

Why is it Necessary to Protect Migrants' Status within Member Countries of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)? Assessing the Stakes and Relevance of Ensuring a Protective Environment for Migrants

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Abstract: The protection of migrant right is a principle of international humanitarian law, ratified by most states, including the states of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), where, the movement of persons is thought to be free and has increased significantly. Although the legal aspect of migrant status and protection has been emphasized, the benefit such protection brings to the host state has been underestimated. The purpose of this article is to fill this gap by identifying and explaining not only the legal environment in which migrants live and operate within ECCAS but also, the benefits achieved by states when they embrace migrants and engage in their protection. The movement of persons within members of the ECCAS is not only a manifestation of the legal will of states of the region to protect migrant status, but also, such movements come with developmental benefits for member states. This article partly seeks to explore the advantages that Cameroon, Chad and Gabon acquire as member states of the ECCAS region when protecting foreigners in accordance with their local legislation and dispositions. Apart from the global symbolic benefits that these countries acquire as members of the international community, they are also thought to achieve real time benefits of national and regional significance when they embrace migrants from neighboring states and ensure their status is protected.

Keywords: Migrant protection, Status-Right, ECCAS, Sub-Region-Position-Cameroon -Chad-Gabon

I. Introduction

The protection of migrant right is a principle of international humanitarian law, ratified by most states. Although its legal aspect has been emphasized, the benefit such protection brings to the host state has been underestimated. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) or CEMAC, in its French acronym, is a regional integration organization that comprises six states (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of the Congo) that share the same geographical location, i.e. the central African sub region. These states have ratified the convention of the protection of human rights including migrant rights. This implies that within the region, states are expected to take proper measures to ensure migrant status¹ are not abused, by either creating individual or collective legal frameworks to ensure their protection against any form of abuse. This is particularly imperative in a context where, movements of persons within member countries is free and has increased significantly. The movement of persons within members of the ECCAS is not only a manifestation of the legal will of states of the region to protect migrant status, but also, such movements come with developmental benefits for member states. This article partly seeks to explore the advantages that Cameroon, Chad and Gabon acquire as member states of the ECCAS region when protecting foreigners in accordance with their local legislation and dispositions. Apart from the global symbolic benefits that these countries acquire as members of the international community, they are also thought to achieve real time benefits of national and regional significance when they embrace migrants from neighboring states and ensure their status is protected.

1.1. Assessing The Position of Migrants Within the Eccas States

Among people who do not move but can be affected by movement are the families of movers and communities at places of origin and destination. The multiple impacts of movement in these different places are critical in shaping the overall human development effects of movement; this section of the work addresses each in turn. At places of origin, benefits can be seen on income and consumption, education and health, and broader cultural and social processes. These impacts are mostly favorable, but the concern that communities lose out when people move needs to be explored as well. Our review of the evidence shows that the advantages surrounding migrants status are complex, context specific and subject to change over time. The nature and extent of

¹ This is an umbrella concept, which has not been defined in international humanitarian law but has been considered in common lay understanding as rights 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.

impacts depend on who moves, how they fare in a foreign land and their proclivity to stay connected, which may find expression in flows of money, knowledge and ideas, and in the stated intention to return at some date in the future. Yet the flow of ideas can also have far reaching effects on social norms and class structures, rippling out to the broader community over the longer term. Some of these impacts have traditionally been seen as negative, but a broader perspective suggests that a more nuanced view is appropriate.

Much academic and media attention has been directed to the impact of migration on places of destination. One widespread belief is that these effects are negative. For instance, newcomers are seen as ‘taking our jobs’ if they are employed², living off the taxpayer by claiming welfare benefits if they are not employed adding an unwanted extra burden to public services in areas such as health and education, creating social tensions with local people or other immigrant groups and even increasing criminal behavior.

Protecting migrant rights has consequences on the receiving country or country of destination just as profound as those for origin do. The contribution of migrants to receiving countries has generally been less researched, and consequently not well documented as the contribution of migration to countries of origin. Thus, it is more difficult to present a thorough discussion of the role of migration in destination countries. There are, of course proven benefits of migration to destination countries and societies. Despite this, public discourse usually centres on the social adjustments that receiving societies have to make to migrants who have a different ethnic origin and whose values may differ considerably from their own. Many societies have managed to adjust to increasing migration, and some, like African countries, even celebrate diversity. Today there is much greater cultural diversity in many countries, even in those which as recently as the 1990s did not see themselves as countries of migration. There have been some negative reactions, however, which sometimes take the form of open racism and xenophobia, especially where migration is perceived, rightly or wrongly, to take away jobs from native workers at another level. Migration, especially when large in scale, may have important repercussions on the political order in destination countries, particularly where it does not lead to integration, it sometimes results in ethnic tensions.

