement of Persons protocol has only been ratified by four countries – Mali, the Niger, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe – which is far below the 15 ratifications required for it to come into force.

Several reasons account for the slow ratification of the Protocol, including a general poor understanding and appreciation of the free movement of persons and its implications for the economies of African States, and a tendency to separate the AfCFTA and the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol at policy levels. A study commissioned by the AUC and UNECA has found that most African States are concerned about their sovereignty and ability to regulate entry, exit and stay of persons (UNECA and African Union, 2023). They are also concerned about security and the potential risks posed by the uncontrolled free movement of persons. Some States have been afraid of the threat posed to public health by huge influxes of migrants. The experience of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly inhibited the commitment of governments to the free movement of persons. Encouraging States to cede authority over border regulation and control when the States do not have minimum protective structures and essential infrastructure to manage high influxes of migrants is not going to make States soften their stance on free movement. Moreover, States have genuine concerns about the challenges posed by violent extremism, human trafficking and money laundering. These fears must not be overlooked in the implementation of both the AfCFTA and the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol, when it comes into force. Regulatory measures to mitigate the risks associated with open borders must be adopted to enhance the capacity of States to manage free movement. Such measures include the development of a robust digital identification and civil registration systems, which would allow States to efficiently trace the cross-border mobility of persons and migration in general. It is also important to develop the essential infrastructure necessary for States to reap equitable gains from the AfCFTA and the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol (ibid.). To raise the profile of the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol and build momentum towards its ratification, it will be important address these concerns as well as any others raised by States about the free movement of persons, and to bridge the gap between the free movement of persons and the free movement of goods, services and investments, bringing the processes of the ratification and the implementation of the Protocol closer to those of the AfCFTA.

ICBT can be hindered by traders' lack of legal identity, given that legal identity is a precondition to accessing mobility and travel across borders. By developing robust holistic national legal identity systems, built on national civil registration and identity management systems and in compliance with human rights safeguards, States can increase the guarantee that the identity information on a travel document (passport or identity card) reflects the legal identity of the person to whom it belongs, and can mitigate concerns that national legal identity systems might be exploited to create multiple or fabricated legal identities, while ensuring that every national benefits from a secure legal identity document. With robust national legal identity systems – that are themselves compliant with human rights standards – States can ensure their nationals can use their documents to access regular migration pathways, contributing to orderly and safe cross-border mobility (IOM, 2021).

One stop border posts (OSBPs) facilitate human mobility and trade by way of reducing the time and costs of delays at border crossings along major corridors, while addressing issues of security. However, OSBPs require extensive bilateral coordination across administrative, operational and even legislative spheres. With informal cross-border traders having to deal with OSBPs daily and in many cases multiple times, it is important to have a realistic outlook on the operational modalities that can inform policy processes and programming. Harmonizing policies, processes and practices can be a success story of OSBPs, as it facilitates the movement of people and goods and addresses many of the challenges that informal cross-border traders are often exposed to.

Another important element to be considered is the impact of ICBT on border communities. It is a means for survival and dependency for these communities, since goods traded by one border community often serve the needs of another border community. As frontliners and recipients to climate and conflict impacts – especially as they threaten the ability to trade – border communities face heightened vulnerabilities. Dependency on community networks and social safety nets becomes vital for cross border trade between border communities.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the positive contribution that ICBT could make to the African economy, and particularly to boosting food security, alleviating poverty and spurring employment, production and income generation. The chapter argues that to reap the maximum benefits from the sector, it is crucial that the challenges faced by informal cross-border traders be effectively addressed. The goal of policy interventions should be to eliminate impediments to formal cross-border trade, in order to reduce informality and integrate informal cross-border traders into formal trade. Moreover, the chapter shows that the effectiveness of the AfCFTA in the regulation and formalization of informal trade can be achieved if measures are also taken to liberalize the movement of persons across borders. Facilitation measures embedded in the AfCFTA – such as the removal of barriers to trade like tariff and non-tariff barriers – can lead to significant decreases in the time and cost that informal traders spend crossing borders. The free movement of persons can also serve as a solution to the challenges faced by informal cross-border traders, and as an important incentive for informal traders to participate fully in the economic development and integration of the continent. Eliminating or reducing stringent requirements for intra-African travel like visas may guarantee the protection of women and youth from harassment, violence and human trafficking, which are still common across several African borders. The adoption of a continental framework for the mobility of persons will complement the provisions of the AfCFTA for the elimination of time-consuming, inefficient customs and trade-related formalities and complex technical requirements, as well as all gender-related barriers that create significant competitive disadvantages for low-skilled women and youth engaged in ICBT, and will enable them to participate fully in Africa's regional markets.

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A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF LABOUR MOBILITY TRENDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

Chapter 6

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF LABOUR MOBILITY TRENDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyses the multifaceted nature and realities of international labour mobility in Africa in the context of regional frameworks regarding such issues as the free movement of persons, free trade, labour migration and labour market access. Primarily, it evaluates the impact of these frameworks on regional integration and sustainable development. It considers gendered perspectives and the underlying drivers of labour migration within and from Africa. Furthermore, it explores the current state of migration on the continent as well as selected operational arrangements to facilitate free movement, free trade and liberalized labour migration, as well as the limitations of such arrangements, particularly in addressing skills mismatches and unemployment. Last, it underscores critical areas that require concerted attention from policymakers and practitioners to holistically enhance the implementation of free movement regimes and address the highlighted disparities to promote a balanced approach to temporary, seasonal and permanent labour mobility from and within Africa.

OVERVIEW AND SCOPE

Mobility of people, trade in goods and labour markets are interwoven in Africa's labour migration landscape. Labour mobility and other modes of socioeconomic interaction are critical to regional integration, underscoring the need for an enabling environment that facilitates the free movement of people, accompanied by rights of residence and establishment. Augmented mobility is expected to serve as a catalyst for continental integration (African Union, 2022:99). Agenda 2063 of the African Union sets out the policy direction, under aspiration 2, towards a holistic strategy for African development and integration (African Union, 2013:paras. 20, 24), and two of the Agenda 2063 Flagship Projects to be fast-tracked include establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and developing an African passport to facilitate the free movement of people.

The chapter builds on work done in the first edition of the Africa Migration Report (IOM and African Union, 2020).[1] The first main area it builds on concerns the progress with ratifying and implementing continental and regional free movement protocols as well as with liberalizing or relaxing visa and labour migration requirements (the first edition had emphasized that despite weak ratification and implementation, progress has been made along some corridors and in some countries). The second area concerns the strengthening of the regional integration agenda, despite COVID-19 setbacks. The chapter reflects on the state of free movement of persons regimes. It highlights challenges experienced with the adoption and implementation of such regimes, distinct approaches on free movement within Africa's regional economic communities (RECs), and interim measures adopted by some countries and regions to realize free movement. Closely linked to the free movement of persons is the growing impact of free trade. Free trade arrangements are embraced by African Union Member States to a much larger extent than free movement instruments, likely under the mistaken belief that the latter would imply relinquishing immigration controls and even sovereignty. Consequently, REC agreements have in general only limited provisions on free movement. The chapter focuses on the free movement of persons, social integration and trade integration, with reference to various protocols, rights and trade agreements within the RECs, and argues that:

- Capitalizing on free movement regimes, strengthened by free trade arrangements, could render significant benefits for the continent;
- There is a need to address the challenges hindering the adoption and implementation of free movement regimes to realize their full potential;
- Better protection of all categories of migrant workers, including intra-African migrant workers, is called for;
- The differently paced implementation of free movement, liberalized labour migration and free trade regimes needs to be addressed, as well as restrictions to labour market access;
- Incongruences appear from free movement, free trade, and international migration governance regimes;
- Temporary labour mobility schemes make some – but only limited – contribution to regional integration.

REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE FORMATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION

There have been three main continental elements to the development of political and economic integration in Africa.[2] The first is the Lagos Plan of Action and Abuja Treaty. Adopted in 1980, the Lagos Plan of Action was critical in promoting continental and national self-sufficiency and in creating a self-reliant African economy. Its commitments were later translated into the Abuja Treaty, which recognized RECs as building blocks toward achieving a politically and economically unified Africa. The creation of the African Union by Heads of State and Government in 1999 was framed within the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The second is the African Union's Agenda 2063. Adopted by African Union Member States, the Agenda serves as a framework for accelerated regional integration and development in Africa.[3] The third is the African Multidimensional Regional Integration Index (AMRII). The Index, consisting of eight dimensions and 33 indicators,[4] has been developed by the African Union Commission and RECs to assess progress in integrating RECs in line with Agenda 2063, the Abuja Treaty, and regional REC treaties (see African Union, 2022:14–17). According to the 2021 Integration Report, the overall assessment score for regional integration in Africa is 0.62, on a scale of 0 to 1 (ibid.:18). The report identifies the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS) as the leading RECs in this regard, with scores exceeding 0.6. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN-SAD), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) each had scores between 0.5 and 0.6.

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1 In particular, see Warn and Abi, 2020; Achieng and Katungye, 2020; Abebe and Mugabo, 2020; and Manke et al., 2020.

2 The narrative of this section has been taken and adjusted from IOM, 2017. See UNECA, n.d., and African Union, 2022:135, from where the information immediately below was partly taken.

3 Agenda 2063 is both a Vision and an Action Plan. It is a call for action to all segments of African society to work together to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny. See African Union, n.d.

4 That is, Free Movement of Persons; Social Integration; Trade Integration, Infrastructure Integration; Financial Integration; Monetary Integration; Environmental Integration and Political and Institutional Integration.

FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS (INCLUDING THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION DIMENSION)

Free movement of persons, an African citizenship, and a continental free trade area are detailed in the African Union Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (African Union, 2018b). Through this protocol, Member States envisioned a phased and flexible approach to achieving free movement in the continent (African Union, 2019:10–16). RECs have specific treaties and protocols providing for the same. There is disparate progress in achieving commitments on free movement of persons at REC levels (African Union, 2022:19). ECOWAS and EAC are leading in this regard, while other RECs lag due to challenges such as visa abolition and regional protocol implementation.

The African Union, RECs and Member States have further actualized their commitments to effectively govern the mobility of workers to achieve regional integration through progressive policies such as the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030) (African Union, 2018a) and through dedicated programmes such as the Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP).

FREE TRADE

With regard to trade integration, according to the 2021 African integration report (African Union, 2022), the overall score based on the AMRII assessment across all RECs was 0.66. The RECs that performed best were ECOWAS, COMESA and EAC, all with scores above 75 per cent. These RECs have been able to implement the main instruments identified in AMRII (free trade zones and a common external tariff) as the essential steps for achieving trade integration. The other RECs have strengths that must be capitalized on: for instance, ECCAS and SADC have within them subregional organizations – the Central African Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) in ECCAS and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) in SADC – that are more advanced in implementing these integration instruments.

The AfCFTA, established in 2018, was preceded by a range of free trade arrangements, most of which are specific to a particular REC but one of which crosses REC boundaries. The AfCFTA gives expression to the pan-Africanist concept of a single African market. The Protocol on Trade in Services (TiS Protocol) aims to create a single services market through progressive liberalization, and to eliminate barriers to trade in services across the continent. All services in every sector are covered, although the Protocol focuses on the mobility of businesspersons, professionals and intracorporate transferees. As part of their commitments, States can stipulate the number of service providers allowed into their territory. The AfCFTA-mandated Protocol on Trade in Goods foresees facilitated informal cross-border trade, while the Protocol on Investment provides for the free movement of investors and businesspersons. Table 1 provides an overview of labour mobility in the African Union Free Movement Protocol, as well as in the AfCFTA TiS Protocol and the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment.

Table 1. Labour mobility in the African Union Free Movement Protocol and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area protocols

Specific provisions relating to labour migration	AfCFTA agreement and protocols		
	African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol	Trade in Services Protocol	Protocol on Investment
Movement of specific categories of persons	All categories of persons, special provisions for workers, cross-border residents, students	Service providers including natural persons, professionals, intracorporate transferees, interns and so forth	Investors, business persons
Entry	Entry requirements for all persons; African Union passport for facilitated entry	Based on commitments indicated in the schedules and national regulations for specific sectors	Facilitated fast-track visa application processes for investors and business persons

AfCFTA agreement and protocols			
Specific provisions relating to labour migration	**African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol**	**Trade in Services Protocol**	**Protocol on Investment**
Stay (including temporary or circular and permanent, as envisaged by the protocols)	Residence permits, work permits should be granted to all workers and persons by national authorities; right to residence and establishment subject to national regulations	Based on commitments indicated in the schedules and national regulations for specific sectors	
Exit	Protection against mass expulsions; protecting the rights to property and other socioeconomic rights		Protecting the rights of investors and protection against expropriation of investments
Access to the labour market	Nationals of Member States are entitled to seek employment in other Member States	National treatment and most favoured nation provisions subject to schedule of commitments	National treatment and most favoured nation provisions subject to national investment regulations
Qualifications	Member States to take steps towards promoting mutual recognition of qualifications	Framework on recognition cooperation	
Remittances	States should undertake measures to facilitate remittance transfers between Member States	Service providers should not be restricted from international transfers and payments for transactions	
Promoting socioeconomic rights	Protection of property rights, access to social and welfare services; portability of social benefits of workers		Protecting the rights of investors and protection against expropriation of investments
Promoting the rights of migrant workers and their families	Access to residence documents and permits		

Source: Bisong, 2022:4.

TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION IN AFRICA

Continental and regional picture

International migration in Africa mostly occurs between African countries in the same region (African Union, 2021:8). In 2019, over 21 million Africans were living in another African country, as compared to a figure of 18.5 million in 2015 (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021:60). Over the same period, the number of Africans residing in regions outside Africa also rose from 17 to 19 million (ibid.).[5] The number of international migrant workers in Africa increased significantly, from 9.5 million in 2010 to 14.5 million in 2019,[6] an average annual growth rate of 4.8 per cent, a sharper rise than the average annual growth rate of the total population, but still only constituting 2.8 per cent of the total labour force (African Union, 2021:67. For ILO estimates, see ILO, 2021:31–34).

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5   The African countries with the largest number of emigrants tend to be in the north of the region.

6   Concerning the 10 countries covered by the 2021 report, the agricultural sector (comprising agriculture, forestry and fishing) was the sector in which the largest number of migrants were employed, accounting for 27.5 per cent of employed migrant workers in 2018. Most of the employed international migrants in these countries are to be found in medium skilled occupations (as defined by the International Standard Classification of Occupations), such as agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (29.3%) and plant and machine operators and assemblers (17.0%) (African Union, 2021:xii).

Figure 1. Distribution of international migrants residing in Africa

North Africa
2,955,849

West Africa
7,398,379

East Africa
7,908,176

11%

28%

14%

30%

Central Africa
3,785,279

Southern Africa
4,481,651

17%
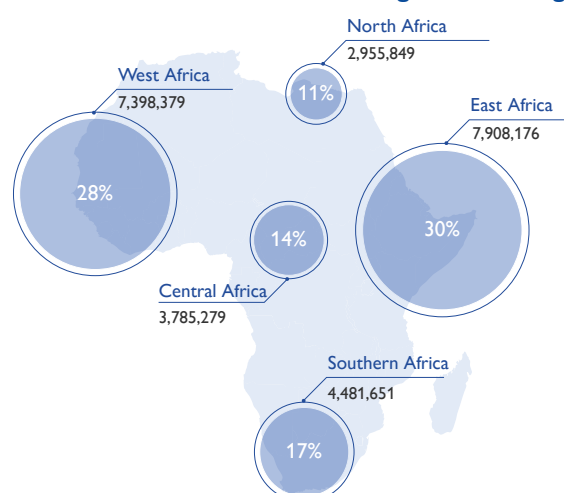
In 2020, East African countries were the destination for 30 per cent of the international migrants on the continent. A further 30 per cent of international migrants were to be found in countries in West Africa, 12 per cent in Southern Africa, 15 per cent in Central Africa and 12 per cent in North Africa (see Figure 1 of Chapter 3 of this report). International migrants represent just 2.1 per cent of the total population in Africa (African Union, 2020:8). In East and Southern Africa, intraregional migration is driven by the increasing demand for high- and low-skilled workers. The EAC Common Market Protocol provides for the free movement of labour and has facilitated notable progress on labour migration governance in the subregion. EAC citizens can move across the region using the EAC passport and some EAC partner States (Kenya and Rwanda) have abolished fees for work permits for East African citizens (McAuliffe and Khadria, 2019:62).

Intraregional migration has been further accelerated by the adoption, by IGAD member States in 2020, of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and the Protocol on Transhumance, and by programmes developed by COMESA to further facilitate regular labour migration and trade among its member States. Interregional irregular migration,[7] including for economic reasons, is also prevalent in the IGAD and COMESA subregions (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021:70), giving rise to trafficking in persons and smuggling of people facilitated by transnational organized crime syndicates. Furthermore, pastoralism is prevalent in about 75 per cent of the arid and semi-arid lands in the region. It is estimated that over 20 million people engage in pastoralism in the East and Horn of Africa region alone, which accounts for up to 54 per cent of the GDP of some countries (Oucho et al., 2023:17). Traditionally, significant numbers of people have migrated to take up work opportunities in South Africa and Botswana, in particular (McAuliffe and Khadria, 2019:62, 63). South Africa in particular has increasingly attracted sizeable numbers of migrants, including irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees from within and outside the Southern Africa subregion. In the absence of well-managed migration and migrant-integration policies, this has led to a rise in xenophobia including repeated attacks on foreigners.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the key reasons for most migrants moving within West Africa was that visa-free movement was allowed for nationals of ECOWAS member States travelling to other countries within ECOWAS. However, despite the ECOWAS free movement regime, irregular migration persists, especially when people do not possess identity documents (African Union, 2020:32).[8] As well, the geographical proximity of some ECOWAS member States to the North Africa subregion – the closest region to the European continent – has accelerated interregional mobility. Despite a multilateral social security agreement providing differently, eligibility for social protection is often restricted to citizens or permanent residents (ECOWAS, 2023:47). Some countries, however, such as Côte d'Ivoire, have taken proactive measures to provide social protection to all, including all migrants (SPPFM, n.d.).

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7   "Irregular migration" is defined as "Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination" (IOM, 2019).

8   As indicated later in the chapter, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions in labour migration flows in West and Central Africa (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021:68).

Emigration, particularly from Maghreb countries such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, has long been a feature in North Africa. Europe is the primary destination, although the Gulf Cooperation Council States are the main destination for migrants from Egypt. Countries in the Maghreb subregion also continue to be the origin and destination of many refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. Most migrants across the region continue to endure a multitude of protection challenges, with women and girls particularly vulnerable to abuse (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021:72–73).

There are some indications that the increase in numbers of migrant workers might be linked to relaxed migration restrictions and to the implementation of free movement provisions between African countries. This is the case in the EAC, where the number of migrant workers increased from 1.14 million in 2008 to 2.69 million in 2019 (Oucho et al., 2023:9). Yet this is not always the case. For example, in the IGAD subregion, the number of migrant workers on the move increased from 1.59 million in 2010 to 3.29 million in 2019, before the IGAD Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons was adopted. These migration patterns in the IGAD subregion tend to include not only voluntary movements, but also forced and irregular movements due to economic, political and environmental factors (ibid.:9–10).

Furthermore, in SADC, the 1995 Fee Movement Protocol has not yet entered into force, due to an insufficient number of ratifications. Nevertheless, several measures have been adopted to ease and facilitate labour migration. For example, SADC adopted a regional labour migration policy and a Labour Migration Action Plan, and created institutional frameworks for dialogue within SADC sectoral structures to facilitate intraregional collaboration in facilitating the free movement of people and workers: MIDSA, the SADC ELS (Employment and Labour Sector), meetings of chiefs of immigration and the like. The REC has adopted a framework and guidelines for the portability of SADC social protection arrangements. These measures and developments have had little impact, however, because some countries – notably South Africa – have adopted more restrictive labour migration policies. While SADC has a common stance on the African Union Free Movement Protocol, it comes with significant preconditions for successful implementation (RSADHA, 2017). At best, it can be argued that, based on a phased approach and the principle of variable geometry, some (interim) steps have been taken in SADC that may eventually help to strengthen the case for the implementation of a free movement regime.

Drivers giving rise to labour migration within and from Africa.

Drivers giving rise to labour migration within and from Africa include:

- Inadequate employment opportunities in the countries of origin (African Union, 2021:6) and a (real or perceived) abundance of opportunities for a better life, higher income, improved security and superior education and health care in countries of destination (African Union, 2018a:20).
- Weak institutions, corruption, inequality, political instability, conflict, civil strife and climate change (ibid.), often leading to cross-border and internal displacement.[9]
- Social ties facilitating the migration process: migrants feel more secure if they already have or can generate connections with other members of the diaspora in their country of destination (African Union, 2021:6).

