

## Concept Note<sup>1</sup>

### **Capacity-building Workshop of the Staff of the Direction Générale de la Diaspora (Directorate General of the Diaspora) by the African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration (ACSRM) within the framework of the CRPM (Cadre Regional des Politiques Migratoires) Project, Expertise France**

Friday 23 and Saturday 24 June 2023 – Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire

#### I. Context and objectives of the workshop

##### 1. Context

- **Causes, patterns, trends, and drivers of Ivorian international migration**

Due to a lack of accurate, disaggregated, and updated statistical data, it is challenging to estimate accurately the Ivorian international migration. Most demographic censuses do not consider migration-related variables, except for the 2014 Census. Most international organizations rely on indirect estimates of the number of Ivorian emigrants due to a need for more reliable data (OIM 2016: 48).

France is one of the primary destinations of Ivorian emigrants. The migration of Ivorians to Africa is mainly directed to neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso, Benin, Guinea, and Ghana. There is an increasing international migration of Ivorian nationals to countries such as Tunisia and Morocco, especially in the context of student migration.

The primary destination of Ivorian international migration to OECD countries is France, followed by the USA, Italy, and Germany (OECD 2008). Historical factors and linguistic ties linked to colonization can explain the prominence of France as the destination country of most Ivorian nationals abroad.

While there is a preponderance of male migration, there is an increasing feminization of Ivorian international migration. For instance, according to estimates, 51% of Ivorians residing in France were women, compared to 49% of men (OIM 2016: 48).

Irregular migration is increasingly a concern for the Ivorian government, while in the last decades, the number of Ivorian migrants in irregular situations has been low (IOM 2012, cited by IOM 2016: 48).

International migration of Ivorians outside Africa is mainly directed to Europe (70%) and North America (22%), according to estimates from the Migration Profile of Cote d'Ivoire (OIM 200). France and the USA represent the main host countries of the Ivorian diaspora in OECD countries. Italy and Spain are increasingly transit and destination countries for Ivorian international migration. Ivorian intra-African

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migration is lower than the international migration of Ivorian nationals in the Global North countries, which tends to be more predominant. Senegal is increasingly a significant destination country for Ivorian nationals in the context of intra-African migration.

- **Ivorian diaspora and homeland development**

- ✓ **Ivorian diaspora profile**

The lack of accurate, reliable, disaggregated, and updated statistical data does not enable capturing the extent and magnitude of the Ivorian diaspora. Statistics from embassies and consular services remain partial and limited owing to the limited number of Ivorian nationals registered in the diplomatic missions in destination countries.

The fact that for a long time, Cote d'Ivoire was primarily a land of immigration explained the lack of interest in diaspora issues among Ivorian authorities. This is no longer the case. There is an increasing awareness of the Ivorian government about the fundamental role of the diaspora in national development. While the Ivorian international migration during the post-independence years involved primarily Ivorian students having completed their studies abroad, nowadays, it is characterized by various profiles and destination points. The severe economic crisis in the 1980s, mounting unemployment, deteriorating living conditions, and the socio-political crises in the 1990s have contributed to increasing Ivorian emigration. This has increased the Ivorian authorities' awareness of the diaspora's contribution to the country's socioeconomic development, in line with many African countries.

The creation of the Direction des Ivoiriens de l'Extérieur (DIE) (« Directorate of Ivorians Abroad ») within the Ministry of African Integration and Ivorians Abroad, initially located in 2001 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reflects the Ivorian government's willingness to respond to the Ivorian diasporas' concerns. The Direction des Ivoiriens de l'Extérieur was redesigned as Direction Générale des Ivoiriens de l'Extérieur (DGIE) (« Directorate General of Ivorians Abroad »).

One of the fundamental questions of interest to the State is the diaspora profile, a better estimate of the extent and magnitude of the Ivorian diaspora, mobilizing the diaspora and strengthening the volume of remittance transfers and their use for national development. The Ivorian diaspora is composed not only of Ivorian emigrants but also of their descendants born abroad, hence its statistical importance as it goes beyond the number of emigrants.

According to the estimates from the Département des Ivoiriens de l'Etranger (Department of Ivorians Abroad), the number of Ivorians abroad was 240 900 in 2008. Many Ivorians reside in France; France represents the primary destination of Ivorian international migration (120,000 Ivorian emigrants reside in France out of the 240,000 Ivorians living abroad in 2008). Historical and linguistic ties between Cote d'Ivoire and France due to colonization explain the significant number of Ivorians residing in France.