1.2. The Existence of An Adequate Economic Environment

Foreigners from Cameroon, Chad and Gabon entering or residing in the sub-region contribute to economic growth in numerous ways. Some of them are: filling labour market needs in high-skill and low-skill segments of the market, rejuvenating populations, improving labour market efficiency, promoting entrepreneurship, spurring urban renewal, and injecting dynamism and diversity into ECCAS Integration.

The contribution of migrants from these countries to the growth and transformation of ECCAS has been adequately demonstrated from the historical experience of countries that have had substantial immigration. In Europe since the Second World War, migrant have been credited for contributing to 30 or more years of sustained growth. In East and West Africa since the 1970s, migrants have helped transform cities almost overnight into gleaming metropolises and they currently form the backbone of the booming construction industry in Dubai and the United Arab Emirates. In North America, for generations, migrants to Canada and the United States have renewed and re-energized the population and economy. The impact of migration is not limited to the labor market; it can provide incentives for capital accumulation as well. Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland have some of the highest proportions of migrant workers in Europe and are among the region’s wealthiest countries. A statistical analysis for 15 African countries over the period 1991–95 found that for every 1 percent increase in a country’s population through immigration, there is an increase in Gross Domestic Product of 1.25–1.5 percent³. This result, of course, does not prove causality; but research that used simulation models to assess the impact of migration on Gross Domestic Products indicates that the impact can be substantial when the skills of the migrant workers complement those of the native population⁴.

The World Bank has used a general equilibrium model to estimate overall economic gains to the global economy through international migration. Assuming a modest increase in migration from developing countries to high-income countries, the share of migrants in the stock of workers in high-income countries will increase by 3 per cent by the year 2025. The model predicts global real income the only losers are the existing migrants in high-income countries⁵ who lose out as a result of competition with the new migrants. Natives in the ECCAS region experience an improvement in their economic situation because of remittances and wage increases resulting from reduced pressure on labor markets. These predictions are broadly consistent with previous studies on the economic effects of migration on destination countries. This study also highlights the large differences between regions, explained

² “So many of the foreigners who come here often dispute jobs with us” Obame, a Gabonese resident in Libreville, Pers.com, 20th March 2013.

³ Artadi, Elsa V. and Xavier Sala-i-Martin. (2003). “The Economic Tragedy of the XXth Century: Growth in Africa.” Working Paper 9865. National Bureau of Economic Research, July. See also Bloom, Canning, and Sevilla. (2001). “Economic Growth and the Demographic Transition.” NBER Working Paper #8685. National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA.

⁴ Brücker *et al.*, (2002) “Managing migration in European welfare state” Migration policy and the welfare system, Volume 14, Oxford University Press, 1-168.

⁵ 14.2 million Workers, consisting of 4.5 million skilled and the balance low skilled.

by the relative differences in wages between origin and destination countries: the highest gains accrue to migrant workers from sub-Saharan Africa.

Important conclusions are that labour market restrictions impose a much larger burden on the global economy than trade restrictions, and that the liberalization of labour movements results in larger gains than trade reforms. It should be stressed that, the model does not incorporate social and political dimensions or other factors, such as changes in migrant gains of 0.6 per cent, or \$356 billion in absolute terms.

A number of recent country studies also lend support to the idea that migration has a positive impact on the economy of States. For example, the Government of Gabon estimates that 30 per cent of Gabon's average annual economic growth between 1996 and 2005 was due to immigration. Further, in 2005 there was a surplus of public revenues over public expenditures related to migrant workers amounting to €5 billion, or 0.5 per cent of GDP. This represented around 50 percent of the total surplus in the public accounts.

