

## **ICPD@15 African Regional Review ‘ICPD and the MDGs: Working as One’**

### **Major Findings**

#### **International Migration**

The ICPD PoA calls on governments in receiving and sending countries to take actions relating to documented and undocumented migrants, and refugees, asylum-seekers and internationally displaced persons. Although international migration is not one of the specified goals of the Millennium Declaration, it is however, widely acknowledged that every MDG has some linkage, direct or indirect, with migration.

African countries have adopted different measures to address international migration concerns, including the promotion of return migration of skilled workers, encouraging investments from Diaspora communities, customs and tax exemptions, etc. Overall, countries express their concern about certain aspects of international migration, particularly the problem of ‘brain drain’, refugee movements, pressures being exerted by migrants on local resources and negative ecological footprints left by migrants. In response, regional blocks in the continent should consider the adoption of migration protocols that will facilitate international migration, while minimizing the disadvantages of migration to both the sending and receiving countries.

International migration on the continent has grown from about 16.5 million in 2000 to about 17 million in 2005 - half-million increase in 5 years. With an annual exponential growth rate of 0.7 percent, international migration in Africa in 2009 is estimated at around 22.6 million. There are 21 countries in Africa, which together host 82.6% of the total stock of international migrants in the continent; mostly from neighbouring countries. Development in Africa is increasingly attracting labour from other continents, particularly Asia. Labour from India, China, and the Philippines are increasingly engaged in mining, energy, and construction sectors. The rapidly growing economic and political relations between African countries and both China and India support this trend.

The majority of countries reported that they were concerned with the brain drain and its impacts on national development. Most countries report particularly the migration of talented and skilled Africans to Europe, United States of America, Australia, and the Gulf States, as a drain to the scarce human resources. Similarly, there has been considerable movement of skilled workers between African countries, with immediate neighbouring countries as target destinations. The brain drain is reported to impact directly on specific sectors such as health and education. The indication from country reports is that there will continue to be a shortage of skilled workers, particularly in

the health sector, as well as an oversupply of unskilled labour in many African countries.

Generally, undocumented migration is high in the Southern Africa, Western Africa and Northern Africa regions. Countries that host large numbers of undocumented migrants are the Republic of South Africa, Botswana, Morocco, Senegal, Libya, and The Sudan. The great majority of undocumented migrants in the Republic of South Africa are from Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The remaining few are from countries as far as Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Somalia. Return migration is a pattern that is gaining momentum in many countries in Africa. Africa is experiencing two main patterns of return migration: return of refugees to their home countries resulting primarily from end of conflict, and return of skilled and professional migrants from outside the continent; a trend that is emerging with the financial crises that has engulfed the economies of receiving countries. Some countries; including Ghana, Nigeria and Sudan reported an increasing trend of the return of their nationals living abroad.

The challenges faced by African countries in addressing international migration concerns include;

- Implementation of policies for increased Diaspora participation in national development is very weak and less comprehensive in most African countries
- The brain drain has had adverse effects on key sectors such as health and education in Africa
- There is weak enforcement of protocols, conventions and laws to uphold the rights of especially international migrants including refugees and displaced persons in African countries.
- Economic and social crisis in some countries like South Africa contributing to problems between migrants and their host communities and aggravating the occurrence of xenophobia.