According to a census of the Département des Ivoiriens de l'Etranger (Department of Ivorians Abroad), the number of Ivorians residing in the USA was 50,000, making this country the primary destination of the Ivorian international migration in the Americas. Senegal (5000), Burkina Faso (2500), Morocco (2000), and Mali (1700) represented the primary destinations of Ivorian intra-African migration in 2008, drawing on the estimates from the Département des Ivoiriens de l'Etranger.

New studies enable a better understanding of Ivorian international migration's contemporary trends and dynamics. According to the United Nations (2015) estimates, the Ivorian diaspora in the world should be around 1 million. According to the United Nations database related to the stock of migrants, the Ivorian international migration tended to be primarily directed to OECD countries, namely France (51%), the USA (15%), Italy (15%), the UK (5%), Canada (4%), Germany (2%), Belgium (less than 2%), and Switzerland (less than 2%). The main destination countries of Ivorian migrants are Burkina Faso, Mali, Liberia, Benin, and Ghana in the context of intra-African migration.

According to the estimates from the Enquête Emploi en Continu (2014), there was a feminization of Ivorian international migration to the OECD countries (with 49% of Ivorian female migrants living in the USA and 51% in Italy, and 60% of Ivorians residing in France). While most Ivorians in France tended to have a low education level (43%), the Ivorian migration to the USA mainly comprises highly skilled migrants (50%).

France represents one of the leading destinations for Ivorians holding a tertiary education degree among the OECD countries. 59% of the Ivorians with a tertiary education degree residing in OECD countries lived in France (Dumont 2017).

While France remains the primary destination of Ivorian emigrants, the destination zones are diversified, with migration flows to Italy, Canada, and Germany. The Ivorian international student migration has been insignificant in scope and magnitude. Nevertheless, it has increased over the last decades. France, the USA, and Canada are Ivorian international student migration destinations, especially in OECD countries (OECD Database on Education).

#### ✓ **Remittance transfer of Ivorian diaspora and its potential to contribute to homeland development**

The Ivorian diaspora contributes significantly to national development through remittance transfers. According to the 2002 United Nations estimates, the volume of financial remittance transfers was 148 million USD, representing around 1% of GDP. The volume of remittance transfers in 2008 via Western Union was about 33 million USD, while the financial flows outside Cote d'Ivoire through Western Union was 17 million, hence a net positive balance of more than 16 million (Konan 2009).

According to the World Bank estimates ([remittanceprices.worldbank.org](http://remittanceprices.worldbank.org)), in 2016, the monetary transfers in Cote d'Ivoire represented 364 million USD, while they were estimated at more than 350 million USD between 2009 and 2010. There has been a reduced volume of remittance transfers in 2015. Monetary transfers represented a low proportion of the GDP (1% in 2015). In 2015, the volume of remittance transfers from France, Senegal, and the USA was estimated at 63 million USD. With 55 million USD in 2015, France ranked the first destination country regarding the remittances sent by Ivorians abroad (Koko 2015).

The Ivorian diaspora in France plays a fundamental role in the volume of remittance transfers directed to Cote d'Ivoire (i.e., 87% of the total volume of remittance sent to Cote d'Ivoire by Ivorians in France, Senegal, and the USA altogether) due to their significant number in France. The remittances sent by Ivorians in France represent 14% of the Ivorian diaspora's total volume of monetary transfers worldwide. In comparison, the remittance transfer of those residing in the USA was estimated at 1.9%, and that of those living in Senegal was almost nil. These remittance transfers represented only 0.2% of the Cote d'Ivoire GDP 2015.

The remittances transferred are primarily used to access basic needs such as food, healthcare, education, emergency expenditures, transportation and accommodation, reimbursement of debts, investment, and savings (World Bank 2015).

According to the World Bank, the use of remittance transfers is fundamentally geared to family consumption (62%), healthcare expenditure (40%), emergencies, education, and other expenses (20%).

- **Objectives and expected outcomes of the Workshop**

The objective of the workshop held in Cote d'Ivoire from 23 to 24 June 2023 was to strengthen the capacities of the staff from the General Directorate on Diasporas ("Direction Générale de la Diaspora (DGD)) on policies and measures to maximize Ivorian diasporas' contribution to homeland development.

The specific objectives (S.O.) and expected outcomes (E.O.) of the workshop were the following:

- S.O. 1: Enhance DGD staff's knowledge and capacities about the Migration and Development nexus and remittance transfer issues.
- E.O. 1.1.: A better understanding of Migration and Development nexus and remittance transfer.
- S.O. 2: Serve as a platform for dialogue, exchange of good practices, and sharing experiences for the Direction Générale de la Diaspora (DGD) following the team building held in May 2023.
- E.O. 2.1.: A dynamic and stimulating exchange and participation among DGD staff to enable a better understanding of the policy options, measures, and good practices and lessons learned on mobilizing Ivorian diasporas for national development and maximizing the development potential of remittances transfer.