In the Central Africa Republic, migration trends affect growth principally through changes in the working-age population. The national Institute of economic and social research found that around 17 per cent of the economic growth in 2009 and 2010 was attributable to immigration. The Central Africa treasury estimates that, between the third quarter of 2004 and mid-2006, migration added 0.5 per cent per annum to the working-age population and therefore supported growth in economic output. On this basis, migration had contributed around \$6 billion to output growth in 2006. Our overall conclusion is that the economic benefits to the resident population of net immigration are small, especially in the long run. Of course, many immigrants from Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon make a valuable contribution to the African continent and the ECCAS Region in particular, but the real issue is how much net immigration is desirable. Gabon and Equatorial Guinea have encouraged the movement of foreigners into their territories because they consider that encouraging free movement in the country contributes enormously to their economy.

Such impact stemmed from the fact that, as parties to the ECCAS Sub-regional integration, these States made provision in their legislation ranging from the constitution to other laws, the free movement of persons into their territories without any discrimination. Acknowledging such principle has brought forth development and increased cooperation ties among various member States in the sub-region.

1.3. An increase in the Employment platform

In Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon, there always seems to be controversy about whether migration causes higher unemployment among citizens. At the enterprise level, there are sometimes displacements when firms restructure and foreign workers are hired to take the place of native workers, especially those older and less skilled. What is particularly difficult to assess is whether in such situations, after considering all economic adjustments, there is higher unemployment among natives than there would have been if immigration had not taken place.

Evidence from several Central African Countries shows that in most cases, protecting immigrants' status complement nationals in the labor market and thus has no negative effects on native workers' job prospects and wages⁶. As members of this sub-regional Integration, Migrant workers from Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon contribute to job creation in several ways, ranging from entrepreneurship to increasing domestic demand for goods and services and improving the efficiency of labor markets. Increases in consumption brought about by increasing numbers of migrants raises overall labor demand and economic growth, improving the economic outcomes for natives.

Many African studies show that immigration plays an important role in improving labor market efficiency. All sectors with jobs avoided by natives for example, dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs; low-paid household service jobs; low-skilled jobs in the informal economy; jobs in sectors with strong seasonal fluctuations⁷ depend heavily on the supply of migrant labor. In the absence of migrant workers, these sectors would probably face severe shortages of labor or sharp increases in labor costs. During the 1990s, empirical studies analyzing the effects of labor migration on native employment pointed to small negative employment effects. In one study, no relationship at all was found between the growth in immigrant arrivals and unemployment of natives. In the countries that had the highest inflows of immigrants, unemployment often stayed the same or went down. Indeed, some studies even show that immigration has led to an increase in employment as a result of an expansion in production.

This aspect of migrant contributing to employment in the sub-region has been well outlined in the constitution of Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon that encourage this, so that it will contribute to the economic development of the state. We have to understand that in every economy, there are certain jobs that native of that economy cannot perform, and the only way such could

⁶ Borjas, G. et al., (1997) "How much do immigration and trade affect labor market outcomes?" *Brookings papers on economic activity*, Volume 1997, No.1, pp.1-90.

⁷ For example, farming, road repairs and construction, and hotel, restaurant and other tourism-related services.

be done is through the employment of foreigners from other countries who are considered to be fit and competent for the said job⁸. Native or nationals of these States are always in the opinion that the State is always discriminatory when offering employment to these foreigners by not taking into consideration their personal needs and condition. Most of these foreigners come into enterprises, para-statal, and public establishments to acquire great position that could have been given to nationals of these states.

We also have to look at the way these countries treat foreigners on the basis of employment. Most of them believe that migrants are strangers, and should not be offered same treatment and status as them. That only particular job is reserved for these foreigners in the country. Let's go back to the Cameroon Labor Code in its *Section 1⁹* which provides that there should be no discrimination as to race, status, religion or nationality when effecting or establishing employment contract between the employer and the employee. To this effect we therefore mean that, employers should treat equally nationals and foreigners the same when it comes to employment cases and not otherwise. The same provision is spelled out in Gabon¹⁰ and Chad¹¹ Labor provisions as non-discrimination when it comes to employment contract. We just provide that migrant to a greater extent can act as a tool for employment to member states of the ECCAS region especially Cameroon, Chad and Gabon. How could this be possible if these states do not offer same protection to these foreigners when it comes to employment as their nationals? Foreigners in these States have no job security, family allowances, possess no property and some even discriminated upon in their jobs side and others like women migrants harassed.