Gendered perspectives

Gender plays a significant role in determining who migrates, the opportunities accessible to migrants, job choices and wage differentials (Oucho et al., 2023:15). A gendered perspective helps recognize and respond to migration-associated vulnerabilities to which women are exposed, and determine who benefits from labour market engagement.

Over the 10-year period up to 2019, there were fewer female than male international migrants in all the subregions and the RECs, though in some sectors – such as the informal market and the care industry – women outnumber

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9   As noted in IDMC, 2023 (17, 35), reflecting on 2022, never before has internal displacement been recorded on this scale. For sub-Saharan Africa, the 2022 figure of new disaster-caused internal displacements amounts to 7.4 million, three times the number of disaster displacements in 2021. In the Middle East and North Africa subregion, 305,000 people were internally displaced as a result of disasters, a 25 per cent increase on the 2021 figure. New displacements by conflict and violence amounted to 9 million in sub-Saharan Africa and to 482,000 in the Middle East and North Africa. See also African Union, 2021:6.

men.[10] "This gender gap was starkest in the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), where female migrants made up 36 per cent of the total migrant population" (ibid.:23, 24). Female migrant workers accounted, on average, for 38 per cent of international migrant workers during 2010–19: "The lack of gender parity is more pronounced among migrant workers than in the total labour force, where the average share of women was 45 per cent" over the same period (ibid.:29). Women may therefore not be able to share in employment opportunities and income generation, in formal labour markets in countries of destination, to the same extent as men.

The significant presence of migrant women in informal and low-skilled work may contribute to their lower representation in data about the labour force. Nonetheless, there has been a slight improvement in the gender balance among migrant workers, with women accounting for 37 per cent in 2010 and increasing to 39 per cent by 2019, indicating a positive trend (ibid.). The increasing share of women in labour migration, also referred to as the feminization of migration, has led to a redefinition of gender roles (African Union, 2018a:77–78; ILO, 2022:49). Decades ago, women predominantly migrated (or were perceived to migrate) to join male family members, as dependents; more recently, women migrants increasingly migrate independently and become engaged in predominantly low-skilled occupations in the informal economy, with a particular focus on informal cross-border trade, domestic work, care work and other typically female dominated professions (Oucho et al., 2023:16; ILO, 2022:49, 51). However, these occupations are also associated with limited rights protections and widescale exposure to discrimination, abuse and exploitation, within the continent and in other regions, with limited support provided by the migrants' countries of origin (Oucho et al., 2023:16; ILO, 2022:44, 49, 51; African Union, 2018a:77–79).

Regional integration and safe migration considerations would require better rights protections for women migrants, as pronounced in global and continental instruments regarding adequate migrant orientation services, labour and social security. Such instruments include free movement protocols and the legal systems of countries of destination. African countries, the African Union and the institutions and instruments of the RECs are urged to ratify, implement and monitor gender-responsive global, continental and regional instruments which also focus on the return phase of migration (African Union, 2018a:78–79; ILO, 2022:52–55, 65–67).

Experiences of migrant workers in countries of destination

The number of Africans residing in regions outside Africa has increased, as is also confirmed in a recent report concerning labour mobility from countries in the East and Horn of Africa subregion (Oucho et al., 2023:13–14). Many migrant workers from East, Central and West Africa are working in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and other Middle East countries. By 2017, 28.1 million migrants were estimated to be living in GCC countries, of whom 12 per cent were of African origin (ibid.:13). The majority have low-skilled jobs, including domestic work.

As shown in Figure 1 from Chapter 3 of this report, regarding the destinations of the 40.2 million migrants from Africa at mid-year 2019, the distribution is as follows: Africa (that is, other African countries), 53 per cent; Asia, 11 per cent; Europe, 26 per cent; Latin America and the Caribbean, 0 per cent; North America, 8 per cent; and Oceania 1 per cent.

Migrant workers and their families are often exposed to abuse and exploitation (IOM, 2022). In GCC countries and in certain other Middle East countries, under the kafala (or sponsorship) system, an employer controls each migrant's entry and exit from the country, their residency and their ability to change jobs. This leads to cases in which employers take workers' passports, force them to work excessive hours and deny them wages. The kafala system remains entrenched and continues to contribute to the vulnerability of labour migrants in Middle East and North African countries, including to conditions of forced labour and wage exploitation (ILO, 2023). The Kafala system exposes migrant workers, especially women, to significant risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, with little social and labour rights protection or access to justice.

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10   There are very few cases where gender-disaggregated data is available; in most cases, where disaggregated data is available, it is disaggregated by sex rather than by gender. In general, sex-disaggregated data also does not include the option for an "another designation" category (e.g. O, T, or X rather than male or female). Throughout this chapter, therefore, analysis is of sex-disaggregated data, and not gender-disaggregated data. The data is therefore unable to offer insights into the migration experiences of people with diverse gender identities, and is able to address only the binary categories of female and male. For more on the importance of data disaggregated by gender and by sex, see IOM, 2023.

Figure 2. Distribution of international migrants residing in Africa and destinations of migrants from Africa
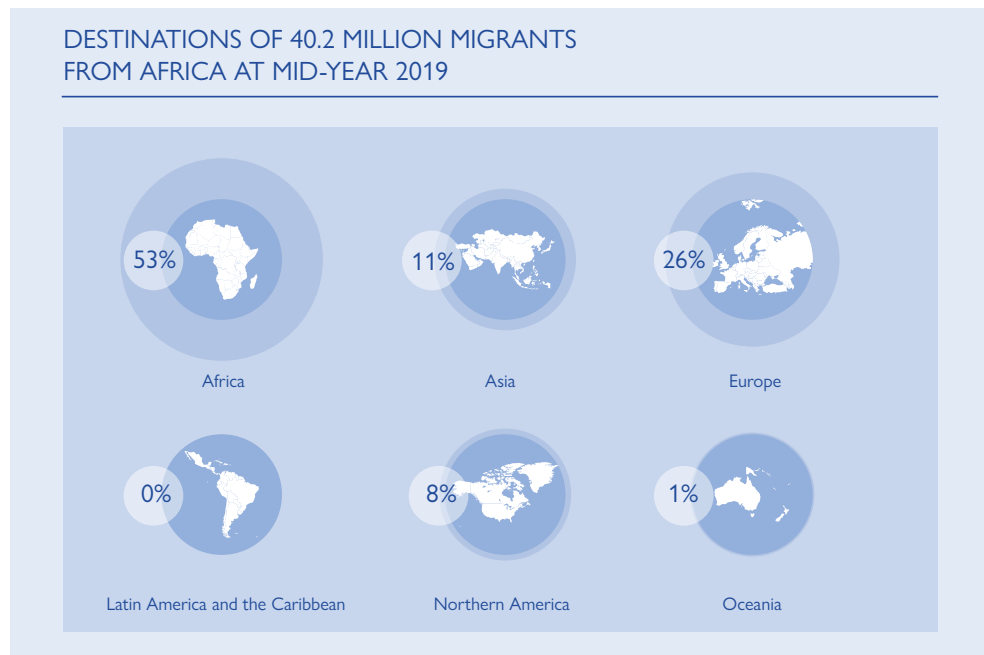
DESTINATIONS OF 40.2 MILLION MIGRANTS
FROM AFRICA AT MID-YEAR 2019

53% Africa	11% Asia	26% Europe
0% Latin America and the Caribbean	8% Northern America	1% Oceania

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.
Source: AU Africa Migration Report: Challenging the Narrative (2020) 17.

As a result of such abuses, governments in Africa (and Asia) have at times banned labour migration to GCC and other Middle East States, citing a largely weakly regulated private recruitment agency sector in several African countries (Atong et al., 2018:vii–ix).[11] Regarding the kafala system, the absence of a revised unified employment contract remains a significant challenge.

The provisions of free movement protocols in Africa, as supported by international human and labour standards, emphasize the rights protections to which migrant workers and their families are entitled (Oucho et al., 2023:4). Such rights protections include, among others, provisions that migrant workers ought to be able to cross national boundaries of member countries visa free, and that a standardized common system of identification should be in place. Also, migrant workers and their families should have the right of residence and access to employment as well as other services, such as health, social benefits and education. Furthermore, their academic and professional qualifications ought to be fairly assessed and recognized. In addition, they should neither be discriminated against on grounds of nationality nor experience discrimination in terms of access to employment, conditions of work, social protection and remuneration. Finally, they should enjoy the right to join labour associations and to participate in collective bargaining.

Impact of COVID-19

Concerning the impact of COVID-19 on labour migration, the IOM *World Migration Report 2022* notes that the COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures have had wide-ranging impacts on migration and mobility in West and Central Africa, disrupting interregional movement and resulting in stranded migrants. Travel restrictions had devastating impacts on trade and on the livelihoods of border communities, including migrants, many of whom are engaged in the informal sector, which employs most people (especially women migrants) in both West and Central Africa (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021:68). However, most countries facilitated the mobility of truck drivers transporting goods from country to country. The disruption of mobility has also affected health workers,

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11 Such bans could take several different forms, such as: imposing an individual employer ban (that is, blacklisting non-compliant employers or recruitment agencies); or imposing an employment ban on the entire country of destination concerned, implying that until the deficiencies in the treatment of migrant workers by that country are sufficiently addressed, migrant workers from the country of origin would not be allowed to work in that country of destination.

to the detriment of the countries of origin of such workers: as the pandemic surged, a global shortage of health professionals in developed countries steeply increased the already pronounced out-migration of health workers from the developing world, creating a vast brain drain of medical professionals, and leading to their critical shortage in tackling the pandemic within their countries of origin (ILO, 2022:45). Global supply chains, economic performance and trade have in particular been negatively affected, also as a result of travel bans, border closures and movement restrictions, while many migrants have been repatriated. The livelihoods, food security and social protection of migrants have also been affected (African Union, 2022:112, 115).

African Union and REC responses to the pandemic have aimed at emphasizing regional coordination – for example, in the form of the Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak and the Africa Task Force for Coronavirus (AFTCOR) (ibid.:113–114). The pandemic has stressed the importance of investing in emergent local manufacturing and enhanced regional cooperation, the need for economic diversification and for implementing the AfCFTA (ibid.:117–118),[12] and a focus on comprehensive and coordinated border management, as opposed to border policing (ibid.:114–116).

SELECTED OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF FREE MOVEMENT, FREE TRADE AND LIBERALIZED LABOUR MIGRATION IN AFRICA

Several operational arrangements have been initiated to support the implementation of free movement, free trade and liberalized labour migration regimes in Africa. Selected initiatives in this context are highlighted in Appendix 2.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Capitalizing on free movement regimes, strengthened by free trade arrangements, could render significant benefits for the continent (African Union, 2022:101–102).**
   Free movement regimes help to realize the continent's demographic dividend and integration, and to ease the movement of persons and goods across borders, thereby enhancing the level of trade in many RECs (African Union, 2022). Free movement also boosts the tourist industry and enhances exchange and transfers of technical skills. A further advantage is that it will help to bolster pan-African identity.

2. **There is a need to address the challenges hindering the adoption and implementation of free movement regimes (ibid.:107–109).**
   The value and benefits of free movement regimes (explained above) need to be shared with policymakers and implementers. Investing in the integrity of international travel documents and integrated border management practices will be decisive.

3. **Better protection of migrant workers, including intra-African migrant workers, is called for (ILO, 2022:83–86).**
   Regional integration must be accompanied by respect for and promotion of fundamental rights. Decisive measures need to be adopted across the board, in coordination with countries of destination and origin, RECs, the African Union Commission and likeminded actors, including civil society.

4. **Differently paced implementation of free movement, liberalized labour migration and free trade regimes, and restricted labour market access, continues to pose problems.**
   Except for the EAC and ECOWAS, free movement regimes remain largely inoperative (for SADC, see Amadi and Lenaghan, 2020:51–52). By March 2023, 46 African Union Member States had ratified and 54 had signed the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, which had already entered into force on 30 May 2019, following 24 ratifications (AfCFTA, n.d.). In contrast, only four countries (Rwanda, the Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, and Mali) have ratified the African Union Free Movement Protocol (with 33 signatures), which means that the Protocol has not yet entered into force, which would require 15 Member States to ratify it (African Union, 2018b).

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12 This would imply, among other things, eliminating barriers to African trade; developing infrastructure to serve Africa's markets; and boosting domestic production.

Labour migration liberalization is a reality across ECOWAS countries, and in the EAC for citizens of Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda (African Union, 2022:31–32); for the rest, this has yet to fully materialize. Many African countries have also introduced restricted access to their labour markets, affecting citizens of other African countries too, often despite free movement regimes;[13] The Trade in Services Agreement adopted under the AfCFTA may have some (limited) impact on labour market liberalization, given the restricted services agreed on and hesitancy to implement most favoured nation (MFN) provisions.[14]

Only three African countries (Benin, the Gambia, Seychelles; Visa Openness Index, n.d.) offer visa-free travel to the citizens of all other African countries; 14 countries offer a visa on arrival to 35 or more African countries; In contrast, 32 countries still require the nationals of at least half of the continent's countries to obtain a visa before travelling: "Reducing this number and making it possible for more people to travel visa free, with an e-visa, or with a visa on arrival, would make the continent significantly more open" (AfDB, 2022:12).

The conclusion is evident: while Africa is on track to achieve free trade goals,[15] much remains to be done to achieve the free movement of persons (including workers) and to facilitate enabling environment for labour market access. Significant reasons for the slow ratification and implementation of free movement regimes in Africa include: the concern that mass migration from lower income countries into middle income countries would negatively impact market opportunities for nationals, considering the high level of informality and growing anti-immigrant sentiments in a number of countries; the fear that irregular migration could propel insecurity; increasing calls, also in view of economies impacted by COVID-19, to prioritize nationals over migrants; and the reluctance to relent on border regulation and control in the absence of effective protective structures, given the risks of violent extremism, human trafficking and money laundering (African Union, 2022:107–109; Maunganidze, 2022). Some of these concerns are based only on anecdotal evidence: for instance, the perceived negative impact of labour mobility on access by nationals to labour markets; the feared correlation between free movement and increasing insecurity; and the misconception that free movement entails the removal of borders and uncontrolled irregular movement of persons (African Union, 2022:108).

Several key actions are necessary to promote effective free movement in Africa:

- Raise awareness about the benefits of labour migration through disseminating provisions of agreements and gradually implementing free movement policies.
- Assist countries in improving civil registration and legal identity systems, and ensuring documentation and border management.
- Create mobility programmes, such as skills mobility partnerships, to address skill mismatches, while investing in skills forecasting and anticipation.
- Invest in regional infrastructure development (such as roads, railways, ports, airports and communication networks) to connect markets and migration hubs at affordable rates.
- Implement the Single African Air Transport Market.
- Simplify entry procedures for all categories of migrants.
- Improve social welfare support for migrant workers and their families (Bisong, 2022:7–10).

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13 Egypt, Ghana and South Africa have been indicated as examples in IOM, 2022. See also Bisong, 2022:6.

14 For a similar experience in Asia–Pacific, see Anukoonwattaka and Heal, 2014:8.

15 For example, by September 2022, initial offers on trade in services have been received from 43 countries (Maunganidze, 2022).

Inconsistencies among free movement, free trade, and international migration governance regimes

At global, continental and regional levels, free movement and free trade arrangements are contained in single, unifying, binding instruments. This is not the case with labour migration governance regimes,[16] leaving labour migration governance largely determined through national regulation, and directly affecting the potential of labour migration to contribute to regional integration, save for certain labour migration provisions contained in (rarely implemented) free movement instruments, and in bilateral arrangements. Furthermore, the categories of persons covered under free trade and trade in services regimes are restricted. In contrast, free movement protocols foresee the movement of migrant workers more generally. Also, the TiS Protocol does not cover service providers within the informal sector or those engaged in informal trade, yet the provisions of the AfCFTA-mandated Protocol on Trade in Goods do promote informal cross-border trade flows, benefiting informal cross-border traders (Bisong, 2022:2).

These considerations suggest that it would be beneficial for the African Union and RECS to adopt unifying instruments aimed at guiding and regulating labour migration; at the gradual expansion of categories of persons for purposes of both free trade and free movement; and at ensuring the inclusion of informal economy workers and particularly informal cross-border traders in such regulation, given the large number of persons so affected. In addition, there is need to ensure alignment between national regulations and regional and continental commitments (Bisong, 2022:8).

Temporary and seasonal labour mobility makes some but limited contribution to regional integration

Currently, bilateral labour agreements mostly provide for the temporary mobility of essentially low-skilled migrant workers (ILO, 2015). While all of this may help to allay the fears of labour-receiving countries that their labour markets would be swamped by "foreign" labour, this represents at best a partial fulfilment of the vision of regional integration.[17] It may, therefore, be helpful to concentrate, as an immediate priority, on the mobility of categories of persons essential to multi-country investments and to creating jobs in countries of destination, in line also with the ambition of AfCFTA – such as businesspersons, entrepreneurs and investors – and gradually expanding these categories to include other migrants (Bisong, 2022:2).

CONCLUSIONS

The movement of persons can stimulate economic development by filling labour market gaps, contributing to skills development, increasing remittance flows, furthering economic activities like the supply of services, and can therefore encourage deeper integration in RECs (regarding SADC, see Amadi and Lenaghan, 2020:51–52). There are several possible avenues to achieve this outcome. These include: addressing real and perceived hindrances, by providing pathways to support and accelerate the implementation of free movement regimes and regimes to liberalize labour migration and labour market access; adopting unifying instruments at the African Union and REC levels to guide and regulate skills mobility and labour migration, ensuring alignment between national regulations and regional and continental commitments; working to include informal economy workers and informal cross-border traders in policy design and execution; and building on temporary labour mobility to gradually expand the categories of persons covered under free movement, free trade, labour migration and labour market access arrangements, specifically designed in a way to allay the fears and address the needs of countries of destination.

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16   As remarked above, no single unifying instrument regulating labour migration has yet been adopted at the continental level, despite a range of policy documents. Also, as has been noted, "a patchwork of agencies attends to different aspects of international migration such as: refugee welfare and resettlement; working conditions and labour rights for migrants; and the facilitation of remittance flows. Relevant bodies include the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank; the World Trade Organization; and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)" (Anukoonwattaka and Heal, 2014:8).

17   For similar remarks in relation to Asia–Pacific, see Anukoonwattaka and Heal, 2014:9.

APPENDIX 1. PROVISIONS ON FREE MOVEMENT AND LABOUR MOBILITY IN VARIOUS REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA

Regional economic community (REC)	Member States and partner States	Protocol on free movement of persons, right to residence and establishment	Provision on free movement of persons, right to residence and establishment
East African Community (EAC)	Burundi; the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda	Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community and Common Market Protocol (2009)	Article 104 of the Protocol obligates partner States to ensure free movement of persons, labour and services as well as the right of establishment and residence of citizens of EAC partner States within their territories.
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Cabo Verde, Guinea, the Gambia, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal, the Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Liberia	Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment (1979)	Article 2 of the Protocol allows citizens of ECOWAS member States to enter, reside in and establish in the territories of other member States.
Common Market for Southern and Eastern Africa (COMESA)	Djibouti; Zambia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Seychelles, Uganda, Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Kenya, Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Eswatini; Malawi; Burundi; Mauritius, the Comoros.	Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services and Rights of Establishment and Residence (2001)	Citizens of COMESA member States do not need a visa to visit territories of other member States for up to 90 days, so long as they possess valid travel documents (article 4). Eventual removal of all restrictions on movement of persons, including visa requirements is foreseen (article 5). Provision is further made for free movement of skilled labour (article 9) and services (article 10), as well as for the gradual removal of restrictions on the right of establishment (article 11) and, eventually, the right of residence (article 12).
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, the Sudan, Djibouti.	IGAD-Regional Migration Policy Framework (2012)	IGAD-Regional Migration Policy Framework provides comprehensive and integrated policy guidelines on various thematic issues on migration, including labour migration; human rights of migrants; inter-State cooperation and partnerships; migration and development; border management; displacement; internal migration; migration data; and irregular migration.
		Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region (2020)	The Protocol provides for the progressive realization of the free movement of persons, rights of establishment and residence in IGAD member States (article 2). The phases comprise: • Phase One, during which member States shall implement the right of entry and abolition of visa requirements;

Regional economic community (REC)	Member States and partner States	Protocol on free movement of persons, right to residence and establishment	Provision on free movement of persons, right to residence and establishment
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)		Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region (2020)	• Phase Two, during which member States shall implement the right of movement of workers and self-employed persons and their dependants and guarantee them the right to apply for employment, conclude contracts and accept offers of employment and accord to workers the right to be accompanied or joined by dependants in the territory of other member States; • Phase Three, during which member States shall implement the right of residence; • Phase Four, during which member States shall implement the right of establishment.
		IGAD Protocol on Transhumance (2020)	The Protocol allows for free, safe and orderly cross-border mobility of transhumant livestock and herders in search of pasture and water.
South Africa Development Community (SADC)	Angola, Botswana, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005)	Article 14(1) of the protocol obliges State Parties to ensure that a citizen of SADC member States who wishes to cross to another SADC member State(s) be admitted without a visa for a maximum stay of up to 90 days, upon possession of valid travel documents. Article 17(1) states that permission for residence in one of the member States will be sought by applying for a residence permit. Article 19 states that member States can grant establishment to citizens of other member States in accordance with their national laws.
Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS)	Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe	Treaty Establishing the Economic Community of Central African States (1983) Protocol on Freedom of Movement and Rights of Establishment of Nationals of Members States (1983)	Article 40 of the treaty that establishes ECCAS decrees that citizens of ECCAS member States will be considered nationals of the Community. The Protocol foresees visa-free entry, right of residence and establishment, and free movement of workers.
Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN-SAD)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Central African Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, the Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Somalia, Togo, the Comoros, the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Guinea, Eritrea, the Niger, Nigeria	Original treaty establishing CEN-SAD (1998)	Article 1 of the treaty advocates for the elimination of all barriers to unity of member States through adoption of measures to encourage free movement of persons, goods and labour as well as the right to residence and establishment.