## **II. Policy options on the migration and development nexus and diaspora mobilization and engagement for national development**

- **Strengthen the migration and development nexus**

The effective integration of migration into poverty reduction policies and strategies and sustainable socioeconomic development policies can foster Cameroonian migrants' development potential. There is a need to implement effective diaspora mobilization and engagement policies and strategies to strengthen the role of the Cameroonian diaspora in national development. Fostering better interinstitutional coordination and coherence can enable better migration governance, a sine qua condition to maximize migration-related opportunities and minimize its underlying challenges.

- **International skilled migration: the burning and unresolved brain drain issue and the possibilities for brain gain (knowledge and technology transfer, research and innovation, remittance transfers, etc.) if a conducive environment is put in place for attracting back and retaining highly skilled professionals and mobilizing and engaging them for the origin country's development**

The departure of competencies negatively impacts the African continent's development and inclusive economic growth efforts. Highly skilled international migration is a primary concern for African governments, although it can lead to brain gain. According to estimates, more than 70,000 highly qualified professionals leave the African continent annually, thus raising the brain drain issues in policy debates.

Therefore, youth unemployment in Africa is one of the major causes of international migration to Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Oceania. Besides conflicts and insecurity, bad governance, infrastructural gaps, corruption, climate change, and environmental degradation, among other factors, accentuate African international migration to other regions of the world, contributing to brain drain.

Brain drain exacerbates a deficit in human capital in the critical sectors of African economies, thereby hindering efforts and capacities in research, innovation, production, and growth. Brain drain is particularly an alarming phenomenon in sectors such as the health system, confronting a chronic shortage of skilled health personnel and affecting African countries' capacities to build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable health systems (AfDB 2020).

Skilled international migration can lead to financial loss, considering the investments made by African countries to educate and train their nationals abroad. The cost of training a health professional is estimated between 21,000 and 59,000 USD for each African country. Destination countries benefit from highly skilled personnel, while they do not contribute to the cost of their training (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2018). The international health professional migration results in a brain drain with a financial loss of around 2 billion USD annually (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2018). The departure of competencies and the ensuing human capital loss led to rising education and training expenditures to compensate for human capital deficits.

Furthermore, according to more optimistic rhetoric, migrations can stimulate financial flows, namely remittance transfers, trade and investment opportunities, and knowledge and technology transfers.

However, despite the fundamental role of its diaspora, the African continent does not seem to benefit substantially from Africa's international migration and the diaspora's contribution to inclusive and sustainable development. Knowledge diasporas can be fundamental to the origin country's socioeconomic development. Highly skilled international migration can facilitate the transfer of knowledge, technologies, capital, and investments. In reducing information costs related to investing in the origin countries, highly skilled migrants can promote capital flows and

investments to benefit countries of origin. They can foster human capital development and strengthen the scientific and technological capacities of the countries of origin thanks to the transfer of knowledge and technologies and the international circulation of competencies (World Bank 2019). Knowledge diasporas have been fundamental to the industrial advancement of countries such as Japan, South Korea, China, and India through the transnational networks of their diasporic communities, facilitating knowledge, innovation, and know-how transfers that contributed to boosting industrial development and scientific and technological research, including Research-Development in these countries.

The realization that highly skilled migration can constitute a gain (brain gain) and a loss to the country of origin has raised fascination about the “diaspora option” (Science and Technology) in response to this burning issue of brain drain (Gaillard and Gaillard 2006). Increasingly, African countries adopt policies and measures to maximize the diaspora contribution to national development (though there is no in-depth assessment of the impact of such policy options). Diaspora has significant potential to positively impact “cultural, symbolic, economical, technological and organizational” (Meyer 2007: 15). Diasporas can play a fundamental role in knowledge and technology transfers, including strengthening the capacities of the origin countries. Confidence and trust are crucial for knowledge transfer. Multiple obstacles hinder knowledge transfer, including gaps in beliefs, values, and practices between knowledge transfer recipients and actors. Knowledge diasporas can directly enable their national counterparts to benefit from their competencies and qualifications through training and capacity-building programs, short stays, diaspora engagement policies and programs, and international organizations programs.

- **International circulation**

The circulation of competencies relates to temporary or transient international highly skilled migration followed by the return to the home country after gaining professional experience abroad and the possibilities of brain gain in terms of positive impacts such as increased productivity at the local level, remittances transfer, increasing demand for higher education, and knowledge and technology transfers. Skilled diaspora can create transnational networks enabling investment opportunities, knowledge, and technology transfer, such as Taiwanese engineers in Silicon Valley who play a fundamental role in Taiwan's scientific and technological advancement by creating transnational links with the scientists and technologists based in Taiwan. Similarly, Indian IT specialists based in the USA played a fundamental role in creating transnational links between American firms and IT specialists based in India, enabling US companies to benefit from a cheap, highly skilled Indian workforce.