1.4. Wages and Earnings

There has also been controversy about whether the presence of migrant workers leads to drop in wages of native workers. It is assumed that, migrant workers compete with native workers, reducing their wages and worsening income distribution¹². However, some researches do not attest to migration's negative impact on wages. The near-uniform finding of a wide range of studies is that any negative effect of immigration on wages is small, if it exists at all. Studies in Gabon and Chad found that increases in immigration had only a small negative effect on wages. A study of the impact on wages in areas with high concentration of migrant workers found that a 10 percent increase in migrants would reduce the wages of Gabonese by about 0.2 percent¹³. Studies in Central Africa have produced various conclusions. A study in Cameroon in 1995 based on household panel data shows that a 1 percent increase in the proportion of foreign citizens in the population actually has a small positive impact of 0.6 percent on domestic wages overall, while wages of highly skilled natives increase even more¹⁴ by 1.3 percent. Other studies found negative, but of unreasonable effects ranging from 0.3 to 0.8 per cent, while some suggested that natives' wages, especially of the highly skilled, increase slightly. Many studies show that minorities earned significantly less than natives even when taking into account occupation, industry, education, experience, and language, among other factors.

Some research supports the view that low-skilled migrant workers are relatively close substitutes for native workers, but found that the impact is not likely to be large, because the proportion of low-skilled native workers in the populations of destination countries is falling. With the rise in educational levels, natives often shun manual work and move out of low-skilled jobs, thereby creating a demand for low-skilled migrant labor. Such demands are accompanied with low wages and advantages. Native of Cameroon, Chad and Gabon believe that certain jobs are best reserved for foreigners due to their capabilities.

1.5. The question of Migrant Entrepreneurship

In many of the ECCAS countries, especially in Cameroon, Chad and Gabon, migrants are considered to be more entrepreneurial than the natives. They are also more likely to be self-employed. This can provide many benefits to ECCAS countries. Migrant entrepreneurs broaden the range of goods and services available, adding vitality to particular city neighborhoods, thus preventing or even reversing deterioration. Migrant entrepreneurs often have skills that are no longer in sufficient supply in host economies and are willing to work long hours and use their social capital to reduce production and transaction costs. The Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECOWAS) found that in most of its member countries self-employment among the migrant population had increased between 2002 and 2005, both in numbers and as a proportion of overall self-employment¹⁵.

Several factors underlie the emergence of entrepreneurial initiatives among migrants. Lack of success in formal labor markets, support from the extended family system including the availability of family labor, access to credit and resources within

⁸ Example of such jobs include engineering, electricity, building construction and other project finance jobs where States preferred to offer them to expatriates companies or enterprises for the purpose of efficiency and effectiveness

⁹ Law No.92/007 of 14 August 1992 establishing the Cameroon Labour Code.

¹⁰ Law No 3/94 of 21 November 1994 dealing with the Labour Code.

¹¹ The Labour Code of 11th December 1996

¹² World Bank study finds mixed results on wages and earnings of migrants, World Bank, 2006, p. 43.

¹³ United Nations Development Program Statistics on employment of migrants in Gabon, 2009.

¹⁴ Statistics carried by the International Labour Organisation in August 1995 in Cameroon as to the impact migrants workers' wages will have on the Cameroon economy and its impact on the local population wage rate

¹⁵ ECOWAS Statistics on the activities carried out by immigrants in countries of destinations, 2007.

the community and within social networks, and links with source countries for trade opportunities. An ECCAS study notes that migrants may be using this route as a means to escape from marginalization in the main labor market. Two categories of the self-employment can be identified: professionals and highly skilled persons, and low-skilled persons. The majority are probably low-skilled. By creating their own jobs, these people ease labor market pressures, and in turn can generate new jobs for both migrant workers and native workers. Women are also well represented in this sector. It is interesting that certain nationalities specialize in particular lines of economic activity. For migrants themselves, there are some advantages in the self-employment option. For example, it allows even those unfamiliar with the local language and customs to find jobs. Self-employment is also a diversification strategy offering families new routes to income and livelihood. It may also promote economic mobility for migrants and their families in the long run. As has been pointed out, migrant enterprises serve as a training ground for new waves of migrants. Moreover, some studies show that many self-employed migrants do well over time.