Source: Adjusted from Oucho, 2015:12–13.

APPENDIX 2. SELECTED OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF FREE MOVEMENT, FREE TRADE AND LIBERALIZED LABOUR MIGRATION IN AFRICA[18]

This appendix considers operational arrangements initiated by partner institutions and implementing partners to support the implementation of free movement, free trade and liberalized labour migration regimes in Africa. Strategies to domesticate the labour migration-mobility related provisions of the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol in regional and national legal and regulatory systems have included the following.

Led by the African Union Commission, development partners – notably IOM and the ILO – have provided technical assistance to enhance labour migration governance for development and regional integration in the continent under the umbrella of the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP). The JLMP is geared towards achieving the vision of the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol in the following four areas:

- Implementation provisions (including progressive realization in relation to the three-phased approach to free movement);
- Core labour migration and mobility provisions (in relation to: the free movement of workers and the right to seek and accept employment; the granting of work and other permits for workers and their families; mutual recognition of qualifications; portability of social security benefits; remittances and earnings and savings transfers; and procedures for facilitating the movement of specific vulnerable groups);
- Facilitation provisions (in relation to cooperation between Member States concerning border management systems, and coordination and harmonization by Member States of laws, policies and systems aligned with the Protocol); and
- Remedial provisions (in relation to the right to remedies and dispute resolution).

Regarding mobility and trade, a joint work plan in support of the implementation of AfCFTA has been submitted to the AfCFTA Secretariat by the IOM. Priority areas include, among others: contributions to a holistic liberalization of trade in services; promotion of the efficiency, safety and inclusivity of cross-border trade (also in relation to small-scale cross-border traders); enhancing the cross-border dimensional contribution of labour mobility to economic productivity and trade; advancing the full ratification and implementation of the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol towards the effective implementation of the AfCFTA and regional integration; facilitating migration and managing mobility including through digitization and digitalization to promote the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol and to support the further implementation of the AFCFTA for regional integration; and strengthening the protection of human rights at borders and addressing the implications of lack of access to legal identity for cross-border mobility and trade.

In the EAC, the JLMP has supported the EAC Secretariat to develop the EAC Council Directive on Coordination of Social Security Benefits process. The JLMP has also assisted the EAC Secretariat with the operationalization of mutual recognition agreements within the context of free movement in the subregion, through supporting the validation and finalization of Annex 7 (Regulation to Operationalize the Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications (MRA)), in September 2022. The JLMP will support ECCAS to facilitate coordination on labour migration policy and governance (African Union, IOM and ILO, n.d.).

The European Union-funded programme Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM) addresses both the South–South dimension of labour migration and mobility through regional dialogue and cooperation, and as well aspects of mobility from North African countries to Europe. It covers three countries – Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia – and is inclusive of and open to other North African countries with regard to subregional activities (ILO, n.d.a). Aligned to existing policy frameworks at the global and regional levels, the overall objective of THAMM is to foster mutually beneficial legal migration and mobility. Its specific objectives include: technically supporting existing national frameworks in the field of migration and mobility; ensuring the improvement of mechanisms for assessment, certification, validation and recognition of migrants' skills and qualifications; improving migration-related knowledge and data management in the field of legal migration and

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18   The assistance rendered by the following IOM staff members and African Union Commission staff members are in particular acknowledged: Jason Theede, Edwin Righa, Catherine Matasha, Tanja Dedovic, Tatiana Hadjiemmanuel, Marwa Mostafa, Addishiwot Arega Gebrewold, Brian Onsase Okengo, Adaeze Emily Molokwu and Amohelang Mamatebele Vivian Ntsobo.

mobility; establishing and improving mobility schemes; and improving cooperation between relevant stakeholders in the field of legal migration and mobility, in particular concerning job placement.

The overall objective of the European Union-funded Southern African Migration Management Project (SAMM) (2020–2023) is to improve migration management in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean subregion, guided by, and contributing to, the realization of the 2030 Development Agenda (goals 8 and 10). This is done in close collaboration with SADC, COMESA and the Indian Ocean Commission, and involves as partners the IOM, ILO, UNODC and UNHCR. It embraces two components: labour migration, which it pursues by supporting the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; and mixed migration, which it pursues by supporting the application of the United Nations Global Compact on Refugees, and the Global Compact for Migration (SAMM, n.d.). Under the labour migration component, key thematic areas include, among others: gender-sensitive policies and strategies regulating labour migration at national or regional levels; international labour standards on the protection of migrant workers; bilateral labour migration and circular migration agreements across the region and with third countries; social protection for migrant workers; and regional qualifications frameworks at REC levels and migrant workers' recognition of qualifications at national and bilateral level.

Funded jointly by the European Union and ECOWAS, the FMM West Africa (Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa) project (2013–2021) sought to support the development of standardized procedures to collect and process migration-relevant data in the 15 ECOWAS countries, plus Mauritania. It also aimed to support the ECOWAS Commission in the development of a regional migration profile, as well as national migration profiles in all these countries. The project was implemented by a consortium of partners, under the lead of IOM, in close coordination with the ECOWAS Commission. ICMPD (the International Centre for Migration Policy Development) and the ILO were the two implementing partners. The project consisted of three components targeting the regional, national and local levels, respectively, and covering the following specific objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of the ECOWAS Commission to lead an intraregional dialogue on free movement and migration issues and to act as a platform for policy development and harmonization;
- Strengthen the capacity of national institutions of ECOWAS member States and of Mauritania in the areas of migration data management, migration policy development, border management, labour migration and counter-trafficking; and
- Promote the active engagement of non-State actors and local authorities in information and protection activities for the benefit of migrant and cross-border populations in West Africa (ICMPD, n.d.).

Some of the key activities of FMM West Africa included: building the capacity and mobilizing the engagement of economic actors in the implementation of free movement protocols and their accompanying measures; ensuring the availability of reliable information on the labour market as a prerequisite for effective free circulation; and ensuring that social security coverage extends to migrant workers, and that social security entitlements are portable, also through ensuring the full implementation of the ECOWAS General Convention on Social Security (2012) and enhancing coordination and cooperation between member States regarding this Convention (ILO, n.d.b).

Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the Government of the United Kingdom, and closely aligned with the Global Compact for Migration and the Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, the Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM) on Labour Mobility and Regional Integration for Safe, Orderly and Humane Labour Migration in East and Horn of Africa (2021–2022) aims to enhance labour migration governance and the protection of migrant workers and their family members' human and labour rights through intraregional and interregional cooperation on a "whole-of-government and whole-of-society" approach. This includes supporting regional integration and facilitating mobility for transformative, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, in addition to empowering youth and women. The project also has a major communications and visibility component that encompasses strategies to combat xenophobia, racism and all other forms of discrimination and bigotry. Project stakeholders include those responsible for enhancing migration governance. Also targeted are migrant workers and their families and those responsible for their protection and well-being. Civil society and media also play an important role as influencers in this project (IOM, n.d.; see also Oucho et al., 2023).

The initial phase of the BRMM project ran from 1 August 2021 to 31 March 2022 under the following pillars:

Pillar 1: Mobility, regional integration and social cohesion, including the EAC Common Market Protocol, IGAD Free Movement Protocol and others (such as AfCFTA), and including support for Regional Consultative Processes (the Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration for East and Horn of Africa, established in 2020, and the EAC RCP, established in 2022) and the five technical working groups.

Pillar 2: Ethical recruitment, bilateral labour migration arrangements, consular cooperation, migrant workers and their families' rights.

Pillar 3: Returning migrant workers and members of their families' vulnerabilities, protection needs and risks, return and reintegration in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) subregion.

Pillar 4: Gender-responsive migration governance in the EHOA subregion.

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THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA AND THE FLOW OF PEOPLE AND GOODS

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Hundreds of refugees arrive daily at Afdera town in Ethiopia after walking for several days.
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Chapter 7

THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA AND THE FLOW OF PEOPLE AND GOODS

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ABSTRACT

In a period in which many African citizens and migrants are not fully aware of their digital rights and do not have the instruments to understand the complexity of data-driven technology, the top-down deployment of new technologies in the African migration policy cycle has caused concerns over the quality of existing regulatory and legal systems as well as worries about the risk of exacerbating persistent forms of marginalization. Against this backdrop, this chapter adopts an integrated approach to the study of the relationship between digital infrastructures and the movement of people, goods and services from, within and to Africa. First, it offers an overview of the digital transformation in Africa. Second, it studies the movement of people and goods. Based on the best available evidence and in line with key continental and regional policy documents, it identifies four policy priorities: strengthening the digital rights of African citizens; fostering cooperation between African countries on the issue of data protection; considering and recognizing that different degrees of digital literacy exacerbate existing hierarchies; and creating a social and cultural ecosystem for the digitalization of basic services.

INTRODUCTION

New technologies have always shaped the movement of people and goods. Transportation and telecommunication advances have contributed to increases in international movement and have nurtured a sense of interconnectedness (McAuliffe and Goossens, 2018). These days, it's common to hear that technological development is faster than ever, that innovations in the physical and digital world can address some of world's hardest challenges, that it is very difficult to keep up with the pace. Recent developments – a boom in data centres across the continent, a flourishing fintech industry, multiple attempts to enhance the regulation of national and transnational digital services, and new partnerships to grant access to broadband services – demonstrate that African countries are making progress to capitalize on some facets of the technological momentum (Langley and Rodima-Taylor, 2022). Such advancements, especially in terms of money transfer and digital trade, have already impacted the lives of many migrants across the continent. Other innovations, such as the deployment of digital technology in border management and in the identification of migrants, raise significant policy challenges that require stronger continental cooperation in terms of data governance and the protection of individual rights.

Digital policies and migration policies are increasingly connected and seen as key drivers for realizing the ideal of an integrated and politically united continent. It is no accident that the African Union Agenda 2063 aspires to ensure support for technology transfer, adaptation and innovation (African Union, 2015). In the same vein, the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) has several objectives with implications for the intersection of technology and migration: the development of a single secure digital market in Africa, "where free movement of persons, services and capital is ensured and individuals and businesses can seamlessly access and engage in online activities" (African Union, 2020:2); the digital empowerment of all African people; the creation of a harmonized environment necessary to guarantee investment and financing to close the digital infrastructure gap; the harmonization of digital policies to strengthen intra-Africa trade and the socioeconomic integration of the continent; the implementation of a coherent set of digital policies; new policies to accelerate digital transformation; the provision of basic knowledge and skills in security and privacy in digital environment to 300 million per year by 2025; and the provision of a digital legal identity as part of the civil registration process by 2030. Continental policies are complemented by several regional frameworks, such as the East African Community (EAC) 2008 Framework for Cyberlaws and Common Market and the 2010 Supplementary Protocol on Personal Data within ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States). These policies, in the context of of a significant increase in online activities, aim to harmonize the legal and regulative environment as well as the processing and storage of personal data.

It is also widely recognized that, if properly regulated, technology can help African countries enhance migration governance (see for example Beduschi, 2019; UNHCR, 2016 ; Urso and Hakami, 2018). The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration sees technology and digitalization as instrumental to attaining key migration policy objectives, such as ensuring that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation (objective 4), strengthening certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral (objective 12), facilitating the mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences (objective 18), promoting faster, safer and cheaper transfers of remittances and fostering the financial inclusion of migrants (objective 20). The Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) also promotes the use of technology in key areas, such as the sending of remittances to and from Africa, the optimization of border governance, and evidence-based policymaking.

In a period in which many African citizens and migrants are not fully aware of their digital rights and do not have the instruments to understand the complexity of data-driven technology, the top-down deployment of new technologies in the African migration policy cycle has caused concerns over the quality of existing regulatory and legal systems as well as worries about the risk of exacerbating persistent forms of marginalization. Insufficient privacy safeguards, little consultation with stakeholders, the risk of aggravating social divisions, and a lack of the required literacy also hinder efforts to digitalize the transfer of money, goods and services between African countries. Against this backdrop, this chapter adopts an integrated approach to the study of the relationship between digital infrastructures and the movement of people, goods and services from, within and to Africa. The next section offers an overview of the digital transformation in Africa. The third section turns to the movement of people, and the fourth section focuses on the movement of goods. In the conclusion, based on these analyses and in line with key documents like the African Union Agenda 2063, the Data Policy Framework 2022, the MPFA, and the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030), the chapter identifies four policy priorities: strengthening the digital rights of African citizens; fostering cooperation between African countries on the issue of data protection; considering and recognizing the ways that different degrees of digital literacy exacerbate existing hierarchies; and creating a social and cultural ecosystem for the digitalization of basic services.

artificial intelligence	Field devoted to building artificial animals or artificial persons (Bringsjord and Govindarajulu, 2022).
AI	Subset of artificial intelligence that refers to processes or systems that perform functions that are often associated with problem-solving, decision-making and learning (ibid.).
algorithms	Sets of machine instructions used to process and solve problems at a level and speed that surpasses human capabilities (LeCun et al., 2015).
biometrics	Informatics field that processes physical or behavioural attributes to establish the identity of a person (Ross and Jain, 2015).
big data	Large volumes of high velocity, complex and variable data that require advanced techniques and technologies to enable the capture, storage, distribution, management and analysis of the information (TechAmerica Foundation, 2012).
blockchain	A distributed database of digital transactions that have been executed and verified by participating parties. Each transaction, once verified, can never be erased (Crosby et al., 2015).
chatbot	A computer programme designed to converse with humans, especially over the Internet (Beduschi and McAuliffe, 2021).
cryptocurrencies	Digital financial assets, for which records and transfers of ownership are guaranteed by a cryptographic technology rather than a trusted third party or a bank (Giudici et al., 2020).
digital identity	A set of attributes available in digital format and related to a person or entity (ISO, 2019).
digital finance	Financial products that include finance-related software as well as new forms of interaction with customers (Gomber et al., 2017).
e-visa	Travel permits in an electronic form (Beduschi and McAuliffe, 2021).
machine learning	One of the techniques by which machines, processing vast amounts of data, are trained to perform tasks that are generally associated with human intelligence (ibid.).

THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA

Africa is sprinting to jump on the train of digitalization. Yet significant issues continue to undermine the transformation of a data-driven digital economy into an engine for inclusive development. Moreover, as several private and public services become increasingly connected, the very limited number of national digital strategies and the lack of comprehensive data protection legislations may result in blind spots that leave African countries and people vulnerable to the misuse of data and to predatory behaviours by non-African companies.

Internet connectivity

The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) establishes that innovation and digitalization can facilitate the delivery of goods and services, address poverty and reduce inequality. To this end, one of its specific objectives is to digitally empower all people and to make Africans able to have safe and secure access to at least 6 megabytes per second of data, all the time, wherever they live in the continent, at an affordable price of no more than 1 cent (in USD) per megabyte, through a smart device manufactured in the continent at the price of no more than USD 100, to allow people to benefit from all basic e-services and content of which at least

30 per cent is developed and hosted in Africa. Yet, in sub-Saharan Africa, 19 per cent of the population (more than three times the global average) live in areas without broadband coverage (GSMA, 2021). Nearly 300 million Africans live more than 50 kilometres from a fibre or cable broadband connection (Abou-Zeid, 2021). The cost of owning a smartphone remains a major barrier for many women and men to become active participants in the digital transformation of Africa. According to GSMA (2020), the cost of the cheapest Internet-enabled feature phone in sub-Saharan Africa represents 30 per cent of monthly gross domestic product per capita, as opposed to 4 per cent in higher income regions of the world. In many areas of the continent, mobile data prices, even if they have become more affordable, are still too high and vulnerable to arbitrary fluctuations. Africans pay, on average, 6.5 per cent of their monthly income to get 2 gigabytes of mobile data. Users in Europe and Asia–Pacific pay 0.5 and 1.7 per cent, respectively (A4AI and ITU, 2022).

Roaming costs, which limit the use of data and slow down the implementation of a continental digital market, also remain too high. In 2017, ECOWAS member States agreed to allow citizens travelling within the region to pay for data access at local rates. In 2014, with an initiative that contributed to doubling cross-border voice traffic, EAC countries committed to eliminating charges for receiving voice calls while roaming, establishing caps on the wholesale price and retail price for outbound out-of-network-area traffic, and requiring mobile network operators to re-negotiate with their roaming partners to reduce wholesale tariffs. These experiments remain, however, limited to a few countries and do not cover data and mobile services (African Union and OECD, 2021).

Digital infrastructure

Closing the digital infrastructure gap is a precondition for achieving inclusive digital transformation, for sustainable development, and for invigorating intra-Africa trade (Arthur et al., 2022). It has been demonstrated that, for twelve African countries, the arrival of high-speed Internet to a region increases the employment rate for workers with both high and low education (Hjort and Poulsen, 2019). According to the WTO (2020), digitalization may help companies to access funding, improve their efficiency and increase their visibility and verifiability across the supply chain. By enabling cross-border digital transactions, data can also enable the coordination of international production processes and help smaller firms to enter the transnational market (African Union and OECD, 2021). In recent years, mobile broadband coverage has increased significantly in sub-Saharan Africa, although around 20 per cent of the population still live in areas without mobile broadband coverage (GSMA, 2021). Moreover, Africa's total inbound international Internet bandwidth capacity increased from 0.3 terabytes per second in 2009 to 15.1 terabytes per second in 2019 (Hamilton Research, 2020).

Improvements have been made at the level of Internet infrastructure and mobile broadband penetration. More cables connect Africa with the rest of the world. More and more Africans have had access to the Internet over the past two decades. In 2020, mobile broadband penetration was 20 times higher than in 2010. In 2021, it reached 33 per cent of the population (CIPESA, 2021b). New players, such as Google and Meta, have also started investing in underwater cables connecting continents. The Google-financed Equiano cable will connect Europe and the West African coast. Meta, in partnership with other African and global operators, has built the 2Africa cable system connecting 23 countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Despite such efforts, many intermediary cities are located far from a high-speed terrestrial fibre-optic network (African Union and OECD, 2021). This makes it difficult for several actors to participate in and benefit from the digital economy. It is, however, important to note that when companies such as Google and Meta contribute to building infrastructures and providing services, they also create the conditions for pushing African citizens into their platforms, collecting data and opening new sources of revenue (Solon, 2017). In this form of "digital colonialism", such data are extracted through networks owned by tech companies outside Africa (Marker et al., 2018). As Tom Simonite (2015:para.4) puts it, getting billions more people online provide "a valuable new supply of eyeballs and personal data for ad targeting".

MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

When it comes to the movement of people, the development of a dynamic digital ecosystem should come hand in hand with stronger continental cooperation in terms of digital governance and the protection of individual rights. There are, of course, risks to the use of digital technologies: in the context of large movements of people, the use of technology can translate into systematic violations to the privacy of migrants as data subjects; securitization of

border management; and economic exploitation of the most vulnerable groups of migrants. For these reasons, many African countries have laws that require data to be stored locally and forbid cross-border transfers of personal data. However, such laws hinder attempts to promote the standards of interoperability that are necessary to support the safe cross-border movement of people and goods. Only with proper governance and protection can the development of the digital ecosystem enhance rather than threaten migrants' rights and quality of life.

Identification and assessment of migrants

Digital technology can offer the opportunity to increase the reliability of identity data, provide more inclusive and user-friendly identification systems, and automate processes to ensure reliability and cost reduction throughout the identity lifecycle, which is the process of establishing a person's identity and using such an identity in later transactions (World Bank, 2017).

Several visible and invisible barriers can exacerbate the problem of obtaining a proof of official identity: burdensome registration procedures, long wait times, technical failures, unclear procedures, the distance between registration points, documentary requirements and high costs. A recent study (World Bank, 2022) shows that people without official proof of their identity – primarily members of marginalized and vulnerable groups – report problems with access to basic services, such as financial services (for instance, receiving financial support from the government, getting a bank account and accessing mobile phone services) and medical care (ibid.). In countries such as Liberia, Mozambique, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania, more than 40 per cent of adults without access to a bank or financial services cited lack of documentation as an obstacle to having accounts with mobile phone companies or financial institutions (ibid.).