Language skills, familiarity with the homeland culture, and social networks, among other elements, enable highly skilled migrants to create transnational links to strengthen business linkages between the destination country (USA) and Asian origin countries. Such transnational links contribute to accelerating the globalization of the labor markets and strengthening entrepreneurial, investment, and trade opportunities between the USA and emerging Asian economies (Saxenian 2002).

- **Remittance transfers of diasporas and their potential role for inclusive and sustainable development**

Remittance transfers represent a prominent part of the external financial flows to Afrique. They surpass international development assistance, foreign direct investment (IDE), and Portfolio investment and represent the primary source of sustainable external financial flows directed to the African continent. Over the last decades, a significant increase in the volume of net remittance transfers (from 37 billion USD in 2010 to 87 billion in 2019) was witnessed. The volume of remittance transfers has undergone a 3.9% reduction, amounting to 83.6 billion USD in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, remittance transfers increased in 2021 (95.6 billion USD during this year) (KNOMAD – World Bank, May 2022).

The African diasporas can contribute to national development beyond remittance transfers. They can support development policies and initiatives in Africa regarding philanthropic activities, knowledge transfer and sharing, promotion of trade relations, and facilities to access international capital markets. They also can promote a country's credibility and financial solvability vis-à-vis creditors and enable access to global capital markets (World Bank 2006).

Remittance transfers can promote increased household investment in education, entrepreneurship, and healthcare, impacting human capital and general social development. According to the Africa Migration Report (2020) estimates, 75% of the remittances sent by African migrants are used for consumption, including livelihoods and housing. The other 25% are used for socioeconomic investments, of whom 10% are used to address needs such as access to education and healthcare. Around 15% are used for savings and investment in housing, income-generating activities, and small enterprises. The high remittance transfer fees are one of the significant hindrances to increasing the volume of remittance transfers in Africa.

Reduced remittance transfer fees could result in a significant increase in the volume of remittance transfers. Difficulties related to accessing formal remittance transfer services, a lack of regulation of informal remittance transfer channels, coordination gaps, gaps or lack of statistical data about remittance transfers, and inexistent adequate mechanisms to maximize and manage remittance transfers and direct them to productive investments (beyond consumption) hinder the increase of the volume of remittance transfer.

Securing remittances can contribute to promoting its role in fostering investments. Remittances can contribute to minimizing shocks linked to external macroeconomic policies and reduce the volatile nature of economic growth in some countries. Remittances can contribute to addressing challenges related to financing investments, strengthening internal savings, and facilitating financial intermediation.

“Diaspora bonds” represent an alternative to development financing. They represent debt instruments set up by origin countries to raise funds through their diaspora instead of borrowing from international financial markets and other creditors. Diaspora bonds represent a significant

potential for development financing. The relatively low cost of “diasporas bonds” is due to the patriotic spirit of investors who are more enthusiastic about the idea of contributing to the development of the country of origin rather than being driven only by profit and reflects the significant development potential of diaspora bonds (page 6).

By enabling access to essential information related to the market for trade, by creating networks for exporters from the origin country and buyers, by allowing their national counterparts to understand the markets better and align with the government laws and regulations and the market conditions, diasporas have a significant potential to promote trade for the benefit of the origin country. Diasporas represent a pathway to promote bilateral trade and investment relations between origin and destination countries. Diasporas can help minimize information asymmetry and other market failures and facilitate linkages between consumer goods producers and relevant distributors.

Direct investments of the diasporas to the origin and destination countries contribute to socio-economic development through job creation, innovation, trade linkages, circulation, and knowledge transfer. African countries should create a conducive environment for diaspora investments through incentive policies and measures, granting the same rights and advantages given to local investors to investors in the diasporas, taxes and customs duties exemption for imported products, and reduced ticket travel for development actors and diaspora entrepreneurs; tax waivers, subventions, co-funding, credit guarantee, establishing a Diaspora Commission to respond to the diaspora needs.

Moreover, diasporas can help to create transnational links between destination and origin countries regarding investment opportunities for the benefit of origin countries and familiarization with the laws and regulations of the country of residence. Linguistic competencies and familiarity with the origin and host country's culture can foster investments beneficial to countries. Moreover, due to their capacity to assess investment opportunities and their social capital in the origin country, investors can be inclined to take more risks than other investors.