The dynamism of the entrepreneurial sector must be understood in the context of the many barriers to self-employment imposed by industrialized countries, such as licensing and access to credit. Because ECCAS countries stand to gain by promoting migrant entrepreneurship, they have tried to provide an enabling environment for it. As has been noted, *“Regulation is not just a matter of repression and constraining, but also of enabling sticks and carrots”*. Policies support both supply and demand aspects, through the training of aspiring entrepreneurs, improved access to credit, and privatizing and deregulating.

1.6. Migrants’ Contributions to Urban Renewal

International migration has played an important role in preventing the depopulation of cities in ECCAS countries and in reviving businesses and housing markets. At the same time, the experience has been mixed with some migrant groups being concentrated in segregated, poor sub-urban neighborhoods. Migrants from common origins tend to move into specific locations or gather there as a result of government housing policies, thereby creating migrant enclaves. The establishment of disadvantaged and segregated migrant communities leads to social exclusion and marginalization and inhibits integration and social cohesion.

This is an important factor of what migrants are contributing to countries and help in nation building in countries especially those of Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon. These countries have gained much in protecting and encouraging foreigners to take up residence in their territories. Most of these migrants come in the form of businesspersons, students and even contractors to improve upon the development strategies of these states. A good example is Cameroon where in its major Cities¹⁶ has experienced rapid development due to concessions or partnerships entered into by the government and foreign enterprises and government. The coming of these migrants or foreigners in the country has contributed positively for the development of the said state.

1.7. The notion of fiscal Implications

A major concern in the sub-region has been that immigrants may become a burden on them by costing more in public services and welfare payments than they contribute through taxes and social security contributions. Attempts to estimate the net fiscal costs of immigration are fraught with difficulties for several reasons according to the World Bank. Results depend largely on what methodology is used, what expenditures and revenues are included, and whether households or individuals are considered. For example, statistical calculations of the current net fiscal impact fail to take into account the age structure of the immigrant population, while any valid computation will need to factor in the levels of skills, experience, education and fertility among immigrants. Most calculations, moreover, do not consider the savings in education and training to the host country when skilled migrants are recruited.

The fiscal impact of immigration appears to depend on the age at which immigrants arrive in Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon. Those who come at working age are likely to make a greater contribution to public finances and social security than those who come as young children.

As for migrants with irregular status, they are usually so concerned with concealing their existence that they are unlikely to apply for welfare or other benefits. Employers who treat migrant workers with irregular status as workers with regular status on the basis of fake social security cards pay social security contributions to the Government for those workers nevertheless. These funds accumulate in a suspense file for contributions that cannot be matched to legally recorded names and will never be claimed by those who have worked for them, because they have no valid migration status. These contributions can add up to enormous amounts. For example, in Gabon during the year 1990–98, more than \$20 billion was being held in suspended status in the social security system¹⁷. Many migrants with irregular status pay taxes through automatic deductions by their employers, and even some of those who are paid in cash pay taxes themselves to prove their residence in the country in case there should be a future amnesty.

¹⁶ Especially Yaounde, Douala, Bafoussam, Bertoua, Buea and Kribi.

¹⁷ See African Development Bank Report (2011) “Gabon: Country assistance evaluation 1996-2008”p.3, available at <https://www.oecd.org/countries/gabon/48158419.pdf>, accessed 12/February, 2023.

II. Protecting Migrants Stay in The Eccas Region

There is a great deal of interest among policy-makers in Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon when it comes to offering protection to foreigners residing in their respective territories. Migration can to some extent relieve local unemployment and underemployment pressures by enabling a considerable number of people to find jobs overseas, while also generating large flows of remittances. Set against these advantages is the chief drawback of losing some of the brightest people, creating situations of brain drain.

2.1. Migrant Remittance Flows

There is an international consensus that migrant remittances are the most tangible benefit of migration to countries of origin of the migrants. Migrant remittances usually go towards improved housing, nutrition, schooling, and health care. Remittances therefore create human capital by financing education of children and health for all age groups, and improving food security for poor households.