As Breckenridge (2014) documents with regard to South Africa, systems of identification are never neutral tools. Even when they are implemented to facilitate the distribution of welfare provisions, such systems can turn into instruments to control and monitor marginalized groups, such as migrants and illiterate minorities. Policymakers should therefore be cautious about applauding the disruptive potential of digital technologies in a context like Africa where, for the most part, privacy laws and data regulation mechanisms are not in line with international standards (CIPESA, 2021a). Even if several countries (such as Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe) have recently drafted or implemented new measures to protect personal data, and others (like Botswana, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia and Rwanda) have fairly advanced identity ecosystems, only a handful of them manage data according to international best practices. Poorly designed identification systems may mishandle private information and spread personal data more quickly. For instance, attempts to manage COVID-19 have certainly resulted in the uptake of digital technology. Yet scholars and civil society groups have denounced the risks, to human rights and of privacy violations, in relation to systematic data collection and usage (McAuliffe and Blower, 2021). In their attempts to trace contagion risk, African governments have used unverified tools and technologies that breached the basic rights of individuals. This suggests that without appropriate oversight, regulation and a human-rights-based approach, the use of advanced technology in identification and assessment of migrants can facilitate surveillance, exacerbate discrimination at the border and violate human dignity.

Recognition of skills, qualifications and competences

Digital technologies can facilitate the verification of qualifications and the recognition of skills. Migrants carry skills and experiences but are at risk of underutilizing them as the skills they have might not be recognized within national or international labour markets. Skills recognition and mobility helps alleviate skills imbalances and labour shortages across sectors and regions. The non-recognition and non-comparability of skills, qualifications and experience across national borders is undoubtedly an impediment to good labour migration governance.

The African Union is in the process of developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF), an overarching regional qualifications framework embracing 55 countries and eight regions. The objectives of the ACQF are to enhance the transparency, quality and comparability of qualifications and mutual trust between national qualifications frameworks; facilitate recognition of skills and qualifications and mobility of learners and workers; and promote cooperation and connection with national and regional qualifications frameworks in Africa and beyond. Qualifications frameworks have increasingly become a policy tool to help promote labour mobility.

EAC, ECOWAS, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have all developed regional qualifications frameworks that aim to harmonize the standards and levels of education and training across their member States. This makes it easier for migrant workers to have their qualifications recognized in other countries within the region. Digital solutions such as online databases and platforms have immensely helped streamline the verification and validation of qualifications for migrant workers. The African Union has also recently adopted the Digital Education Strategy, with three key focus areas for the digital transformation of Africa's economies. These focus areas are digital technology in education, for teaching, learning, research, assessment and administration; digital education to enhance digital skills and competences, and to promote digital citizenship; and building the capacity of African Union Member States in digital infrastructure (networks and devices) for digital education. When fully implemented, the strategy is expected to spur an integrated and inclusive digital society and economy in Africa that improves the quality of life of Africa's citizens, strengthens the existing economic sector and enables its diversification and development.

Border governance

In the twenty-first century, it would be naïve to think of borders as just physical barriers impeding the movement of people from one country to another. From online visa application platforms and e-visa, to chatbots for information service functions provided by government authorities and automated border gates using biometric data, data-driven technology can be used at different stages (pre-departure, entry, stay, and return) of the migration cycle (Beduschi and McAuliffe, 2021). Walls, checkpoints, rivers and barbed wire fences still exist, but they are only the most visible elements of a system that includes a vast array of tangible and intangible technologies. The experience of borders is becoming a technology-mediated, sometimes virtual, element of migratory journeys from and within Africa. Technological innovation – such as big data analysis, new matching software tools, automated decision-making systems and advanced electronic communication systems – can be a helpful asset to facilitate the management of migratory movement, ensure border security, and automate certain activities currently conducted by immigration officials (Beduschi, 2019).

It is against this backdrop that African countries have started experimenting with new projects and policies to make up various gaps between them and the rest of the world. For instance, Kenya ruled out paper verification of COVID-19 test results, and uses a trusted digital tool to verify test results (Africa CDC, n.d.). South Africa is piloting e-gates for self-service immigration clearance at Cape Town International Airport. There is also a plan to roll out a biometric movement control system at several ports of entry across the country (BusinessTech, 2022). These changes are part of a global trend in experimenting with and adopting advanced technology for border control. If extended to the visa industry, technologies such as chip technology and 3-Domain Secure (3-DS), which enable real-time identification in market interactions, could facilitate the digital management of visa applications that is currently performed manually from paper-based documents.

The use of new technologies at several levels of border governance operations is not without risks. By generating virtual personal profiles, especially in countries marked by xenophobic and anti-immigrant attitudes, behavioural digital data can further the criminalization of migrants and exacerbate the harmful effects of prejudices and stereotypes towards already marginalized groups. Poorly developed identification systems that are not coupled with comprehensive data protection law can become a tool for oppression, violence and surveillance of ethnic minorities. Moreover, it is still unclear how automated systems can ensure the fulfilment of the individual basic right to a fair and impartial decision, especially in hard cases such as immigration and refugee claims, or recognition of the basic right to privacy, which is enshrined in international human rights instruments (such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection), or recognition of migrants' rights as data subjects.

MOVEMENT OF GOODS

Mobile devices are the primary means for African people to connect with the online world. The mobile phone revolution, as the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) emphasizes, has created opportunities for new services and cooperation across borders. In particular, in recent years, digital finance solutions have boomed in Africa.

Money transfer

More than 500 African companies provide technology-enabled innovation in financial services (fintech). In 2021, the African fintech sector grew exponentially, recording an 894 per cent year-on-year growth in terms of funding (Mastercard, 2022). The value of transactions processed by the mobile money industry in Africa reached USD 701.4 billion in 2021, roughly 70 per cent of global mobile money transactions (GSMA, 2022). The rise of African fintech industry also has an impact on the movements of goods and people across the continent. Migrants across Africa increasingly use remittance service providers (RSPs) to send money or goods back home to their countries of origin. Between 2020 and 2022, the cost of digital remittances in sub-Saharan Africa was between 2.1 and 3.2 per cent lower than the cost of cash remittances (Liu et al., 2022).

In 2020, international remittances processed via mobile money amounted to USD 12.7 billion with a 61 per cent increase since 2019 (Guermond, 2022). Given these numbers, several companies across the world have developed an appetite for the African remittance market. In 2020, MoneyGram signed a partnership with Airtel Africa to enable mobile money customers to receive transfers into their mobile wallets (MoneyGram, 2020). In the same year, Xoom launched an international remittance payment system connecting members of the African diaspora in Europe, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States with twelve countries in Africa (Domingo and Teevan, 2022).

Even as fintech companies mushroom across the continent, informal money transfer systems – such as Hawala (Mali) and Nita (the Niger) – are still among the preferred options for migrants without a bank account or who live in countries where there are sanctions on the flow of money. Such informal systems develop through a network of dealers who record all debit and credit transactions on their accounts. Cryptocurrencies – either in the form of directly sending cryptocurrency or using cryptocurrency as a transfer currency between two fiat currencies – have also been hailed as an alternative that provides lower remittance costs (Prasad, 2021). The peer-to-peer (P2P) nature of cryptocurrency can enable transfers with higher speed and lower costs than traditional money-transfer services (Liu et al., 2022). For instance, SureRemit, a Nigerian remittance service provider with a network of over 1,000 partners and merchants, uses blockchains to facilitate remittances from the global diaspora (ibid.).

The hype around the expansion of digital payments and mobile money across Africa should not divert attention from the exclusionary character of several digital financial products (Natile, 2020). The widespread adoption of mobile money necessitates a holistic approach to regulation, especially in societies affected by structural problems and with very low levels of financial literacy. The modernizing imaginary of inclusion through financial access and empowerment tends to obscure how digital money services also constitute an opportunity for private companies to extract indirect rents from user-generated data (Langley and Leyshon, 2022). And, despite their increasing popularity, cryptocurrencies remain a very volatile type of investment, susceptible to speculative bubbles. The technology is not always intuitive, and remains vulnerable to security issues such as phishing (sending emails or other messages to induce cryptocurrency owners to reveal their keys).

Digital trade

Experts have long recognized the centrality of the trade–migration–development nexus. An efficient African trading system can enhance migration governance by creating the institutional and social infrastructures that encourage ethical recruitment and the recognition of qualifications. At the same time, trade and the trading system promote the development of infrastructure networks that may contribute to safer and less costly labour mobility (UNCTAD, 2018).

African exports and imports of goods have grown over the past ten years, and the value of intra-African trade (USD 169.73 billion) increased after two years of consecutive declines (Afreximbank, 2022). The value of extra-African trade reached USD 1.01 trillion in 2021, 29.54 per cent more than in 2020 (ibid.). In view of this, digital trade – understood as commerce in goods and services enabled by information and communications technology (ICT) services – is often framed as a huge opportunity for the economic growth of Africa.

Pan-African cooperation on a digital trade protocol would harmonize regulations and – especially in a time when international trade faces severe interruptions, disruptions of global value chains and volatility in energy costs – incentivize intra-African trade. To this end, in 2020, the African Union Heads of State and Government

Assembly included e-commerce and other forms of digital trade within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Nevertheless, even if online payments and purchases in Africa have grown exponentially over the last decade, the share of the population engaging in online shopping is still the lowest globally (Coulibaly et al., 2022).

The ongoing process of digitalization is affected by major power imbalances that, within and between countries, shape both the terms and conditions by which goods and services are transacted, and national and transnational processes of social value creation. The growth of the digital economy is far from being uniform across the continent. In 2020, the Internet economy represented 7.7 per cent of Kenya's GDP and 1.27 per cent of Ethiopia's GDP (Diplo, 2022). The policy landscape is also fragmented. At the end of 2021, only 33 African countries had adopted e-transaction laws, and only 28 countries had consumer protection laws (ibid.). The most dynamic start-ups tend to cluster around cities such as Cape Town, Cairo, Lagos, Johannesburg and Nairobi (African Union and OECD, 2019). ITC (2020) also reports significant concentration of marketplace activity in Africa: 1 per cent of entities in the digital marketplace in Africa are responsible for over 60 per cent of total marketplace traffic across the continent.

The cross-border nature and global reach of digital trade also presents complex challenges in terms of regulation. On the one hand, the instant payment ecosystem lacks a comprehensive regulatory framework and remains fragmented, affecting several cross-border traders who rely on e-commerce to keep their businesses going (Domingo and Teevan, 2022). Fragmentation is particularly acute in East Africa, the region with the largest number of active accounts. On the other hand, interoperability of cross-border instant payment systems remains crucial to capitalize on the full potential of instant payment in the progress towards the AfCFTA. In this spirit, the SADC Banking Association developed Transaction Cleared on an Immediate Basis (TCIB), an initiative to push low-value cross-border transactions. After an operational pilot in Nigeria, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana and Guinea, Afreximbank, the African Union, and the Secretariat of the AfCFTA set up the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), one of the five building blocks of the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, that will integrate existing payment systems and enable payment transaction across Africa in 42 national currencies.

THE WAY AHEAD

In creating the conditions for the continent to reap the benefits of digital transformation, it is essential to integrate a rights-based approach into the economic road map. Given the low levels of digital penetration and literacy, Africa should prioritize the strengthening of social and economic infrastructures over the top-down adoption of technological innovation from the outside. Without such an enabling environment, digitalization may in fact translate into a rush for innovation that will benefit only the few and end up exacerbating existing asymmetries between and within countries. With this in mind, this chapter concludes with four key recommendations.

First, it must be remembered that data are not just economic resources, small pieces of information, or neutral means to achieve some ends. In increasingly digitalized societies, data are primarily pieces of people's identities, the use of which raises questions of privacy, power imbalances and human rights. Because of this, it is important to strengthen forms of engagement between the African Union and those civil society groups that, in several African countries, have been working to raise aware of digital rights and to challenge forms of digital enclosure, such surveillance, disinformation, arrests for online speech, closing civic space to specific groups, and badly designed laws and regulations (Roberts and Ali, 2021). Such issues are particularly pressing in a context, like Africa, marked by low levels of digital literacy. With an ever-increasing number of companies offering digital services to support border management, there are major worries regarding the privatization of migration control. Without adequate data protection frameworks, the privatization of migration control raises concerns regarding how and where data are collected, processed and stored. It is also a source of concern that private entities do not measure up to human rights standards and fail to respect data privacy.

Second, cooperation on data protection legislation should be strengthened. As several private and public services become increasingly connected, the very limited number of national digital strategies and the lack of comprehensive data protection legislations may result in blind spots that leave African countries and people vulnerable to predatory behaviours by non-African companies and the misuse of data. Following the Kenya ICT Master Plan 2014–2017, Kenya has drafted a new masterplan (2022–2032) to leverage the contribution of ICT to support the digital ecosystem. The masterplan has four pillars: granting access to pervasive national ICT infrastructures; providing

digital government services in all sectors; enhancing digital skills; and fostering innovation to migrate business onto digital platforms. The African Union and its Member States should strengthen their cooperation along these or similar lines.

Third, policymakers should consider that the capacity to make productive use of digital technologies varies across income, gender and ethnic groups. Uneven availability of digital resources and different degrees of digital literacy exacerbate existing hierarchies and prevent migrants from exercising and defending their rights. For this reason, in a world where the Internet has become the main space for information exchange, but where individuals are vulnerable to disinformation campaigns, forms of digital surveillance and the interception of digital communication, it is key to ensure that the same rights people have offline are protected online (UNHCR, 2021).

Fourth, it is important to create a social and cultural ecosystem for the digitalization of basic services. The need to maintain the pace of innovation may push African governments to adopt expensive devices without building the necessary social and cultural ecosystem for people to get used to digitalization. For instance, despite the dominant positive narrative about innovation and new technologies, limited technical and administrative capacity, as well as fragmentation in the identity lifecycle, may threaten the implementation and success of digital identify systems. Moreover, an unbalanced global, continental and regional implementation of data-driven systems may also intensify existing asymmetries in decision-making power on migration rules between technology leaders and the "Global South". Therefore, in a continent exposed to predatory behaviours by non-African tech companies and marked by high degrees of difference in Internet penetration rate and digital skills, it is also important to give precedence to the construction of social, legal, political and economic infrastructures, so that African citizens can shape their own digital future.

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HUMAN MOBILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

8

Devastating floods in Somalia. © IOM 2023/Claudia ROSEL

Chapter 8

HUMAN MOBILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Across Africa, seasonal mobility has long been used as an adaptation mechanism to deal with climate variability as well as a risk management strategy to manage in unpredictable and extreme environments. Disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, combined with structural factors, however, led to the erosion of pastoralism and undermined the mobility of transhumant herds. At the same time, new displacements were triggered and millions more have moved, or are seeking to move, in a changing climate. In that context, the African Union and the International Organization for Migration signed, in 2022, a three year agreement to strengthen policies and institutional frameworks consistent with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063. One of the key thematic areas of this agreement addresses migration and climate change. This chapter looks at the interlinkages between human mobility, disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation in Africa. It further looks at the policy advances made by the African Union, and by regional and national bodies, as well as at the challenges and gaps that remain. Finally, the chapter looks at solutions implemented for people to move, for people on the move and for people to stay, in a changing climate in Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The African continent has a rich history of leveraging seasonal mobility as an adaptive strategy to contend with climate variability and as a means of managing the risks posed by unpredictable environments. Pastoralism is defined by the African Union as "a high reliance on livestock as a source of economic and social well-being, and [on] various types of strategic mobility to access water and grazing resources in areas of high rainfall variability" (African Union, 2010:2). It is practised on around 40 per cent of the continent's total landmass and is a unique source of employment for the 50 million people living on the arid and semi-arid lands of Africa, where other types of livelihood are limited (Filho et al., 2020). The connections between human mobility and disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation are intricate, yet there is now unanimous agreement that these elements play a pivotal role in reshaping traditional movement patterns in Africa.

The interlinkages between these elements have given rise to new displacements and have compelled millions to migrate or contemplate migration in the face of a rapidly changing climate. In recognition of these challenges, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the African Union joined forces, in 2022, embarking on a collaborative three year

agreement aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063. A central focus of this collaboration is the acknowledgment of the intricate links between human mobility, disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation across the African continent.

This chapter delves into these nuanced interconnections and examines the policy strides made by the African Union, along with regional and national bodies, shedding light on the advances, challenges and existing gaps in addressing these complex issues. Lastly, the chapter explores the diverse array of solutions implemented to facilitate movement, support those in transit and provide viable alternatives for individuals to remain resilient in the face of a changing climate on the African continent.

HUMAN MOBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF DISASTERS, THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN AFRICA

Overview of human mobility trends across Africa in relation to disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation

In 2022, there were more than 7.4 million new internal displacements across Africa as a result of disasters within the continent (IDMC, 2023). Rapid-onset events like floods, windstorms and wildfires are raging across the continent. Recently, Cyclone Freddy, an exceptionally long-lived and powerful storm, traversed the southern Indian Ocean for more than five weeks in February and March 2023. Overall, the cyclone killed at least 499 people and internally displaced around half a million persons in Mozambique, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius and Zimbabwe (IOM, 2023a, 2023b). At the end of 2022, a total of 1.2 million people were still displaced as a result of disasters – mainly due to floods – in West and Central Africa, mostly in countries bound to the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Guinea (IDMC, n.d.). After four consecutive failed rainy seasons in the Horn of Africa, internal displacements more than doubled in 2022, accounting for 50 per cent of all displacements. The region experienced its longest and most severe drought on record, affecting Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. By the end of the year, 36.6 million people were impacted by the drought, with 2.7 million displaced and 5.7 million IDPs residing in affected areas. The agropastoral communities were most affected, adopting new mobility patterns, including split-household arrangements and involuntary immobility for those with depleted livelihood assets (ibid.).

Millions more are moving in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation (IDMC, 2023). With 1.7 °C global warming by 2050, a minimum of 17 to 40 million people could migrate internally in sub-Saharan Africa due to water stress, reduced crop productivity and rising sea levels (Trisos et al., 2022). The latest is affecting various coastal areas of the continent, such as in Egypt, around the Gulf of Guinea or on the Kenyan coast. A 1.5 °C temperature increase is projected to result in the level of the Mediterranean Sea rising between 0.2 and 0.5 metres, which could lead to up to 1.8 million people in Morocco alone being affected by floods (Sieghart and Betre, 2018). Rising sea levels and coastal erosion, coupled with rapid-onset events like storm surges, threaten the livelihoods of local populations in North Africa, pressuring them to move. Close by, people living in West Africa's semi-arid climate are vulnerable to the high risk of desertification (IOM, 2021a). In the region, limited capital reduces the ability to make long-distance journeys, especially for groups with lower financial means such as low-skilled women, the elderly and children. If displaced, these groups are more likely to be trapped in transit (Zickgraf, 2018; Zickgraf et al., 2016).

Planned relocation is a preparedness strategy that seeks to sustain life, communal property and spaces and to empower communities that would otherwise face catastrophic losses or total destruction over the medium to long term. For instance, the Senegalese Government, together with the World Bank, is working towards the relocation of 10,000 people from high-risk areas in the coastal city of Saint Louis. Some families have been resettled temporarily in camps in areas that are themselves vulnerable to flooding, putting these people at risk of repeated displacement (IDMC, 2019). In Southern Africa, Botswana, Malawi, Namibia and Uganda have relocated or are in the process of relocating populations vulnerable to flooding within their own borders (IOM, 2022a; Monitor, 2019). In Morocco, following the 2023 earthquake, communities are being relocated to safer, less earthquake-prone areas or into seismically sound structures that are more capable of dealing with future earthquake risk (El Atti, 2023).

During their migration process, migrants may continue to encounter challenges in transit or at their destination. Weather-related and non-weather-related hazards have an impact on the lives, the livelihoods, the physical and mental health and the enjoyment of human rights of affected populations as these hazards interact with structural factors including age, gender, socioeconomic factors and legal status. Depending on personal characteristics, obstacles and facilitators, people will either move (because they choose or are forced to), or will stay (because they choose to or are physically unable to leave, so-called "trapped" or "immobile" populations). Across the continent, many people are trapped in contexts where disasters, the adverse effects of climate change or environmental degradation put them in danger. Heatwaves in particular pose existential threats to the life and well-being of many Africans (Trisos et al., 2022).

Structural factors contributing to the links between human mobility, disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation

This section offers a non-exhaustive list of factors that contribute to the links between human mobility, disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

Urbanization

Adverse climate conditions – along with non-climatic stressors such as lack of education, lack of access to land and negative land management practices – have contributed to an increase in rural to urban mobility within countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, "increased migration to urban areas [is] linked to decreased rainfall in rural areas, increasing urbanization and affecting household vulnerability" (Trisos et al., 2022). While Africa's urban centres swiftly expand, the risks faced by people and assets from hazards increases as they compound with existing challenges tied to poverty, the rise of informal settlements, social and economic marginalization and governance issues (ibid.). Cities like Luanda (Angola), Kinshasa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Tunis (Tunisia), Bangui (the Central African Republic) and Mogadishu (Somalia) face great challenges as they are expanding inadequately at a growing rate (OECD, UNECA and AfDB, 2022). Approximately 59 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's urban population resides in informal settlements, and the population of these settlements is expected to increase dramatically in the years to come (Trisos et al., 2022).

