

# High-Level Panel on Migration and Structural Transformation in Africa

Co-organized by the Governments of Morocco and Rwanda and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

25 September 2018

United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room IV  
12 to 2 p.m.

## A. Introduction

The outflow of migrants from Africa to other regions, and particularly to Europe, is a topical issue featuring prominently in the media. As a result, migration has steadily risen towards the top of the international affairs agenda. \*\* By contrast, though migrating to neighbouring countries and beyond has long been a key characteristic of life in Africa, relatively little attention has been devoted to people on the move within the continent.

From an economic perspective, the assumption is that migration is driven by a mismatch between population growth and availability of resources and opportunities. To be well understood, however, the actual drivers, as well as costs and benefits, of migration flows in Africa must remain subject to analytical scrutiny. Pioneering work on this issue is at the heart of the UNCTAD *Economic Development Report in Africa 2018: Migration and Structural Transformation*. On the one hand, well-managed migration can yield significant benefits for countries of origin and for destination States. On the other, mismanaged or unmanaged migration can have detrimental consequences for the welfare of States and migrants and generate security threats.

With Africa projected to be the region with the largest population growth by 2050, job creation has become a top political priority. Yet, in the context of Africa's regional and continental integration, vulnerability to low commodity prices and rising national unemployment threaten acceleration of the continent's agenda for facilitating the mobility of persons. Furthermore, drivers such as the depletion of environmental endowments and natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, as well as conflicts and political crises, have gained prominence in the analysis of the underlying causes of migration patterns.

Against this backdrop and negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, a high-level event on leveraging partnerships at the multilateral level for enhanced migration management within Africa is timely for the international community, particularly in the context of advancing implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

## B. Objectives

### Overall objective

The main purpose of the high-level event is to provide a platform to raise awareness and discuss how to maximize the economic and developmental impacts of migration in Africa. The high-level event will further seek to foster integrated policies and strategies, deepen cooperation and partnerships, and enhance support for African efforts to use migration management to strengthen the pooling of resources under humanitarian, environmental, security and development efforts and ensure the continent's structural transformation is economically sustainable.

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\*\* This has also been recognized by the international community, as reflected by the inclusion of migration, directly and indirectly, in Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 16 and 17.

### **Specific objectives**

The high-level panel event will offer critical perspectives on how to maximize the development impacts of migration in Africa. Panellists will address five main questions:

- (a) How can migration act as a catalyst for inclusive economic growth?
- (b) What are the institutional frameworks that would best harness the benefits of migration for structural transformation?
- (c) How can African countries capitalize on their domestic and foreign human resources to drive structural transformation?
- (d) How can Africa make the most of the different categories of migrants across regional economic communities to achieve prosperity in sending and in receiving countries?
- (e) How can African countries leverage partnerships at the multilateral level to enhance the management of migration?

### **C. Expected outcomes**

The intercontinental dimension of migration, i.e. migration from Africa to non-African countries, garners significant attention from the research community. Intra-African migration has received little attention. This is the case despite an estimated 53 per cent of migration movements in Africa occurring intraregionally. The high-level event will aim at delivering three key outcomes:

- A series of specific policy recommendations on how intra-African migration can contribute to growth and structural transformation for both countries of origin and destination States, in the context of the Global Compact for Migration and based on recent UNCTAD research.
- Insightful proposals and sharing of best practices on how partners at the multilateral level can support Africa in improving migration management, by purposefully dedicating resources to addressing drivers of migration, and on the management of migration in African countries.
- Shared experiences and outlining of proposals on how to maximize the potential economic, employment and trade gains from migration within the continent, and how these could contribute to structural transformation.

### **D. Format**

The high-level panel event will bring together high-level officials from various organizations working on migration, trade, economic development, peace and security, including representatives of African Member States, the African Union, African regional economic communities, the European Union, civil society organizations, the United Nations system, international partners and academia, as well as members of the media.