The volume of migrant remittances to countries has greatly increased in recent years from \$60 billion in recorded remittances in 1990 to \$285 billion in 2007. Remittances reached \$328 billion in 2008, dropped by as much as 10 percent in 2009 as a result of the global economic crisis¹⁸. Flows to Latin America, in particular, have fallen. Despite this decline in the growth of these flows, remittances remain resilient in relation to other forms of financial transfer's official development assistance and foreign direct investment. Recorded remittances are now over twice the level of office Development assistance, which in 2007 was \$105 billion, and about two-thirds that of foreign Direct Investment, which was \$325 billion the same year.

For some countries, in fact, remittances constitute the main source of foreign exchange. The World Bank has therefore described remittances as an important and stable source of development finance¹⁹. Yet it must also be stressed that remittances are private household transfers and should not be viewed as a substitute for office development assistance, foreign direct Investment, or investments in public services. This was recognized in the conclusions of the first Global forum on Migration and Development²⁰, which emphasized that remittances do not diminish the need for Office Development Assistance and they are not an alternative to national development efforts by concerned governments.

An important advantage of remittances is that they are better distributed than Foreign Direct Investment which is largely concentrated in a few countries. They are also a more reliable and stable source of income tending to fluctuate less with economic cycles and thus to be less volatile than capital flows. For example, remittances continued to rise during the Asian financial crisis at the end of the 1990s, even when flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) fell. In fact, remittances tend to increase in times of economic hardship, because families depend on them as a principal source of income and because more people are likely to emigrate in search of work during such times

The World Bank has noted that remittances improve the access of countries to international capital markets on favorable terms. However, remittances may make exports less competitive and investments in import substituting industries less attractive, since they tend to push up the external value of a country's currency or its exchange rate. But most authorities in origin countries seem convinced that the impact has been positive on the whole, especially given the need for foreign exchange to finance large trade deficits and service external debts.

With regard to Africa, a review of remittances there concluded:

For many African households and nations remittances are a tremendously important source of finance and foreign exchange, helping to stabilize irregular incomes and to build human and social capital. Remittance receivers are typically better off than their peers who lack this source of income. At the national level, remittances have a substantial effect on the balance of payments and on foreign exchange.

Most remittance data refer to official transfers. It must be stressed that, official transfers make up only a portion of the total remittances transferred. It is thought that in some countries only about half the remittances received go through official banking channels. This is because migrant workers are discouraged from using official channels because of cumbersome procedures, high fees and poor rates of exchange. In some areas, the systems of informal transfer known as "*hawala*" or "*hundi*" are popular, because they make it much easier for people not accustomed to using banks to receive money. These are informal systems primarily used in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, whereby funds are transferred through the services of a large network of money brokers. If funds that do not travel through formal banking channels are taken into account in estimating remittance flows, the global annual flow to

¹⁸ See Cortina, Jeronimo. (2009) "Survival in Mexico: Remittances and Social Assistance among Children and Women Left-Behind." Draft working paper for the ODI/UNICEF Conference on "The impact of the global food, fuel, and financial crises and policy responses: A child-sensitive approach".

¹⁹ World Bank report on the impact of remittances in developing world, 2003, p. 157.

²⁰ The second Global forum on Migration and Development took place in Manila in October 2008, and the third in Athens in November 2009.

origin countries was estimated at about \$300 billion in 2007, a substantially greater figure than the \$285 billion for recorded remittances stated above²¹.

The World Bank's analysis of remittance flows among developing countries, that is, South–South remittances, found that in 2011 South–South remittances ranged from 9 per cent to 30 per cent of developing countries' remittance receipts. The study concluded that income benefits from South–South migration are more limited than those from South–north migration. Nevertheless, even small increases in income can have very substantial welfare benefits for people in such circumstances. For these reasons, as the World Bank recommends, policy-makers should pay attention to the complex challenges developing countries face, not just as countries of origin, but as countries of destination as well.

It is difficult to generalize the ways in which increased remittances by migrants have affected economic development and poverty in countries of origin. Members of relatively well to do families are usually the first to migrate, thereby initially resulting in remittances tending to go to those in origin countries who are already fairly well off. Later, with the migration of low-skilled workers from poor families, remittances reach lower-income segments of the population and thus can alleviate poverty to some extent. World Bank household surveys have confirmed this effect, finding that a 10 per cent increase in per capita remittances leads to a 3.5 per cent decline in the proportion of poor people in the population. Some optimists believe that this aspect of remittance has a positive impact on economic development by stating that:

Remittances obviously are improving the lives of poor families and communities in most recipient countries particularly those in which migrant senders come from the poorest groups. Low-income rural areas receive a large share of remittances in a majority of countries. And remittances mostly go to poor families; over half of all recipient households in Africa earn less than \$200 per month. In Gabon, 60 percent of household income for the poorest 10 percent of the population is from remittances. In short, remittances are in most places helping improve Africa's skewed income distribution. This is particularly important in countries with low per capita incomes and large inequalities between rich and poor²².