By 2050, urban areas on the continent will be home to an additional 950 million people, mostly in search of alternative sources of income (OECD and SWAC, 2020). Their infrastructure systems are put under pressure by the direct impacts of climate change, their population densities and sustained underinvestment. Africa's cities are growing in terms of population size, and that population is decreasing in age: 66 per cent of urban dwellers are below the age of 30, while 60 per cent of Africa's population is under the age of 25 (OECD, UNECA and AfDB, 2022). African children are at high or extremely high risk of experiencing the impacts of climate change, in terms of both their exposure to shocks and their vulnerability to those shocks (UNICEF, 2023). Youth mobility towards urban areas increases as disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation compound with other socioeconomic drivers such as health issues and food insecurity (IPCC, 2022).

Livelihoods

People in Africa are heavily reliant on climate-sensitive sectors to sustain their livelihoods. Around 60 per cent of the workforce is employed in agriculture, and croplands are almost entirely rainfed (Trisos et al., 2022). Rural communities – which account for 85 per cent of Africa's poor – face increased conditions of vulnerability, including food insecurity, as they have access to fewer livelihood alternatives and are less able to be informed of risks or be assisted in the event of extreme climate events (Basupi et al., 2019). In the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region, livestock constitutes a major economic, social and cultural facet of life for 250 million people (Kasimbu, n.d.). As one of the world's most water-scarce regions, North Africa suffers from high pressure on water demand due to climate change and progressive heatwaves, intensified by environmental degradation and inadequate water management practices, affecting crop and animal production as well as threatening food security in the region (Kuzma et al., 2023). Up to 9 per cent of the subregion's projected population could move internally by 2050 without concrete climate and development action (Rigaud et al., 2018).

Fishing communities in Africa provide nutritious meals to 200 million people across the continent (Obiero et al., 2019). By 2050, fisheries catches are expected to decrease by 7.7 per cent worldwide due to climate change (Lam et al., 2016). This decline could reach 26 per cent in West Africa, and up to 53 per cent in Nigeria and 60 per cent in Ghana (ibid.). The decrease in catches is driven by ocean acidification, the loss of mangroves and destruction of coral reefs. It will affect the livelihoods of 12 million people working in Africa's artisanal fishing sector (Gross, 2021). Africa's largest freshwater lake, Lake Victoria, nestled between Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, is rapidly deteriorating due to environmental degradation and overfishing, leading to declining lake water quality and fish depletion. While this will drive internal mobility – from the lake basin towards other subregions – inward movements will also occur, driven by the lake basin's environment, higher elevation and more stable and plentiful rainfall, compared to the semi-arid regions of neighbouring countries (Rigaud et al., 2018).

Conflict

In fragile and conflict-affected countries, the nexus between disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, conflicts and mobility is becoming a growing concern. If conflict induces displacement and limits abilities to adopt climate adaptation strategies (including migration), it also disrupts traditional mobility patterns and traps populations (for example, see Akinyetun and Ogunbodede, 2023). Environmental pressures may spark conflicts among pastoralists or between pastoralist and sedentary groups. In the central Sahel, herders covering longer distances in search of scarce resources may encounter sedentary groups that they have not previously engaged with, leading to competition over limited water and pasture. For example, in the Liptako–Gourma border region between Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger, Malian pastoralists congregate around a limited number of water sources, where they must vie with other groups for resource access. This situation plunges them into a cycle of vulnerability, forcing them to sell their livestock at lower prices and, ultimately, driving them to displacement towards urban areas (ICRC, 2020).

In recent years, climate change, environmental degradation and sometimes disasters, exponential population growth, urbanization, land privatization, changes in farming practices and insecurity have affected transhumance patterns, routes and periods as well as relations with other communities. In the East and Horn of Africa subregion, conflict and climate events, along with the macroeconomic challenges faced by the region, appear to have stimulated a major shift to the full resumption of mixed migration trends across key migratory routes in 2022, marking the end of the impact of COVID-19 on mobility (IOM, 2023c). The 2022 IOM Region on the Move report points specifically to the effect of climate shocks and persistent conflict and violence on extraregional mobility dynamics (ibid.). Significant underinvestment in climate change adaptation in countries dealing with violent internal conflict reinforces their conditions of vulnerability (ICG, n.d.).

POLICY ADVANCES, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND GAPS IN AFRICA

African Union vision for a connected and integrated continent

The African Union is the continental body that fosters and leads regional cooperation and the integration of African States, including in the areas of migration management, climate change action and disaster management. Numerous cross-cutting African Union policy frameworks are relevant to addressing human mobility in the contexts of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. In 2022, IOM and the African Union signed a three year agreement to strengthen policies and institutional frameworks consistent with the United Nations Agenda 2030 and with the African Union Agenda 2063. One of the key thematic areas of this agreement is the migration–climate change nexus.

In 2002, the African Union became the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which adopted in 1969 (and implemented in 1974) the OAU Refugee Convention. The text of this convention provides an expansive approach to refugee protection compared to the 1951 Geneva Convention. It allows for an interpretation covering cross-border displacement in contexts of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, should the event "seriously disturb … public order" (OAU, 1969:article 1, para.2).

The Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa, adopted in 2010, was the first continent-wide policy initiative aiming to secure, protect and improve the lives of African pastoralists. Like the OAU Refugee Convention, it acknowledges the impact of climate change and its consequences on pastoralists' grazing areas and their livelihoods.

More recently, the African Union Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and Plan of Action (2018–2027), revised in 2018, reflects on the current migration dynamics in Africa. It provides comprehensive policy guidelines and principles to assist Member States and regional economic communities (RECs) in formulating and implementing their own national and continental migration policies. It states that "environmental conditions" and "environmental degradation", along with other factors such as insecurity and poverty, "have been significant root causes of mass migration and forced displacement in Africa" (African Union, 2018a:1).

Based on the MPFA, the African Union then adopted the Plan of Action for the Global Compact for Migration in Africa 2020–2022, which lays out the areas of work and outputs that the African Union seeks to achieve in line with the target objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The priority activities focus on more and better evidence, policy coherence and development, and migrants' protection and assistance. It specifically addresses the migration–climate change nexus in its seventh priority, which aligns with the second objective of the Global Compact for Migration, calling for minimizing the adverse effects of climate change, disasters and environmental degradation that compel people to leave their country of origin (UNGA, 2018).

Recently, the African Union mainstreamed human mobility in climate change policy with the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2032 (AU-CCRDS), which positions human mobility as an adaptation strategy. The AU-CCRDS identifies mobility decisions as context specific and determined by economic, political, social, cultural and demographic factors, among others, that enhance both vulnerability and adaptive capacity. In terms of security, the Strategy highlights that pinning down a direct causal link between climate change and conflict can be challenging. It states, however, that climate change drives local insecurity by interacting with other variables, such as water scarcity and resource competition, food insecurity, low economic development, weak institutions and population displacement and migration (UNECA and African Union, 2022).

The Kampala Convention, adopted in 2009 and enforced in 2012, was the first continental agreement mandating that States address displacement, including displacement caused by disasters and climate change, and that States protect internally displaced people fleeing from disasters (African Union, 2009).

With regard to protection, the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment was adopted in 2018, though it has not yet been implemented. This protocol represents the codification of the commitment to free movement made by African States during the establishment of the AEC (Abuja, 1991). Although not explicitly tied to environmental factors, free movement protocols typically facilitate regular migration occurring in that context. Additionally, they contribute to reducing the protection gap in cross-border disaster displacement situations (African Union, 2018b).

The African Union also adopted a range of policies on climate change and climate cooperation, development and agriculture that acknowledge to various extents human mobility in the context of climate change and environmental degradation. Additionally, the African Union has humanitarian and disaster risk reduction policies – including a new continent-wide implementation plan for the Early Warnings for All Initiative – which refer to displacement as a consequence of disasters. These policies address protection, assistance, early warning systems and the nexus between human mobility and conflict in the context of climate change.

Regional policies, legal frameworks and mechanisms

The African Union recognizes eight RECs: the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN-SAD); the East African Community (EAC); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); IGAD; and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). As the leading international organization on human mobility, IOM supports the RECs by providing comprehensive policy guidelines and

promoting inclusive partnerships to mainstream the inclusion of human mobility considerations in climate change, environment, disaster and other relevant agendas.

East and Horn of Africa, Southern Africa

Adopted in 2012, the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework refers to migration and environment as having a "reciprocal relationship" (IGAD, 2012:21). The text of the Framework promotes data collection and analysis, among other things, to manage migration in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. It also highlights the need for responsible environmental management to avert migration out of necessity.

SADC developed its Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in 2016, seeking to harmonize "regional immigration policies to reduce vulnerability to extreme climate events" (SADC, 2015:5). The Action Plan also links migration with instability and the escalation of conflicts.

In 2016, the EAC Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill promoted cooperation between countries of destination and those affected by a disaster to facilitate the return of those displaced across borders. In 2020, the IGAD Protocol on Free Movement of Persons was adopted, under which article 16 enables citizens of IGAD member States to cross borders in anticipation of, during, or in the aftermath of a disaster (IGAD, 2020). IOM supported IGAD in drafting article 16 through mapping laws, policies, practices and tools on admission and stay in the disaster context, among others, in collaboration with multiple governments (IOM and ILO, n.d.).

In July 2022, IOM supported a conference convened by the Government of Uganda, bringing together ministers of the environment, the interior, and foreign affairs, along with technical experts from 12 countries in the region, members of the EAC or the IGAD, as well as four countries from outside the region. The outcome was the signing by 15 States of the Kampala Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change (KDMECC), the first regional high-level declaration on the topic (member States of IGAD, EAC, and States of the East and Horn of Africa, 2022).

In September 2023, the first Africa Climate Summit was hosted by the President of Kenya in his role as the Chair of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government, on climate change, under the African Union. During the summit, IOM supported the governments of Uganda and Kenya to expand the KDMECC through a continental addendum. The new KDMECC-AFRICA is the first continental policy framework seeking solutions and opportunities for human mobility in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. The text of the addendum also refers to additional interlinkages such as health, economy, security and many other sectors, under 25 newly articulated commitments.[1]

West Africa

With the adoption of the ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance (1998) and supporting regulation (2003), cross-border pastoralist transhumance was acknowledged as a valuable economic activity. Subsequently, a regional regulatory framework for cross-border transhumance was established, based on the long tradition within ECOWAS of advocating for the free movement of persons, services and goods.[2] Since then, the political context and agricultural production systems have changed, leading to challenges in the Protocol implementation (IOM, 2019).

In 2000, ECOWAS, together with IOM, established the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA) to address migration topics in a regional forum. The 2008 Common Approach, linking the topics of migration and development, is currently under revision and the ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy, its successor, focuses on

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1   The continental addendum to the Kampala Declaration is not yet available online. However, see IOM, n.d.c for more information.

2   In 1979, States adopted the 1979 Protocol A/P.1/5/79 relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, followed by the 1985 Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/7/85 on the Code of Conduct for the implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment, which enumerates protection beyond regular migration. Other supplementary protocols were adopted in 1986, 1989 and 1990.

migration and climate change. And in 2010, ECOWAS adopted its Regional Action Program to Reduce Vulnerability to Climate Change in West Africa. This programme focuses on reducing climate vulnerability, promoting sustainable development and expanding the development and implementation of climate change adaptation strategies (IOM, 2021a).

In 2022, ECOWAS published its first regional climate strategy, the Regional Climate Strategy (RCS) and Action Plan (2022–2030) (ECOWAS, 2022). It promotes the implementation of disaster risk management strategies and early warning systems, notably through a gender-sensitive approach, to strengthen adaptation. In regard to human mobility, the strategy seeks to strengthen regional cooperation on human mobility in the context of climate change by building on existing dialogue structures and defining a legal framework, supporting the implementation of the ECOWAS migration policy and ensuring the integration of human mobility in national adaptation plans (NAPs), nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national communications.

CEN-SAD counts 29 member States, including all 15 ECOWAS member States, as well as countries from outside of West Africa such as Kenya and Somalia. The community, initially focusing on peace and security, has recently put a greater emphasis on environmental protection and management, as shown by the implementation of the Great Green Wall initiative in 2007 (UNCCD, n.d.). Through land restoration, it aims to address migration, among other issues (IOM, 2021a).

North Africa

The Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development was launched by Egypt in 2019, during its time as chair of the African Union. The Aswan Forum, partnered by the African Union and IOM, annually gathers various stakeholders to reflect on the opportunities, threats and challenges faced by the continent. The theme of the third edition of the Aswan Forum in June 2022 was Africa in an era of cascading risks and climate vulnerability: pathways for a peaceful, resilient and sustainable continent. Its conclusion included a recommendation for "advancing durable solutions for the climate–displacement nexus" (CICCRPP, n.d.). This recommendation has become the third of the 15 pillars of the COP 27 Presidency's initiative on climate responses for sustaining peace. IOM will co-lead this particular pillar.

National policies and legal frameworks

Climate change governance has been key for African countries to improve the integration of human mobility in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. NAPs and NDCs, driven by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), comprise a significant portion of the total number of instruments submitted by national governments.[3] Out of the 55 Member States of the African Union, 20 countries had submitted a NAP to UNFCCC, as of December 2023 (UNFCCC, n.d.a). In addition, all countries except Libya have published an NDC. These documents help countries identify their adaptation needs, address challenges and build capacities to develop and implement strategies to respond to those needs.

Aside from these internationally agreed frameworks, countries developed other policies and, to a minor extent, legislations. When not linked to climate change governance, these national instruments are related to disaster management (disaster risk reduction, disaster response, civil protection), human mobility governance (immigration, foreigners' status, asylum and refugee laws, border management, internal displacement) and, more rarely, to sustainable development programmes (Mokhnacheva, 2022). For example, in their development action plans, both Djibouti and Egypt mention human mobility as both a cause and a consequence of land degradation.

The instruments developed by individual nations differ, as provisions can be explicit or indirect when referring to human mobility in the contexts of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

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3   See Adaptation Community, n.d.: "Nationally determined contributions (NDC) communicate a country's contribution to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. The national adaptation plan (NAP) process can help to identify NDC adaptation goals and translate them into action. Both are complementary processes and should ideally be aligned to strengthen national climate change adaptation". The two overarching objectives of NAPs are: to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by building adaptive capacity and resilience; to integrate adaptation into new and existing policies and programmes. (UNFCCC, n.d.b).

Some policies barely mention the topic, while other strategy papers or action plans have a dedicated section on the topic. Increasing rural–urban mobility numbers, and the pressure induced on resources, is mentioned as a priority area requiring policy action for many countries such as Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar and Eswatini. Many instruments acknowledge the vulnerability of migrants in disaster situations, such as in policies developed by Burkina Faso, Somalia and South Africa. The impact of human mobility, disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation on (migrant) women specifically, as a nexus or separately, is acknowledged by an increasing number of countries such as the Sudan, Benin, Cabo Verde and Zimbabwe. In addition, health insecurity is seen as both a climate change-related cause of human mobility (through the impacts of rising sea levels, for example), and as a consequence of human mobility, as shown in various national instruments of Malawi, Ethiopia, Liberia, Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In these policies, conflict at local, national or regional levels is also regularly acknowledged as a main consequence of displacement, and in some cases as a cause, aggravated by environmental degradation and resource scarcity. It is a main source of concern for the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Togo, Mali, the Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad, as disputes and conflicts may result in political instability, weak governance and human rights infringements. To address these vulnerabilities, policies and legislations developed by Kenya, Mozambique, the Niger, Somalia, Uganda and Angola, to name only a few, address protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons and people displaced across borders following disasters. In Angola, a law grants refugee status to people leaving a neighbouring country following a disaster. Looking at prevention measures and solutions, planned relocation is also considered as a disaster risk management measure, as developed notably by Togo, the Congo, Benin, Kenya and the Sudan in their policies, legislations and frameworks. Finally, human mobility is increasingly seen as an adaptation strategy in policies developed by many African countries, such as Burundi, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Ghana and the Niger.

GAPS ANALYSIS: IMPLEMENTATION IS LAGGING BEHIND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Policy development is a work in progress. The drafting and implementation of policies addressing the nexus between human mobility, disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation need to be developed jointly, to ensure coherence between fields. As such, the KDMECC-AFRICA is the first continent-wide framework that brings such topics together in a consortium, and can be used as a model for future policy development. While regional and subregional dialogues on the topic have increased in number and frequency, and deepened in focus, some countries are missing out on partnerships and opportunities. For instance, the SADC has drafted a protocol on the facilitation of movement of persons, which so far has not been endorsed by the required two thirds of SADC member States. Bilateral conflicts between nations have also hampered the ability of RECs to advance related discussions.

Moreover, as more instruments continue to be published, more policy, research and knowledge gaps are identified. It can be helpful to flag these shortcomings in relation to implementing global frameworks like the Global Compact for Migration, as analysed by the Platform on Disaster Displacement (Mokhnacheva, 2022). First of all, clarification is often needed around the scope of human mobility covered by the policies. While internal displacement is often the main focus, concrete commitments on terms such as cross-border migration and displacement are less clearly addressed. A better understanding of whether mobility is undertaken by choice or through necessity (for instance, through the establishment of a mobility spectrum) could help to identify and target protection and assistance needs, solutions and implementation strategies.

Slow-onset disasters and permanent climate change impacts are often mentioned in these kinds of policy developments, but few concrete solutions are offered in this regard. As mentioned above, planned relocation needs to be further considered by additional countries, and solutions should be integrated with existing policies and legislations related to rights-based labour mobility schemes, citizenship programmes and free movement agreements. Moreover, the actions of local governments in addressing the nexus between human mobility, disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation need to be further encouraged and supported. As the immediate recipients of migrants, local governments' expertise and experience should be included in both the design and implementation of national instruments.

Most importantly, the implementation of policies at subregional, regional and national levels policies lags behind policy development. The lack of engagement of all stakeholders in the planning process – which requires better coordination between sectors like business, academia and civil society – impedes implementation progress. Another reason for the poor implementation of such policies is the lack of agreement on terminology regarding the broader application of what constitutes climate change adaptation and related financing of programmes. Finally, the inclusion and participation of concerned communities – especially migrants, minorities and diasporas – needs to be further encouraged to ensure the implementation of evidence-based policies.

SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE IN AFRICA

Through long-standing collaboration, IOM has continuously provided support to African Union Member States leading to the development and adoption of migrant-centred, rights-based, and comprehensive approaches to environmental mobility across the continent.The African Union Member States have looked into developing a shared understanding of that nexus by fostering a holistic, integrated and coordinated approach, powered by the IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021–2030. In addition, IOM supports the implementation of legislations and policies and the development of programmes that allow vulnerable communities to choose migration as an adaptation strategy. Finally, African Union Member States have been assisted in strengthening the capacities of all Africans in terms of preparedness, disaster management and resilience building (IOM, 2020).

Solutions for people to move

When staying is not an option, African Union Member States sought to facilitate safe, regular and orderly migration and in minimizing displacement via regular pathways, such as labour mobility schemes, free movement protocols, asylum systems and humanitarian visas. The development and implementation of innovative human mobility policies and practices, including planned relocation as a last resort, are among the many collaborative projects developed and led by the African Union, its Member States and IOM. Finally, the African Union receives support in developing solutions that leverage the potential of migration as a strategy for climate adaptation and risk reduction, and that enhance the contributions of migrants, diasporas and communities to climate action and resilience building.

Across the continent, the KDMECC both addresses the challenges of climate-induced mobility and also seeks to leverage the opportunities it presents. The declaration addresses growing rural–urban migration by facilitating in-between movements, in recognition of the ties that people maintain to their rural homes. In addition, it promotes the development of comprehensive urban plans to address population surges in urban areas arising from the adverse impacts of climate change in marginal rural areas. In that context, it promotes rural–urban collaboration to reduce vulnerability and create adaptive mechanisms for safe migration and for access to sustainable livelihoods. It also supports working with the private sector to improve urban–rural connectivity for young people and traders, through Internet access and technological advancement, as well as the provision of energy and road and rail infrastructure.

The strengthening of urban climate resilience through the integration of human mobility considerations into urban planning is especially challenging for North African countries, given the subregion's high urbanization rate. Urban resilience building goes hand-in-hand with the strengthening of internal migration governance; with the increase in systems for service provisions, especially health-care systems; and with the increase in preparedness and response capacity to climate-induced hazards in urban areas. In that regard, the city grantees of the Global Cities Fund for Migrants and Refugees receive on-the-ground technical and coordination support. The Fund was set up by the Mayor's Migration Council and is jointly managed by IOM in collaboration with partners, providing guidance on the development of projects, including those related to the pillar on climate migration (Mayor's Migration Council, n.d.).