With regard to making the best use of remittances, there is a consensus that sound macroeconomic policies, political stability, and improvements in the investment climate in destination countries are prerequisites. Formalizing money transfers by channeling them through the recognized banking system is also believed to be central to enhancing the long-term development impact of remittances. The round table on remittances and other Diaspora options at the 2010 GFMD agreed that improving the formalization of remittance transfers offers opportunities to leverage their development impact by providing options for individual savings and investments and by supporting local development projects.

Clearly, as shown here, remittances from migrant have a great impact on development in origin countries. This impact should not be undermined by low wages, delayed wage payments, non-payment of wages, or the exploitation of workers in irregular status, as is too frequently the case. Protecting migrant status in Cameroon, Chad and Gabon have granted some security to foreigners when it comes to remittance. Migrants in these countries due to the degree of protection offered to them can boast of sending money back home to their loved ones.

2.2. Employment and Wages

While there are many motivations behind individual decisions to migrate, a major force driving contemporary migration is the lack of decent work opportunities at home. In other countries, decent jobs are not being created fast enough to absorb the growing numbers of people ready to join the labor force every year. Migrants taking up residence in Cameroon, Chad and Gabon experienced economic security. Although emigration may be perceived as helping to ease population pressures, for most countries it can have only a modest impact at best. Even for the main countries of origin, the proportion of the population leaving is relatively small. In very populous countries of origin, even high levels of emigration may have minimal effects on unemployment and wages. However, because migration is selective, it may induce upward pressure on wages in specific sectors. Some countries with high net emigration rates also have intractable unemployment problems. In small countries with large expatriate populations, the reduction of unemployment or under-employment related to emigration may be substantial.

III. Understanding the concept of Skilled Migration and the Brain Drain

In considering the development impact of international migration, it is important to assess the impact of skilled migration from countries. Since the early 1990s the international mobility of highly skilled workers has been increasing, reflecting globalization trends, rising global demand for skills, selective admission policies in developed countries, and the phenomenal

²¹ World Bank studies suggest that unrecorded flows through informal channels may add 50 per cent or more to recorded flows. See also Freund Caroline, (2005) "Remittances: Transaction Costs, Determinants, and Informal Flows", *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 3704, September 2005.

²²Orozco with Jewers, (2014) "Economic Status and Remittance Behavior Among Latin American and Caribbean Migrants in the Post-Recession Period," Inter-American Development Bank.

growth in Information Communication Technology. The impact of this “brain drain” from origin countries varies according to the characteristics of those countries size and level of development, the type of sector or occupation concerned, the mode of financing education and the type of migration.

Skilled people move for many reasons, including higher wages, better facilities and more opportunities for advancement. Destination countries sometimes promote the immigration of professionals through recruitment drives and selection systems that facilitate entry. These selection systems can amount to what has been called “cherry picking”, in the sense of attracting the “best and brightest” from poor countries and depriving these countries of their most qualified individuals, individuals in whom they have made heavy investments in education and human capital, often at public expense. Many migrants from developing countries in the United States in 1990 had twice as much education as their compatriots at home.

Brain drain is a real concern, for it can have dire consequences for sustainable development in developing countries, especially the least developed. The departure of skilled migrants reduces a country’s capacity for long-term economic growth. Local firms that invest in training people will find it hard to recover their investments if these trained workers leave regularly. Because it tends to have cumulative effects, the emigration of highly trained people may make it very difficult to create the critical mass of expertise necessary for product development and for adapting imported production technologies to local conditions. Moreover, the emigration of highly skilled workers trained at public institutions means a loss of return to the society on its investment in higher education, as well as a loss of potential fiscal revenue. Highly educated citizens may also help to improve governance, encourage education of children and help train or guide other workers, all of which may be reduced as a result of high-skilled emigration²³.

The problem is best illustrated in cases of migration of health workers. According to the World Health organization, 57 countries have severe shortages of health workers; 36 of those countries are in sub-Saharan Africa²⁴. Countries such as Ghana and Jamaica have more of their locally trained doctors abroad than at home. Many countries, especially in Africa, can no longer maintain adequate public health services because of the exodus of health workers attracted by better prospects abroad. Moreover, the emigration of African doctors and nurses is taking place at a time when there is a greater need for health-care staff because of the impact of HIV/AIDS and the need to improve immunization rates. The fact that Africa’s share of global diseases is 25 per cent, while its share of the global health workforce is only 3 per cent, highlights the unethical nature of African health worker recruitment by wealthier countries. Rural areas in particular are left with few health-care staff, increasing the workload for those who remain.

The migration of more highly skilled people can also affect capital movements. Countries that do not have sufficiently skilled local personnel may fail to attract Foreign Direct Investment from companies reluctant to invest there. In addition, migrants may depart not only with their education, but with significant amounts of capital.

This aspect of brain drain has been very rampant in the western world, where we see nationals from the developing economies leaving to study abroad in Europe stay back there and huge salaries offered to them as compare to those offered back home. Many Cameroonians citizens are great pharmacists, engineer, technicians, accountants, researchers, and even Doctors in the western economies. Most of them due to believe that Africa do lack the potentials, equipment’s and even the pay package is low in order to encourage them in order for them to perform the same services in the country.

Lets us not go far with our hypothesis and analysis on the issue of brain draining of migrants, look at the standard of living of Gabon, and compare it to that of Chad and Cameroon. We see that Gabon and Chad have a low population as compared to Cameroon. This has made it for the Standard of living in these countries to be on the rise far better than that of Cameroon, and as a result of this, most foreigners are being attracted to the various benefit acquired if possessed a job in these countries.

This concept of brain draining has both its positive and negative impact on the encouragement and promotion of migration. As far as the negative aspect is concerned, brain drain can lead to development and potentials in a country. We do understand that after these countries must have exploited the services of a foreigner, the only remedy or aftermath here is to send you back home and this person will be of no importance to its home country. This is mostly the situation of Africans working in influential economies in the world, and when their services are no longer needed, we see them running back home and fighting jobs with their common nationals.

The States of Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon have to visit their nationals’ laws and those of foreigners’ entry, staying and living the country. They have to redress this issue of employment of foreigners in domestic enterprises and the exercising of gigantic projects in the various countries.

²³ Global Commission on International Migration (2005), *Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action*, Geneva: Switzerland.

²⁴ WHO, statistics on the brain draining of migrants’ workers by States of destinations, 2006. See also Docquier, F., Lohest, O., & Marfouk, A. (2007). Brain Drain in Developing Countries. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 21(2), 193–218. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40282242>.

IV. Conclusion

More attention should be given to the legal advantage available to migrants in an age of global migration with more migrants moving in more ways to more countries than ever before. As in the past, this migration can be beneficial for those who move, for the countries they leave, and for the countries that welcome them. The challenge is to govern and regulate migration in a way that maximizes benefits for all involved. Countries of origin have begun to recognize that their nationals abroad can be an important asset for home country development. Migrants who return or who circulate between countries of origin and that of the ECCAS can be an important source of new technologies and ideas. With emigration, remittances, and returns come together in a virtuous circle, as in the Information Communication Technology sector, the result can be an important new export industry that also benefits those who do not migrate. The ambition and drive that motivates people to migrate generally helps migrants in many countries to find jobs, work hard, and benefit both themselves and natives of the destination country. In most cases, migrant workers have only a slightly negative, if any, effect on the wages of native workers, and they usually pay more in taxes than they receive in tax-supported services. There is little evidence that migration leads to displacement of nationals in employment. One of the main challenges for destination countries is to ensure the integration of migrants in their societies. The current emphasis on migration and development projects a positive image of international migration. This has resulted in greater international co-operation to maximize the positive aspects of migration and minimize the negative ones. Yet as Juan Somavia, the ILO Director-General emphasized, "Gains from migration and protection of migrant rights are indeed inseparable. Migrant workers can make their best contribution to host and source countries when they enjoy decent working conditions, and when their fundamental human and labor rights are respected."

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