Solutions for people on the move

In situations of mobility across the African continent, African Union Member States have looked into solutions to address the assistance and protection needs of people on the move, as well as address vulnerabilities in migration that arise in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

By guiding the implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, IOM supports the African Union in finding durable solutions to displacement linked to climate and conflict (United Nations, 2022). It also supports the development and implementation of anticipatory actions, and inclusive and rights-based approaches that ensure durable solutions, across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

Given that North African countries serve as primary transit routes for migrants from East Africa, Horn of Africa, West Africa and Central Africa to Europe, it is crucial to provide humanitarian and recovery support in those countries to people on the move, considering the vulnerable situations they go through, amplified by a greater exposure to extreme weather events in the transit and destination countries. Most migrants originate from countries that are seriously affected by climate change. Between 2018 and 2020, the Protecting Women Migrant Workers in the Context of Climate Change in North Africa IOM project supported relevant countries to increase awareness among policymakers, media and the public of the impacts of climate change on women migrant workers, and to advocate for policies and practices that address their protection and assistance needs.

The KDMECC specifically addresses the need to support countries that are the destination for people on the move, including Uganda, which is the country of destination for the largest international migrant and refugee population in Africa, accounting for 1.7 million people or 20 per cent of the total stock of people currently on the move in the world (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021; UNHCR, n.d). In addition, the KDMECC seeks to engage with multilateral development banks, financial institutions and international organizations to create or extend financing relief for countries that are the destination for migrants and disaster-displaced persons (IOM, n.d.a).

In West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and Sénégal requested IOM's assistance in valuing the contribution of labour migrants in the agricultural sector to the resilience of the urban and peri-urban territories and proposing innovative nature-based solutions respectively in the periphery of Abidjan and Dakar (IOM, 2022b). The first results of the project not only show the social protection needs of labour migrants but also demonstrate the vulnerability of these migrants to climate change. In both locations, nature-based pilot projects are under development to promote the essential role of labour migrants and the importance of urban and peri-urban agriculture regarding food security and resilience to floodings.

Solutions for people to stay

Lastly, IOM supports efforts of the African Union Member States aiming to avert migration out of necessity and minimize displacement via climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, community stabilization, resilience building and preparedness.

For the countries of origin in North Africa (such as Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco), the diversification of livelihood options remains crucial. Young people account for a large share of the population of all three countries, with two working-age people in the population for each and every dependent (World Bank, n.d.). It is important to target youth for upskilling for green jobs, which will also support the green transition of these countries. Such skills are equally in demand in destination countries, meaning that such upskilling will open up opportunities for regular migration channels. In fragile and conflict-affected nations like Libya and the Sudan, it is vital to enhance local natural resource management systems – particularly regarding water management – to address the interconnected challenges of climate change impacts, fragility and migration drivers. This approach should involve promoting conflict-sensitive, community-based resource management to enhance communities' conflict resolution capabilities and responsible water usage. In both Libya and the Sudan, IOM actively supported authorities in implementing disaster risk reduction projects, building government capacities and enhancing community resilience against floods (IOM, 2021c).

Communities in West Africa face the salinization of cultivation areas, loss of beaches and mangroves, and inadequate housing and economic infrastructure. As well, communities in West Africa have cited as challenges the gradual abandonment of dominant economic activities such as seaside tourism and the fish trade (Trisos et al., 2022). Coastal communities are facing rising sea levels, land and river salinization, food insecurity and heavy loss of livelihoods. West African countries, with IOM assistance, developed the project Implementation of Global Policies

on Environmental Migration and Disaster-related Displacement in West Africa. The project is supporting two communities in Casamance, Southern Senegal, in adapting to and mitigating these adverse effects of climate change (IOM, n.d.b).

In the East and Horn of Africa subregion, solutions for people to stay centre around several key areas, including but not limited to livelihoods and economic opportunities, since maintaining family, social and cultural ties to historical presence in particular areas and environments are particularly important. In addition, solutions also differ according to the type of livelihood practised by individuals and the type of environment they live in. For example, solutions for pastoralists include the implementation of free movement arrangements, such as those articulated in the IGAD Protocol on Transhumance, as well as addressing desertification and land degradation (IGAD, 2021). In farming and fishing communities, access to new technologies, green and blue economies and climate-smart agricultural techniques could be considered amongst the solutions, as developed by IOM in support of the Kenyan authorities (Migration Network Hub, n.d.), and as encouraged by the Kampala Declaration (ibid.).

CONCLUSION

Looking ahead, cooperation and solidarity will be crucial in the decades to come, given the transboundary nature of both climate change and migration. Across the African continent, human mobility, climate change, disasters and environmental degradation, as well as their interlinkages, are experienced and their humanitarian consequences often endured. Regional collaboration – such as the African Multi-hazard Early Warning Early Action System Programme, and the African Union Humanitarian Agency as well as other initiatives led by the African Union – is an essential building block for well-integrated and coordinated preparedness, response and recovery building efforts.

Effective cooperation involves partnerships between and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, financial actors, regional organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. Collaboration among these actors helps leverage expertise, resources, local knowledge and, ideally, cost efficiencies to develop comprehensive and context-specific solutions. These cooperation processes and policy interventions at local, national, regional and continental levels in Africa can remove barriers and ultimately provide a range of solutions for people to move, for people on the move and for people to stay, enabling climate vulnerable persons and at-risk communities to take informed mobility decisions. In this context, and through a knowledge provider role, IOM remains at the disposal of the African Union and its Member States to engage as an actor for migration policy and operations and as a convenor, ultimately working collaboratively towards the success of these initiatives.

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MIGRATION-SENSITIVE HEALTH-SYSTEM PLANNING TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S MIGRATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

9

IOM supports vaccination posts at crucial entry points and along key mobility corridors.
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Chapter 9

MIGRATION-SENSITIVE HEALTH-SYSTEM PLANNING TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S MIGRATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Health is a cross-cutting issue within the African Union's Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030) (MPFA). As well, migration is recognized as being key to development, benefiting not only those who move but also countries of origin and of destination. However, for these benefits to be achieved, migration must be managed in ways that will maintain the health of migrants. To address this, migration-sensitive responses to health are needed, whereby population mobility is embedded in the design of health-related interventions, policy and research, with health benefits addresseed at both the individual and population levels. Unfortunately, health systems across the continent have largely failed to engage with the realities of migration, jeopardizing efforts to effectively implement African Union policies addressing migration and health, whilst simultaneously limiting progress towards international health and development goals, including universal health coverage (UHC). In this context, this chapter outlines two key areas for action to support the development and implementation of effective responses to migration and health: improving governance responses to migration and health; and addressing the social and structural determinants of health. Recommendations include establishing continental and subregional forums to strengthen migration and health governance in ways that are responsive to existing strategic plans, including the MPFA.[1]

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1   The African Union, with its secretariat the African Union Commission, is based in Addis Ababa, is made up of 55 Member States, and represents all the countries on the African continent. African Union Member States are divided into five geographic subregions (North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa), defined by the OAU in 1976 (CM/Res.464QCXVI), though updated since. The WHO Regional Office for Africa serves the WHO African region, which comprises 47 Member States, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, with the Regional Office in Brazzaville, the Congo.

INTRODUCTION: THE MIGRATION AND HEALTH AGENDA GLOBALLY AND IN THE AFRICAN UNION

This chapter situates the field of migration and health within the existing global and continental policy and governance context,[2] and outlines a renewed governance approach to migration and health in Africa that addresses the social and structural determinants of the health of migrants. This will support the successful implementation of current continental strategies that aim to improve responses to migration and health.

The relationship between migration and health is recognized globally (Vearey et al., 2020; Thomas, 2016; Lee et al., 2018),[3] including within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015; IOM, 2017a); in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (United Nations, 2018a); and in the Global Compact on Refugees (United Nations, 2018b). This has led to a range of global governance interventions, including the implementation of two World Health Assembly resolutions (WHA 2008; 2017); three global consultations (WHO, 2010; IOM, 2017b; WHO, 2023a); the launch of a global action plan to address the health of migrants and refugees (WHO, 2019, 2023b) (see Box 1); a toolkit for countries to "advance the migration and health agenda" (IOM et al., 2022); production of competency standards for health-care workers (WHO, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c); development of a global research agenda on health, migration and displacement (WHO, 2023c); and establishment of regional and global networks on migration and health (for example, CREMH, n.d.; GSMERH, n.d.; Abubakar et al., 2018; MAHP, n.d.; Migrant Clinicians Network, n.d.; MIHSA, n.d.; MHADRI, n.d.).

Text box 1. The World Health Organization global action plan on promoting the health of refugees and migrants, 2019–2030

Priority 1. Promote the health of refugees and migrants through a mix of short-term and long-term public health interventions.

Priority 2. Promote continuity and quality of essential health care, while developing, reinforcing and implementing occupational health and safety measures.

Priority 3. Advocate the mainstreaming of refugee and migrant health into global, regional and country agendas and the promotion of refugee-sensitive and migrant-sensitive health policies and legal and social protection; the health and well-being of refugee and migrant women, children and adolescents; gender equality and empowerment of refugee and migrant women and girls; and partnerships and intersectoral, intercountry and interagency coordination and collaboration mechanisms.

Priority 4. Enhance capacity to tackle the social determinants of health and to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including universal health coverage.

Priority 5. Strengthen health monitoring and health information systems.

Priority 6. Support measures to improve evidence-based health communication and to counter misperceptions about migrant and refugee health.

Sources: WHO, 2019, 2023b.

Migration is key to social and economic development, benefiting not only those who move but also countries of origin and of destination (Migration for Development, 2018; United Nations, 2013; GFMD, 2023). However, for these developmental benefits to be achieved, migration must be managed in ways that will maintain the good health status of migrants (IOM, 2017a, 2013a; 2017b). This requires addressing the barriers faced by migrants to

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2   There is not yet a global definition of the field of migration and health; however, there is consensus among the international and scientific community that the field addresses the patterns of and the interlinkages between health and migration. This implies that work in the field considers health aspects within the context of migration, and the impact of migration on public health and global health issues.

3   In this chapter, the term "migration" refers to all forms of movement within and between countries, and the term "migrant" refers to all administrative categories of migrants, including labour migrants, short-term visitors, temporary residents, asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and undocumented migrants.

accessing positive determinants of health, including ensuring that the rights of migrants to access basic services – including health care – are upheld. Opportunities to do so include leveraging the ambitions of the SDGs (United Nations, 2015) for a more inclusive approach to health and migration: most notably, universal health coverage (UHC) (UHC2030, 2017).

Migration and health in Africa

The African continent is characterized by significant migration patterns and large numbers of migrants (see Chapter 2 for more detail). In this context, any failure to engage with migration and mobility in health system responses will have negative consequences. The typical design of such responses assumes that populations are static, that they can be continuously accessed at one geographical location, and that health-care users will access care and treatment at a single health-care facility over time. Available evidence, however, indicates otherwise, showing that health-care users across the African continent – both citizens and non-citizens alike – are mobile, and are moving for reasons other than seeking health care.

Subsequently, public health and health-care system responses – including those aimed both at prevention and treatment, at care for both communicable and non-communicable diseases, and at maternal and child care – either do not adequately engage with migration and mobility, or focus on interventions that target specific migrant groups at singular points in time and place (for example, health outreach services for migrant farm workers, clinics in refugee camps and dedicated migration response centres). Such focused intervention has negative impacts on the continuity of access to health care over time and place and along the migration journey, both within and between countries, with particular implications for the management of increasingly prevalent chronic non-communicable diseases (including diabetes and heart disease), for the management of communicable diseases (such as HIV, malaria and tuberculosis) and for the reduction of maternal and child mortality.

Migrants moving across borders may experience a range of challenges in accessing effective, safe and patient-centred health care (WHO, 2022). In many African contexts where public health-care systems are struggling, these challenges are often experienced by the population of the destination country (citizens), but there are particular challenges associated with being a migrant, including access to health services that is dependent on documentation status; poor treatment from health-care workers lacking in culturally competent understandings or in knowledge of legal frameworks; and fear of being arrested, detained and deported (Vearey, 2023; African Union, 2022a). In addition, inadequate data collection has negative implications for early detection and response to public health threats, with particular implications for pandemic preparedness plans (Wickramage et al., 2018; Vearey et al., forthcoming; Vearey et al., 2021; de Gruchy and Vearey, 2021).

The right to access health services across countries, and in particular the right to UHC, is paramount to achieving the SDGs (United Nations, 2015; IOM, 2017a; UHC2030, 2017). At the continental level, the importance of improving responses to migration and health is recognized in key strategies such as the African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (African Union, 2015) and the Africa Health Strategy 2016–2030 (African Union, 2016a), as well as in key regional integration commitments such as the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol (African Union, 2018b) and the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (African Union, 2018c). Most recently, the African Union Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and Plan of Action (2018–2030) (African Union, 2018a)[4] emphasizes the need to include migrants in national health policies and programmes across the continent and outlines recommendations for its effective operationalization (African Union, 2018a, 2021, 2022a).

Despite the recommendations outlined by the framework for its effective operationalization, and despite its emphasis on the need to integrate migrants into national health policies and programmes across the continent (see Box 2), the accompanying plan of action fails to provide a clear timetable for implementation and indicators to monitor progress. It is clear that without investing in migration and health in Africa, the objectives of the MPFA will not be

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4   The OAU Council of Ministers adopted Decision CM/Dec 614 (LXXIV) during the seventy-fourth ordinary session in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2001, which called for the development of a migration policy framework. The original MPFA was adopted in 2006; the revised MPFA was adopted in 2018.

realized: dedicated efforts to provide technical support to the development of evidence-informed, coordinated, multisectoral, multilevel, migration-sensitive health system responses are needed at continental, regional, national and subnational levels.

Text box 2. The Migration Policy Framework for Africa recognizes migration and health as a cross-cutting issue and highlights eleven key strategies that African Union Member States should undertake

i. Conduct situation analyses and needs assessments of the health of migrants for planning purposes, with involvement and participation of the most vulnerable, including women and girls.

ii. Ensure that migrants have adequate access to health-care services by granting access to national health-care systems and programmes, ensuring that cultural or linguistic barriers do not prevent migrants from seeking and obtaining care, especially in relation to pregnancies and communicable diseases such as sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, HIV and hepatitis.

iii. Ensure the minimal health-care service package for refugees and displaced persons, including prevention, treatment and health education, with special regard for the needs of vulnerable groups, and mobilize resources needed, by, among other things, enhancing collaboration with UNHCR, IOM, WHO, ICRC, IFRC, UNFPA, UNAIDS and other relevant agencies.

iv. Strengthen research and data collection initiatives on the relationship between health and migration, and enhance cooperation between countries and relevant agencies including WHO, UNAIDS, IOM, UNFPA and ILO.

v. Support the implementation of continental and regional policies, particularly the Abuja Declaration and Plan of Action on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and Other Related Infectious Diseases; the Abuja Call for Accelerated Actions towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Services; and the Catalytic Framework to End HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Africa by 2030.

vi. Provide migrants with access to social services, and meet the nutritional needs of infants and children of migrants in line with international law, standards and norms, ensuring such access is not restricted on the basis of migration status. Provide access to such service in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way, without stigma and through advocacy and the provision of cultural mediators.

vii. Advocate for the inclusion of migrants and mobile population health issues into national and regional health programmes and strategies.

viii. Support the establishment of health and social affairs desks at the level of the regional economic communities (RECs), to harmonize migration and health policies and to address cross-border health related issues among respective member States.

ix. Develop strategies to allow screening and treatment at entry points and border posts in war-torn areas and areas at high risk of natural disasters.

x. Encourage Member States to develop strategies to respond to major epidemics in line with international health regulations.

xi. Ensure that health-care personnel in areas receiving high numbers of migrants are trained to meet the health-care needs of migrants.

Sources: African Union, 2018, 2016b; OAU, 2001.

To enhance the implementation of evidence-informed responses to the complex interplay between migration and health in Africa, the African Union Commission took a significant step by establishing the Migration and Health Policy Area within its Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development in July 2020 (African Union, 2022b). The report on migration and health that was then produced, involving a continental scoping study that explored the health needs of diverse migrant subgroups, revealed significant variations in the extent to which the rights of migrants to access health care is addressed in policy frameworks across African countries (African Union, 2022a). While most countries included health within their national constitutions and in existing policy documents governing migration, specific policy instruments and frameworks for developing migrant-inclusive health-care systems were limited. Recent studies conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in selected countries and regions confirmed that national legislative frameworks lack direct obligatory language in stipulating benefits for migrant populations with regard to access to health-care services, labour systems, social security systems and social assistance at local country levels (IOM and ACMS, 2022; IOM, forthcoming). According to the forthcoming IOM report, some countries provide free medical assistance to those in need; however, eligibility criteria are unclear or may not include migrants (referring specifically to displaced persons and returnees, as well as people living in extreme poverty and other vulnerable groups). Other countries have an inclusive national health policy, but with an implementation scheme and financial mechanism that only addresses the needs of nationals. In other cases, other legislative instruments contain restricted definitions, such as victims of trafficking, IDPs, or foreigners held in detention, but do not specifically include migrants.

Ensuring that migration is addressed when developing coordinated continental health responses provides an opportunity to support the principles of the international health regulations (WHO, 2016) and the ambitions of the global health security agenda (Feldbaum et al., 2010; Feldbaum et al., 2006; Ingram et al., 2004). Whilst good population health is dependent on an inclusive, migration-sensitive response to control disease outbreaks, concerns raised prior to the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that migrant and mobile populations have been mostly absent from global health security interventions and pandemic preparedness plans (Wickramage et al., 2018; Truman et al., 2009). Unfortunately, the negative consequences of this manifested in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Vearey et al., forthcoming; Vearey et al., 2021; Maple et al., 2021). Learning from this, there is an urgent need to reconsider the concept of cross-border health. This is necessary to ensure that the safeguarding of health transcends national borders and is prioritized in collaborative efforts. The roles of the African Union and the regional economic communities (RECs) become pivotal in enhancing cross-border coordination and dialogue, identifying innovative solutions for health-care coverage across borders, and preventing the institutionalization of social exclusion. Such an approach would guarantee implementation and quality control, and would ensure the sustainability and scalability of responses in alignment with the vision of the Africa 2063 Agenda: a united Africa where people are free to move across borders, and where the wellbeing of all Africans is ensured.

To this end, a migration-sensitive approach to revising health governance, including well-monitored roadmaps and continental guidelines for harmonizing this process across countries (Vearey et al., 2017a), is urgently needed.

TWO KEY AREAS FOR DEVELOPING MIGRATION-SENSITIVE HEALTH RESPONSES: IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL AND STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Migration-sensitive health responses would ensure that health policies and programming enhance the rights of migrants to access public health-care services; in addition, they would engage with the broader social and structural determinants of the health of migrants,[5] and would recognize that these might change over time and place, as will be discussed below. Migrants are, by definition, not a static population, and so, as explained by the Global Compact for Migration, effective migration-sensitive health responses need to be embedded in a whole-of-government approach

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5   According to WHO, the social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems (WHO, n.d.).

that is multisectoral and multidisciplinary,[6] a whole-of-society approach that includes representation from multilevel stakeholders,[7] and a whole-of-route approach that is formulated to develop cross-border, multi-country strategies to address the health of migrants.[8] Developing such an approach involves reviewing global (United Nations, 2018a, 2018b; WHA, 2008, 2017; WHO, 2010, 2019, 2023a; IOM, 2017b; UHC2030, 2017; GCHRM, 2017, 2023), continental (African Union, 2015, 2018a, 2022a), regional (Vearey et al., forthcoming; IOM and ACMS, 2022; SADC, 2009), national (for example, see IOM and ACMS, 2022; IOM, 2013b; African Union, 2022c), and subnational (Vearey et al., 2017b; Vearey et al., 2023; IOM, 2021) governance processes,[9] their associated recommendations for improving responses to migration and health, and exploring if – and, if so, how – these could be contextualized and adapted across the African continent.

Two key areas for action have been identified to support the development and implementation of effective responses to migration and health: improving governance responses to migration and health; and addressing the social and structural determinants of health. These are outlined below.

Improving governance responses to migration and health

Global and continental governance approaches

Efforts are currently underway across the African Union to achieve UHC (African Union, 2016a) through strengthening primary health care, an approach that requires States to provide "financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all" (UHC2030, 2017, 2018). The ambitions of UHC are reflected in article 16 of the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (OAU, 1981). The 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (OAU, 1990) echoes the international Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) by according all children, including migrant children, the right to health.

The importance of investing in health is emphasized in the African Union's Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2015) and reflected in the Africa Health Strategy 2016–2030 (African Union, 2016a), which states that health is a human right accessible to all, explicitly including migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. This is also recognized in the Common African Position (CAP) on the Global Compact for Migration (African Union, 2017) and in the Maputo Plan of Action 2016–2030 for universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in Africa (African Union, 2016c). However, implementation frameworks for the African Health Strategy are currently lacking, and its links with the MPFA have not been established. This could be a consequence of the already-noted missing MPFA operational workplan, timetable for implementation, and indicators to monitor progress on its health strategies. Such a workplan becomes a priority for policy coherence, governance and proper implementation of the MPFA. To support a comprehensive cross-border approach to health across the continent, guidance for operationalizing the health and migration aspects of these key strategies is needed. Another helpful development would involve the African Multidimensional Regional Integration Index (AMRII), that measures progress on regional integration using several thematic dimensions, none of which directly addresses health. The AMRII measurement process could therefore be revised to incorporate dedicated health indicators to monitor progress towards advancing the health of migrants and other people on the move in the region.

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6   "Whole-of-government" approach: The Global Compact for Migration considers that migration is a multidimensional reality that cannot be addressed by one government policy sector alone. To develop and implement effective migration policies and practices, a whole-of-government approach is needed to ensure horizontal and vertical policy coherence across all sectors and levels of government.

7   "Whole-of-society" approach: The Global Compact for Migration promotes broad multi-stakeholder partnerships to address migration in all its dimensions by including migrants, diasporas, local communities, civil society, academia, the private sector, parliamentarians, trade unions, national human rights institutions, the media and other relevant stakeholders in migration governance.

8   There is no global definition for "whole-of-route" approach; however, there is consensus that it implies governance, policies and operational actions throughout the whole cycle of migration, where dialogue and coordination among countries of origin, transit and destination are critical for the fulfilment of the health of migrants, providing universal health coverage and continuity of care across the migration route. UNHCR advocated for an updated "whole-of-route" approach to address mixed flows of refugees and migrants, taking into account the entire spectrum of situations people find themselves in (United Nations, 2023), along the phases of migration that IOM defines as pre-departure, transit, arrival, stay, integration, return and (re)integration (IOM, n.d.).

9   The term "governance" is used to explain the ways in which an entity functions to develop and implement policy and practice, incorporating the State, civil society, the private sector and other key actors, including international organizations.

Global consultation

The importance of implementing global, continental and regional strategies was emphasized during the third Global Consultation on the Health of Refugees and Migrants, which took place in June 2023 (WHO, 2023a). Co-hosted by Morocco, IOM, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the consultation included representation from the African continent and underscored the pivotal role of country-led initiatives. Discussions emphasized the need to empower relevant national authorities, particularly ministries of health and other pertinent agencies, in spearheading endeavours to enhance the well-being of refugees and migrants. This collective effort embraces a comprehensive approach, spanning the entirety of government, society, and migration routes. The Consultation made it clear that without regional collaboration and dedicated investment to inform, develop and implement policy and programmatic responses to address migration and health at continental, regional, national and subnational levels, the ambitions of current commitments like the MPFA will not be realized.

Nations participating in the Consultation pledged to intensify their endeavours by fostering a collaborative framework for migration and health governance. This commitment extends to establishing organized mechanisms for international cooperation, support and sharing responsibility, including a proper financing mechanism. These initiatives are integral to achieving the overarching goals of promoting UHC, reducing out-of-pocket catastrophic health expenditure and amplifying efforts in the realms of prevention, preparedness and response to pandemics and other public health emergencies. Such endeavours are to be executed at the national, regional and continental level.

The Rabat Declaration (GCHRM, 2023), the outcome of a high-level political meeting held during the Consultation, emphasizes the urgency of implementing a migration-sensitive approach to health governance. This involves embedding migration and health as a cross-cutting pillar across the interconnected activities associated with health governance, including the coordination of interventions, policies, data collection and research.

A migration-sensitive approach to health governance

To address the challenges outlined above, a migration-sensitive approach to health governance (Vearey et al., 2017b) is needed. Existing migration and health governance approaches (African Union, 2018b; IOM, 2017a; United Nations, 2018a, 2018b; WHA, 2008, 2017; WHO, 2019; UHC2030, 2017) already emphasize the need to develop a whole-of-system response in which population movement is embedded as a central concern in health governance (Vearey et al, 2017a). Such a whole-of-system response would directly address the health-related elements of the SDGs, with a particular focus on supporting efforts to achieve UHC and exploring the opportunities – and risks – for strengthening ties between research and interventions relating to UHC (Vearey et al., 2017a; WHO, 2007; Wickramage and Annunziata, 2018; Vearey et al., 2019; Erondu et al., 2018; Lal et al., 2021).

Addressing the gap in data on migration health within health systems is an urgent need, and efforts should be fast-tracked to ensure evidence-based guidance for effective governance. To achieve this, there is a need to build capacity across countries in Africa by investing in developing the next generation of African migration and health researchers and governance actors. The WHO 2023 global research agenda on health, migration and displacement (see Box 3) outlines priorities for strengthening research and improving the ways in which research can be translated into action (WHO, 2023c). Good practice examples for migration and health training exist on the continent (AAMR, n.d.; WHO, 2023d), alongside other initiatives that focus on developing collaborative research across governance actors to generate – and support the implementation of – evidence-informed, cross-country and cross-regional policy approaches to support good health for all (CREMH, n.d.; MAHP, n.d.).

Core theme 1. Generate evidence on inclusive UHC and primary health care for migrants, refugees and other displaced populations:

- Priority topic 1.1. Effective models of health financing for these populations.

- Priority topic 1.2. Interventions that improve health service provision for diverse populations.

Core theme 2. Improve knowledge generation on the inclusion of migrants, refugees and other displaced populations in preparedness and response to (health) emergencies:

- Priority topic 2.1. Sustainable health-care models for these mobile populations in humanitarian settings, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and fragile contexts.

- Priority topic 2.2. Effective models of UHC in areas of protracted displacement.

Core theme 3. Generate multisectoral research on addressing the determinants of health of migrants, refugees and other displaced populations:

- Priority topic 3.1. The impact of living and working conditions on the health of these populations.

- Priority topic 3.2. The impact of restrictive immigration policies, securitization and externalization of borders on the health of these populations.

Cross-cutting theme 1. Build evidence on under-researched migrants, refugees and other displaced groups and their contexts.

Cross-cutting theme 2. Strengthen equitable and inclusive research collaborations on health, migration and displacement and knowledge translation into policy and practice at all levels.

Source: WHO, 2023c.

Addressing the structural and social determinants of health

A successful response to migration and health requires addressing the upstream structural and social determinants of health that dominate in certain environments and in different ways through the migration journey.

Health risks are not increased by being a migrant per se, but by the unhealthy contexts and precarious social conditions in which migrants often work and live. These include the ways in which national and regional policies are developed and implemented: migrant health can be understood as "a product of policies of entitlement and exclusion, which ultimately shape health risks and access to care, resulting in differential consequences of ill health" (Sargent, 2012). When identifying intersecting vulnerabilities and needs, it is critical to incorporate "spatially sensitive" or "place-based" approaches to health that consider specific contexts and living conditions, as well as diverse migration trajectories and profiles (Vearey, 2011; Vearey et al., 2018). Recognizing that different migrant groups face different vulnerabilities at different times and in different locations, approaches and planning need to be based on the "multi-sited lives of … Africa's populations" (Freemantle and Landau, 2017). To improve understanding of this, and to align with existing continental priorities, efforts should be made to align interventions with existing approaches for regional integration in Africa (IOM et al., 2022).

Effective migration-sensitive health responses should be multisectoral, multidisciplinary, and multilevel, adopting a whole-of-route approach with cross-border, multi-country strategies. These should address the challenges associated with access to social welfare services, including health care. Such responses should include: supporting the creation of secure livelihood activities; ensuring access to education; and addressing the violent outcomes associated with gender-based violence, anti-foreigner sentiments and xenophobia. The health system, albeit crucial, is just one of multiple determinants of health that interact with each other and affect equity in health outcomes.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS AN IMPROVED GOVERNANCE RESPONSE TO MIGRATION AND HEALTH

While African countries endorse global and regional frameworks emphasizing health for all and the inclusion of migrants in national health plans, a significant gap exists between those frameworks and actually existing health practices due to the absence of any agreed-upon implementation and monitoring plan by African Union Member States at either the continental or subregional level. Addressing this gap and its associated challenges requires a vision that includes the upstream structural and social determinants of health as well as an integrated approach to migration and health governance, and sound coordination.

The current landscape of migration and health demonstrates a heightened political sensitivity, heavily influenced by often restrictive migration regulations rather than inclusive health policies. There is an urgent need to explore how health diplomacy can generate political buy-in for actions on migration and health, which would involve identifying strategies to effectively challenge prevailing negative and unsubstantiated rhetoric. A multisectoral and multidisciplinary response, extending beyond health, is essential. Political accountability and the will to pursue change is a prerequisite. Collectively, such actions will contribute to addressing global and continental migration, health and development strategies and targets (United Nations, 2015, 2018a, 2018b; UHC2030, 2017). As suggested in the MPFA, reviewing existing interventions that aim to address migration and health will be key to identifying good practice examples that can be adapted to different contexts on the continent (African Union, 2018b).

Numerous strategic opportunities for developing responses to address the structural and social determinants of the health of migrants exist within the immigration and refugee governance ecosystem, including in Global Compact for Migration processes and associated continental, regional and subregional migration dialogues. These opportunities should be leveraged by health experts to influence the development of "health-aware" immigration policies.

Responses to migration and mobility should be integrated into existing health systems, as part of government commitments towards population health. Successfully integrating migration and health governance in this way will avoid institutionalizing social exclusion, ensure quality control and guarantee sustainability and scalability of responses for all. Achieving this will require tailored capacity-building, evidence-informed and focused interventions to meet the needs of certain migrant groups where evidence indicates this is necessary, and will contribute to the improvement of health-care services for all across the continent (Africa Union, 2018b, 2022a; WHO, 2023c). Effective interventions will support progress towards a range of global and continental health and development targets, including UHC and addressing actions outlined in the African Union's MPFA, including country assessments (African Union, 2018b; United Nations, 2015; UHC2030, 2018).

To this end, the African Union's migration and health programme must be sustained, strengthened and expanded to serve as a pivotal continental coordination platform. Consultative and participatory platforms should bring together various stakeholders involved in migration health, including RECs, United Nations agencies, international and national organizations, NGOs, civil societies, academia and the private sector. Establishing such a coordination forum is crucial for overcoming the current fragmentation in migration health operations in Africa, that lack continental or subregional guidance on principles and priorities. Consensus among African countries is paramount to advance this agenda cohesively, with a harmonized approach. Agreement on a unified action plan for the implementation and domestication of globally relevant frameworks – including the Global Compact for Migration and the World Health Organization's Global Action Plan – should be a priority.

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MISSING MIGRANTS IN AND FROM AFRICA:
A LOOK INTO THE DATA AND POLICY GAPS

10

Hundreds of refugees arrive daily at Afdera town after walking for several days. IOM teams are on the ground providing relocation, resettlement and related support. © IOM 2023/Hiyas BAGABALDO

Chapter 10

MISSING MIGRANTS IN AND FROM AFRICA: A LOOK INTO THE DATA AND POLICY GAPS

Authors: Julia Black, Stephen Antonio Fonseca, Lou-Salomé Sorlin and Florian von Koenig

ABSTRACT

More than 12,000 deaths during migration have been documented in Africa since 2014, and at least 20,000 African nationals have died or disappeared during migration worldwide. While these figures are certainly a gross underestimate of the true number of missing migrants in the African context, they nonetheless indicate the urgency of addressing this issue. This chapter discusses the far-reaching impacts that these disappearances and deaths have on families and communities on the continent and beyond, and urges action on three core areas: prevention of further deaths and disappearances; resolution of cases of missing migrants (including the identification of unknown bodies whose migratory status is undetermined); and support for families directly impacted by these tragedies. With tens of thousands of Africans directly affected by these tragedies across the continent, the time for Africa to take the lead on resolving the crisis of missing migrants is now.

TEXT

As migration policies are becoming increasingly restrictive in many countries, safe and regular migration options are put out of reach for many. People compelled to leave their homes often have no other option than to undertake risky irregular cross-border movements, which can lead to death or disappearance. While increased restrictions to migration and the ensuing crisis of missing migrants occur worldwide,[1] over time, popular narratives around migrant deaths and disappearances have centred around the Mediterranean Sea, where thousands of deaths and countless more disappearances have occurred on several routes that involve the African continent. This chapter takes an Africa-centric view of the issue of missing migrants, in terms of the location of deaths and disappearances, the origin of missing migrants, and the solutions needed on and beyond the continent. It first introduces the phenomenon of missing

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1   There is no universally accepted definition of the term "migrant" under international law. The ICRC, like the rest of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, considers migrants to be all people who leave or flee their home to seek safety or better prospects abroad, and who may be in distress and need protection or humanitarian assistance. Migrants may be workers, students or foreigners deemed irregular by public authorities. They can also be refugees, asylum-seekers or stateless persons. The IOM uses the term "migrant" to reflect the "common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons" (IOM, 2019). The notion of missing persons is not also defined in international law. The ICRC understands missing persons to be individuals about whom their families have no news or who, on the basis of reliable information, have been reported missing as a result of an armed conflict (international or non-international), other situation of violence, a disaster or any other situation that may require the intervention of a competent State authority (ICRC, 2009). This includes persons who have gone missing in the context of migration.

migrants in the African context by examining the available data on the circumstances in which migrants go missing in Africa, as well as the main African countries of origin of missing migrants worldwide. It then provides an overview of international and regional commitments to action on the ongoing crisis of migrant deaths and disappearances, before discussing the actual consequences and of the lack of concrete, timely action, and making recommendations to address this lack. At its centre, this paper identifies three crucial areas of work where steps must urgently be taken, and proposes a framework for taking those steps: first, to prevent further deaths and disappearances; second, to resolve the tens of thousands of cases of missing migrants in the African context; and third, to address the needs of the families profoundly impacted by the loss of a loved one after they have left home.

Migrants go missing in a variety of circumstances; missing migrants may be dead or alive. Migration routes across, and originating on, the African continent transit countries experiencing armed conflict or other situations of violence as well as dangerous environments such as deserts and seas. Migrants may lose access to means of communication, including in situations of detention, particularly places of detention without official recognition. They may also intentionally stay in hiding in countries of transit and destination, for fear of being arrested, detained, or deported. Others end up in the hands of smuggling and trafficking networks, rendering them invisible and vulnerable.

More than 12,000 people have died on migratory routes or at their destinations within Africa, with countless more undocumented. This section relies on data from the IOM Missing Migrants Project, which since 2014 has documented deaths and disappearances (IOM, n.d.).[2]

Among the deaths documented during migration in Africa, more than 5,000 have occurred in the Sahara Desert. Experts have long agreed that trans-Saharan migration routes are among the most dangerous routes in the world, but reliable reporting of cases remains scarce, due to both the inherent vastness of the 9 million square kilometre region and the lack of work by governments across the region to collect data on countless missing persons and deaths.[3] Another challenging migratory context is the overseas route to the Spanish Canary Islands, where more than 3,000 deaths have been documented since 2014. This route – which often requires a weeks-long journey in a small boat from Western African nations to southern Morocco before attempting the Atlantic crossing – is characterized by the high number of "invisible shipwrecks", that is, cases in which a disappearance is reported at sea, but where there is no evidence of a search and rescue operation having occurred, and no remains of those lost is ever found. The overseas route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen, which has claimed at least 570 lives since 2014, is also believed to be extremely hazardous, not only due to the risks of any sea crossing but also due to the presence of State and non-State armed groups which have been known to target migrants on several documented occasions. Given the remoteness and the lack of systematic reporting and data collection along these routes, the real number of disappearances along them must therefore be assumed to much higher than is indicated by the collected data.
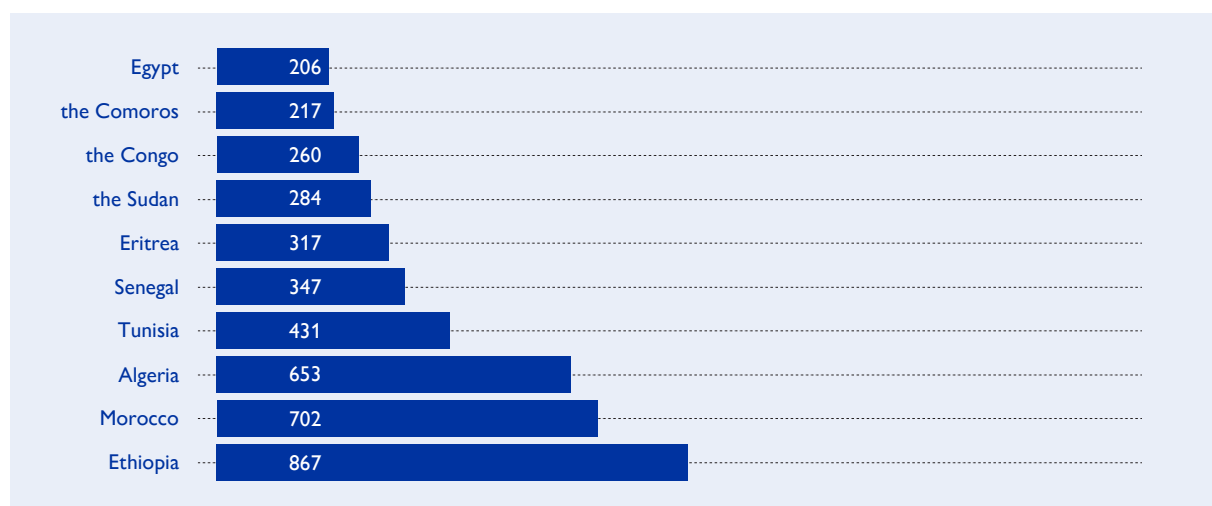
The data on migrant deaths on these and many other routes, including southern journeys, are highly incomplete, according to IOM Missing Migrants Project observations as well as two forthcoming studies on the continent. The first, an ongoing survey collection exercise conducted by the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, asks questions about whether people in key migratory hubs in Mali and the Niger have witnessed a death during their journey to cross the Sahara Desert. Across all monitored locations, roughly one in every ten interviewees reported witnessing at least one death between January and May 2022. While these surveys are not representative, they present a potentially staggering picture of the volume of undocumented loss of life during trans-Saharan migration. The second study, a household survey conducted by Ethiopia's Central Statistics Agency in 2021, estimated that more than 51,000 Ethiopians are missing migrants, as reported by their families (ECSA, 2021). This estimate is particularly disturbing as it means that the number of missing migrants from just one African nation is almost the same as the number that the IOM Missing Migrants Project has recorded worldwide since 2014.

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2   These data comprise cases in which a person is lost and presumed dead as a result of recorded incidents, for example in overseas journeys. However, it does not include cases that were registered as missing by families nor cases of migrants that may be missing because they are unable to communicate with their families, for instance, because they are in detention or in hiding or have otherwise no access to means of communication.

3   To read more about deaths during migration in the Sahara Desert, see Black, 2020.

ICRC engagement with an extensive network of forensic practitioners across Africa reveals that thousands of unidentified bodies enter mortuaries across Africa every year. Many of these are assumed to be migrants. Bodies recovered after shipwrecks or found in the desert along known migration routes are most likely to be the bodies of migrants. But many migrants along transit routes and at destination will have integrated into local communities, obscuring their migrant status if and when they die unexpectedly. False identification documents are common among migrants fearing deportation, which can further complicate identification efforts. In some mortuaries, such as in South Africa, the percentage of unidentified bodies can be as high at 10 per cent of body admissions (Keyes et al., 2022). But without migrants being reported missing by their families, and without their information being shared between countries, their identification is impossible. Scientific identification processes rely on fingerprint, dental and DNA comparison, often against data in medical records or national biometric databases. As such data are seldom available, authorities in many African countries rely solely on visual recognition by family members to confirm identification. Families are, however, often unaware that their relative has died. Even when they are aware, they are often unable to participate in the identification process because they are in another country. Due to the lack of data sharing, as well as the lack of systematic local, regional or provincial and national reporting systems in most countries, precise numbers of missing persons and unidentified bodies are not reported. In the absence of established national missing persons and unidentified bodies programmes across most of the African continent, the vast majority of these cases are never resolved, and the true number of migrants who have died remains significantly underreported. A sad reality is that the majority of unidentified bodies end up buried anonymously in unmarked common or mass graves, further compounding challenges to any family seeking the return of their loved one.

Figure 1. Top 10 African countries of origin in Missing Migrant Project data set, worldwide, 2014–2022

Country	Value
Egypt	206
the Comoros	217
the Congo	260
the Sudan	284
Eritrea	317
Senegal	347
Tunisia	431
Algeria	653
Morocco	702
Ethiopia	867

Source: IOM, n.d. Figures as of 20 February 2023.

More than 20,000 people presumed to be Africans have also died or gone missing on migratory routes beyond the African continent, according to the Missing Migrants Project data set.[4] However, many of the people who are listed as "African" are missing and presumed dead at sea, with no specific country of origin listed. An additional 16,000 individuals with no country or region of origin are also included worldwide, meaning that many thousands of Africans who died during migration remain unidentified.

COMMITMENTS TO ACTION ON MISSING MIGRANTS

In 2018, more than 150 States, including 44 in Africa, committed to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Global Compact for Migration objective 8 commits States to "coordinated international efforts on missing migrants", cooperation in "the standardized collection and exchange of relevant information" and

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4 The Missing Migrants Project data set relies on the United Nations Statistics Division's geoscheme and therefore does not include deaths in the Mediterranean as within Africa (DESA, n.d.). Other overseas routes between nations and territories that are included in Africa, per the United Nations geoscheme, such as the route to the Canary Islands and Mayotte, are included in the Missing Migrants Project data set as occurring within Africa.

"identify[ing] those who have died or gone missing, and … facilitat[ing] … communication with affected families". States undertake to establish "transnational coordination channels" and "designate contact points for families" in order to "facilitate identification [of remains] and the provision of information to families".

The Global Compact for Migration's language echoes and expands on target 10.7 of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls on States to "facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people." States' progress on this target is measured, among other ways, by the "number of people who die or disappear during the process of migration towards an international destination."

In 2021, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) adopted Resolution 486, on missing migrants and refugees in Africa and the impact on their families. It "calls on States Parties to take all possible measures to prevent migrants and refugees transiting or residing on their territory or under their jurisdiction from going missing, including preventing the separation of families, reuniting them where possible, as well as endeavoring to identify dead or missing persons, in accordance with applicable legal frameworks" (ACHPR, 2021). Policies, however, do not necessarily translate into practice without both a clear strategy for implementation in a systematic manner and financial support. Medicolegal systems are seldom sufficiently functioning to accommodate even daily or routine complex medicolegal cases, and certainly not equipped nor coordinated at a transregional level to resolve cases involving missing and dead migrants, whether reported as single cases or in large scale incidents.

Despite these high-level commitments, then, little action has been taken to prevent further disappearances and deaths during migration, to collect and resolve cases of missing migrants, to identify the unknown bodies in mortuaries, or to address the needs of the families impacted by this crisis. An IOM review of implementation of the Global Compact for Migration in West and Central Africa in 2022 found that Global Compact for Migration "objective 8 is still scarcely implemented in policies and programming" across the region (Schöfberger et al., 2022:7). It is among those objectives that received the fewest responses in the 2022 voluntary review process, and those provided largely focused on deterring irregular movements, rather than taking concrete action toward the actual goals set out in the objective (United Nations, n.d.). In Africa and beyond, a major challenge is the implementation of these commitments. Actors involved in the operational side of the issue of dead and missing migrants are unaware of the actions needed to uphold international frameworks, and the capacities to do so are lacking.

ACTION NEEDED ON MISSING MIGRANTS IN AFRICA

Addressing the multifaceted crisis of missing migrants in Africa requires a response involving three areas of action. First, prevention of further deaths and disappearances in the context of migration through regional cooperation is long overdue. Second, mechanisms to successfully search for and identify and report cases of missing and dead migrants must be established and implemented. Third, the needs of the tens of thousands of African families of missing and dead migrants must be addressed, and their rights must be upheld. Each of these areas is addressed in the following sections.

Prevention of migrant deaths and disappearances through policy and practice

Preventing further cases of missing migrants requires both normative, policy-oriented action and an increase in practices that save lives. ACHPR resolution 486 calls on States to regularly assess the potential harmful consequences of their migration policies and practices. This is to ensure that these are in line with relevant international obligations and that they do not lead to new or increased risks for migrants. Specifically, it encourages States to use administrative detention of migrants only as a last resort, giving priority to non-custodial solutions.

Despite this resolution being passed at the pan-African level, restrictive migration-related policies and practices – designed by States to prevent and deter foreign nationals from arriving on their territory or from moving onwards to third countries – continue to be passed and enacted, tending to increase the risk of migrants going missing or dying. Such practices and policies also deter those who could assist with the identification of their deceased migrant relatives, friends or associates from engaging with authorities. Globally, evidence shows that deterrence-based migration policies force migrants to take increasingly hazardous irregular routes, including by crossing through areas affected by conflict and insecurity (see for example MMH, 2018). In addition to this, current

migration-related policies and practices in Africa tend to increasingly resort to detention, often regardless of personal circumstances, and such detention may contradict the detained person's right to liberty and security. Detention of migrants may increase the risk of migrants going missing; for instance, if migrants are not held in a recognized place of detention and duly registered, if they are kept without access to means of communication, or are unable to contact family members or diplomatic or consular authorities, then they become missing.

Based on ICRC observations, national level search and rescue (SAR) operations in Africa tend to be primarily initiated in the context of shipwrecks – often in the Mediterranean Sea – and much less so in the context of persons going missing or dying on land, particularly at international borders. The ability of many African countries to mount effective national responses is hampered by poor disaster planning, including the uneven development of critical capacities such as the ability to conduct rescue operations, to recognize the humanitarian consequences for the families of missing migrants as well as the importance of their participation in reporting their missing relatives, to provide forensic expertise and medicolegal systems and infrastructure (including the systematic management of the missing and the dead, including their scientific identification), and to collect, compile and analyse critical information.

In addition to the lack of lifesaving capacities for migrants, lack of access to means of communication between migrants and their families is pervasive in the African continent. Migrants and families benefiting from the ICRC Protection of Family Links services often report a lack of respect for family unity, leading to family separations along migration routes, including at border crossings, when returned, in detention or at sea. In detention centres in particular, lack of accurate registries and of access to means of communication expose migrants to severe risks of going missing.

Good practice : Detained migrants' communication with families

At the Lindela Holding Facilities in South Africa, the ICRC, with the support of the authorities, set up phone kiosks and provided migrants with free airtime vouchers to enable them to make phone calls. These not only help to maintain family links and prevent separation, but also allow detained migrants to request assistance from their family and preserve their psychosocial well-being. Around 30,000 migrants transit through this facility each year.

Recommendations to prevent migrant deaths and disappearances in Africa

1. **States should review and revise policies that lead to migrant deaths and disappearances in and beyond Africa**
   Measures such as border securitization, restrictive admission and stay policies, and blanket border closures without safeguards to protect individuals in need of international protection against refoulement often compel migrants to take dangerous routes and increase their risk of dying or going missing. States should work towards decriminalizing the irregular entry, stay and exit of migrants, particularly for those who are in need of protection. States should also end automatic and arbitrary immigration detention, and develop non-custodial alternatives to detention, in line with international law and standards.

2. **States should scale up existing safe and legal pathways to prevent migrants taking unsafe irregular journeys**
   Deaths and disappearances of African migrants occur almost entirely in the context of irregular movements or residence. Safe legal pathways are particularly needed to ensure access to international protection, including fast-track humanitarian procedures and rapid family reunification processes through travel assistance. This can include measures such as including humanitarian and protection visas, resettlement, and complementary pathways.

3. **African States and their neighbours should carry out or facilitate SAR for people in distress, regardless of migratory status**

   The imperative of saving lives and the necessity to render assistance to persons in distress must remain the priority in transit and destination countries, whether on land routes such as those that cross the Sahara Desert or on sea routes such as in the Mediterranean context, in accordance with international obligations. Measures to ensure adequate SAR capacities must be provided at a national level, and transnational coordination must be built up to ensure there are no geographical gaps in coverage and that migrants' fundamental rights are respected throughout the process. All rescued migrants should be delivered (or disembarked) to a place of safety where protection of their lives, safety and other human rights – such as access to asylum and the prohibition of cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or arbitrary detention – is guaranteed and where their needs are met. The efforts of non-governmental actors that currently fill existing SAR gaps on routes within and from Africa must be supported and facilitated by States. This should equally extend to the search for and timely recovery of bodies along migrant routes, wherever possible, for examination, data and sample collection and comparison to missing person cases, and traceable burial or return to families.

4. **All actors should ensure that African migrants and their families are able to establish, restore and maintain contact throughout their migratory journeys**

   Migrants and families benefiting from the ICRC Protection of Family Links services often report a lack of respect for family unity, leading to family separations along migration routes including at border crossings, when returned, in detention or at sea. In detention centres in particular, accurate registries of detainees and access to means of communication should be provided to prevent migrants from going missing.

Resolving cases of missing migrants

Within Africa and beyond, searching for missing migrants and resolving cases by reuniting those found alive with their families and identifying those who died is an inherently transnational challenge that requires cooperation among a broad range of actors in countries of origin, transit and destination. It requires capacities at the national level to collect, centralize, analyse and accurately report information; as well, it relies on a well-functioning medicolegal system. At an international level, it requires mechanisms to facilitate cooperation and information exchange along migratory routes. Levels of engagement, as well as the capacities of relevant authorities, differ considerably among African States. While some positive examples show that effective action is possible, overall capacity and political will to address the issue remains inadequate.

Routine missing persons cases are usually managed by law enforcement authorities at a local (urban or rural) level, and are usually resolved at that level. Receiving missing migrant enquiries is problematic, as the investigation extends beyond the immediate community and usually via national centralization of case data, requiring the investigation to be handled through collaboration with other international law enforcement agencies or through consular channels. This requires centralization of case information within a national digital repository, cross-border agreements and information conduits to share personal and protected information while taking into account relevant international frameworks on data protection.

Assessments of the legal and medicolegal frameworks completed by the ICRC show that complex missing persons investigations – such as those required for missing migrant enquiries – are routinely hindered due to outdated or absent legislation on missing persons, poor investigative practices, lack of standardization and centralization of digital data, and a paucity of law enforcement and medicolegal resources.

Families have reported being turned away from police stations when trying to make a missing person report on a migrated relative. In other instances, families have shown reluctance to report their relative missing due to a lack of trust in the authorities or a lack of confidence in the ability of the authorities to render a successful outcome (Dearden and Sánchez Dionis, 2021).

A growing number of promising practices exist on the African continent with respect to transnational cooperation on missing migrants, such as Ivorian authorities exchanging information with Tunisian authorities for the purpose of

the identification of shipwreck victims, and Zimbabwean authorities working with South African authorities on the identification of deceased migrants there (United Nations Network on Migration, n.d.a). There are also instances of efforts between African countries along the Mediterranean and European countries, such as Spain, to identify the remains of migrants along European shores, often with the facilitation of Red Cross Red Crescent societies. Similarly, pilot projects exist on the Canary Islands to identify missing migrants along the Atlantic route. In 2021, a boat containing the remains of 15 African migrants was found in Trinidad and Tobago and several of the deceased were identified and their families notified through efforts involving police and medicolegal services, INTERPOL and the ICRC (United Nations Network on Migration, n.d.b). However, such efforts remain few and far between. Discussions with government officials from West Africa have revealed that, often, the lack of designated focal points among authorities in other countries renders efforts to clarify the fate of missing migrants futile. Neither the African Union nor the RECs currently have policies in place that encourage or facilitate cooperation among their member States on this issue.

Good Practice: South Africa–Zimbabwe

In 2016, the ICRC worked with authorities in South Africa and Zimbabwe to develop a pilot project that would show the importance of engaging families of missing migrants in Zimbabwe to assist in locating their living or deceased relatives in South Africa. Information collected from 61 families in the initial project led quickly to the restoration of family links in 14 cases. With technical support from the ICRC, the Gauteng Forensic Pathology Service in Johannesburg, supported by the University of Witwatersrand, developed a secondary post-mortem examination programme for unidentified bodies. Of the 385 bodies that underwent secondary examinations between January 2018 and July 2020 by the Human Decedent Identification Unit (comprised of four staff and numerous university student volunteers), 87 bodies were subsequently identified: 86 by fingerprint comparison in the national fingerprint databases and 1 by DNA analysis. Fifty-two per cent of those identified were South Africa nationals, while the nationalities of 48 per cent were undisclosed or foreigners. The 298 cases (74%) that remain unidentified and unresolved suggest to forensic experts that many are irregular migrants whose biometric data are not stored on the national biometric systems where the data is being compared.

Recommendations to resolve cases of missing migrants in and from Africa

1. **State authorities across Africa should put in place processes to manage missing person cases, including those of migrants**
   In order to resolve cases of missing migrants in Africa, national medicolegal systems must ensure proper documentation and forensic examination and sampling of unidentified remains and require professionally collected missing persons enquiries conducted by skilled investigators. These systems must involve all relevant authorities, whether coroners, medical examiners, police or other investigators. Data both on remains and missing persons reports should be centralized at the national level to improve case resolution.

2. **The African Union and RECs should improve data information management systems to meet digital case management requirements, and promote existing data standards to facilitate case resolution**
   States must take measures to develop accurate systems of reporting, nationally, the number of missing persons cases (resolved and unresolved), the number of missing migrant cases, the number of unidentified bodies buried annually, and the number of unclaimed bodies buried annually. Data collection, exchange and protection standards on missing migrants – including in particular those published by the ICRC on the Core Dataset for the Search for Missing Migrants – should be promoted by intergovernmental actors in Africa in order to ensure adherence by all African States. This will in turn aid the exchange of data on missing migrants so crucial to case resolution.

3. **All actors should establish mechanisms to ensure transnational cooperation on case resolution within and beyond the African continent**
Such mechanisms should include investigative policies and practices, digital infrastructure, forensic expertise and resources. Information exchange and cooperation across countries of origin, transit and destination is needed to resolve cases of missing migrants. Bilateral and multilateral agreements should be reached by State and non-State actors that have relevant data on migratory routes within and beyond the African continent.

4. **African States and RECs should create regional approaches involving national authorities having to plan for, develop and activate disaster victim identification programmes.**
Such programmes are required to successfully resolve the vast number of missing migrants (reported and unreported), as well the thousands of unidentified bodies in mortuaries across Africa. They should rely on internationally established forensic identification protocols and practices, such as Interpol's Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) standards, which have proven effective with respect to dealing systematically with large caseloads (Interpol, n.d.).

Addressing the needs of families of missing migrants

The families of missing migrants consistently say that their most important need is to know what happened to their relatives and where they are. But the effects of a disappearance of a migrant relative are far-reaching, according to interviews carried out with families of missing migrants in Senegal (ICRC, 2013), Zimbabwe (Chikohomero et al., 2021; ICRC, 2021), Ethiopia (Mengiste, 2021), and with Africans living abroad in the United Kingdom and Spain (Okyere and Kondeh, 2021; Sánchez Dionis et al., 2021).

According to this research, a large share of African families, regardless of where they live, never report their missing relative to the authorities. They often do not know which agency or government unit to approach, and are often sceptical about whether the authorities will help them. Authorities are often unaware of the existing framework or lack the technical and investigative capacity as well as the skillset to support families. Some families also expressed fear about reporting the disappearance to the authorities, either because their missing relatives were not residing legally in the country where they went missing, or because the families were migrants themselves with irregular status. This directly impacts on the authorities' frequent failure to identify human remains in cases of migrants.

The lack of information and uncertainty about their relative's fate causes a range of psychological and psychosocial difficulties. African families across all countries where interviews were conducted also reported being stigmatized as a result of the loss of loved ones during migration. This is especially the case for women, who often reported being held responsible for the departure of their family member, or for their failure to prevent it.

Families of missing migrants frequently experience economic and financial hardships as a consequence of their disappearance (as expressed by 93% of 256 families interviewed by the ICRC in Senegal and 65% of 80 families in Zimbabwe), often due to the fact that the missing person was the breadwinner but also in relation to the cost of the search itself. Consequently, families resorted to negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing the number of daily meals or their consumption of basic services such as electricity and water.

Families of missing migrants also report that their situations have not been properly recognized by the authorities, as expressed by 63 per cent of the families interviewed in Senegal. Across Africa and much of the rest of the world, families frequently face a lack of clear domestic legislation pertaining to the status of missing persons in the migration context. This includes the (im)possibility of declaring a relative missing, administrative problems regarding property, inheritance, divorce, remarriage and the custody of children. Even where laws exist that address such issues, as is the case in Zimbabwe and Senegal, families are often unaware of their existence or lack the capacity and resources to undertake the required administrative processes.

Since 2014, the Senegalese Red Cross and the ICRC have been implementing a support programme for populations affected by the disappearance of relatives following migration. The main objective of its "accompaniment approach" is to strengthen the capacity of individuals and families to cope with the difficulties caused by the disappearance of one or more of their loved ones and to gradually regain their psychological and psychosocial balance. This includes teaching them to live with uncertainty, using their own resources as well as those available within the wider community, both locally and nationally. The programme has four components: re-establishment of family links, psychosocial support, socioeconomic support and institutional mobilization. It is implemented in close cooperation with local authorities and has, to date, benefited more than 600 families.

Source: ICRC, 2019.

Recommendations to address the needs of families of missing migrants in Africa

1. **States should ensure that the needs of families of missing migrants are acknowledged and should put in place policies and measures to address them**
   These should address the families' need to know the fate of their loved one as well as economic, psychosocial, legal and administrative needs. Accessible focal points should be created, where families can safely register a missing person case and obtain assistance, irrespective of migratory status. The families' right to know of the fate and whereabouts of their loved one requires States to capacitate justice, law enforcement and medicolegal policies and practices towards the systematic management of the missing and to ensure the identification of those who have died in countries of origin, transit and destination. In cases where a missing person cannot be found, States should also provide relatives access to critical legal documentation such as certificates of absence, presumed death certificates, or similar documents which can help address challenges related to marital status, control of property, guardianship of children and the like. Guidance on how to claim rights and access assistance should be provided to families.

2. **State and non-State actors must involve African families throughout the case resolution process**
   Families of missing migrants are simultaneously the most profoundly affected by this crisis and those who are often most crucial to resolving a missing persons case. Meaningful missing persons investigations must be accessible to families in Africa regardless of their location. Adopting transregional policies and practices that accommodate families is a moral imperative but can also ensure that critical information from families reliably identifies human remains. This should include the systematic collection of information and biological samples for missing persons cases and unidentified bodies that will allow for their future identification and resolution in perpetuity.

3. **States and intergovernmental actors should support civil society actors that support families in their search**
   IOM and ICRC research with African families within the continent and in Europe reveal that community-based organizations are often the main source of support to families of missing migrants, as they are often situated in the specific sociocultural context of those in need of assistance. These organizations, which are often informal, grass-roots structures, must be recognized, supported and, where needed, funded by official actors.

CONCLUSIONS

More than 12,000 deaths during migration have been documented in Africa since 2014, and at least 20,000 African nationals have died or disappeared during migration worldwide (IOM, n.d.). While these figures remain a vast underestimate of the true number of missing migrants in the African context – as evidenced by the estimate of more than 51,000 migrants missing from Ethiopia alone – they nonetheless indicate the urgency of addressing this ongoing crisis of death and disappearance in the African context. As a result of the far-reaching impacts of these

missing Africans on families and communities on the continent and beyond, this chapter urges action on three core areas: prevention of further deaths and disappearances; resolution of cases of missing migrants (including the identification of unknown bodies whose migratory status is undetermined); and support to families directly impacted by these tragedies.

Across all these areas the issue of missing migrants must be addressed from a perspective of humanitarian challenge, rather than through a lens of security. In addition, the involvement of operational actors working collaboratively across sectors (including border management, justice, medicolegal systems and non-governmental organizations) is crucial, and where needed should be accompanied by capacity-building to ensure these recommendations are put into practice in a coordinated and systematic manner. Specifically, we recommend that:

1. States should review and revise policies that lead to migrant deaths and disappearances in and beyond Africa.

2. States should scale up existing safe and legal pathways to prevent migrants taking unsafe irregular journeys.

3. African States and their neighbours should carry out or facilitate SAR for people in distress, regardless of their migratory status.

4. All actors should ensure that African migrants and their families are able to establish, restore and maintain contact throughout their migratory journeys.

5. State authorities across Africa should put in place processes to manage missing person cases, including those of migrants.

6. The African Union and African RECs should improve data information management systems to meet digital case management requirements and promote existing data standards to facilitate case resolution.

7. All actors should establish mechanisms, policies and practices, digital infrastructure, forensic expertise and resources to ensure transnational cooperation on case resolution within and beyond the African continent.

8. African States and RECs should create regional approaches involving national authorities having to plan for, develop and activate disaster victim identification programmes.

9. States should ensure that the needs of families of missing migrants are acknowledged, and should put in place policies and measures to address those needs.

10. State and non-State actors must involve African families throughout the case resolution process.

11. States and intergovernmental actors should support civil society actors that support families in their search.

In order for States to uphold their commitments under the Global Compact for Migration, the Sustainable Development Goals and ACHPR Resolution 486, not to mention their moral obligation to the citizens of Africa, action must be taken to end migrant deaths and disappearances. With tens of thousands of Africans directly affected by these tragedies across the continent, the time for Africa to take the lead on resolving the crisis of missing migrants is now.

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