



## MIGRATION

### Foreword

Even though it may be useful, a global approach to migration is not sufficient as the nature and challenges of this phenomenon are not the same in North America, Latin America, Asia and Africa. In this light, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) intend to contribute to strategic thinking on the region through this chapter of the Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa.

International migration is a politically sensitive issue in the North, as well as in the South. The debate it raises is often passionate, even extreme and dangerous. We feel that the best approach is to place observed facts at the centre of the debate. Hence, we have requested that facts should be presented here on the basis of available knowledge, and that the challenges be summarised in light of scientific literature. The result, which of course is never perfect, will require regular updates, since movements of populations and migration policies are often changing.

We have also requested that the migration demographic context be well described, because we realise that this aspect is generally given very little attention. The fact, however, is that sub-Saharan Africa is the last large region in the world where population growth is above 2.5% per year. Nowhere else is pressure on mobility, in every sense of the word, so strong.

ECOWAS member States have embarked on the difficult but irreversible path to the free movement of persons. This option also takes into account the history of the people of West Africa. Irrespective of future trends of migration policies of developed countries, intra-regional mobility (at least seven times more than the volume of migration from West Africa to the rest of the world) should be preserved. However, Africa should not be passive. Therefore, we feel it is important for the debate to focus more on the future than on the past, that the States of the region should define common priorities taking into account their individual specific realities, and that future policies and investments should be anticipated today.

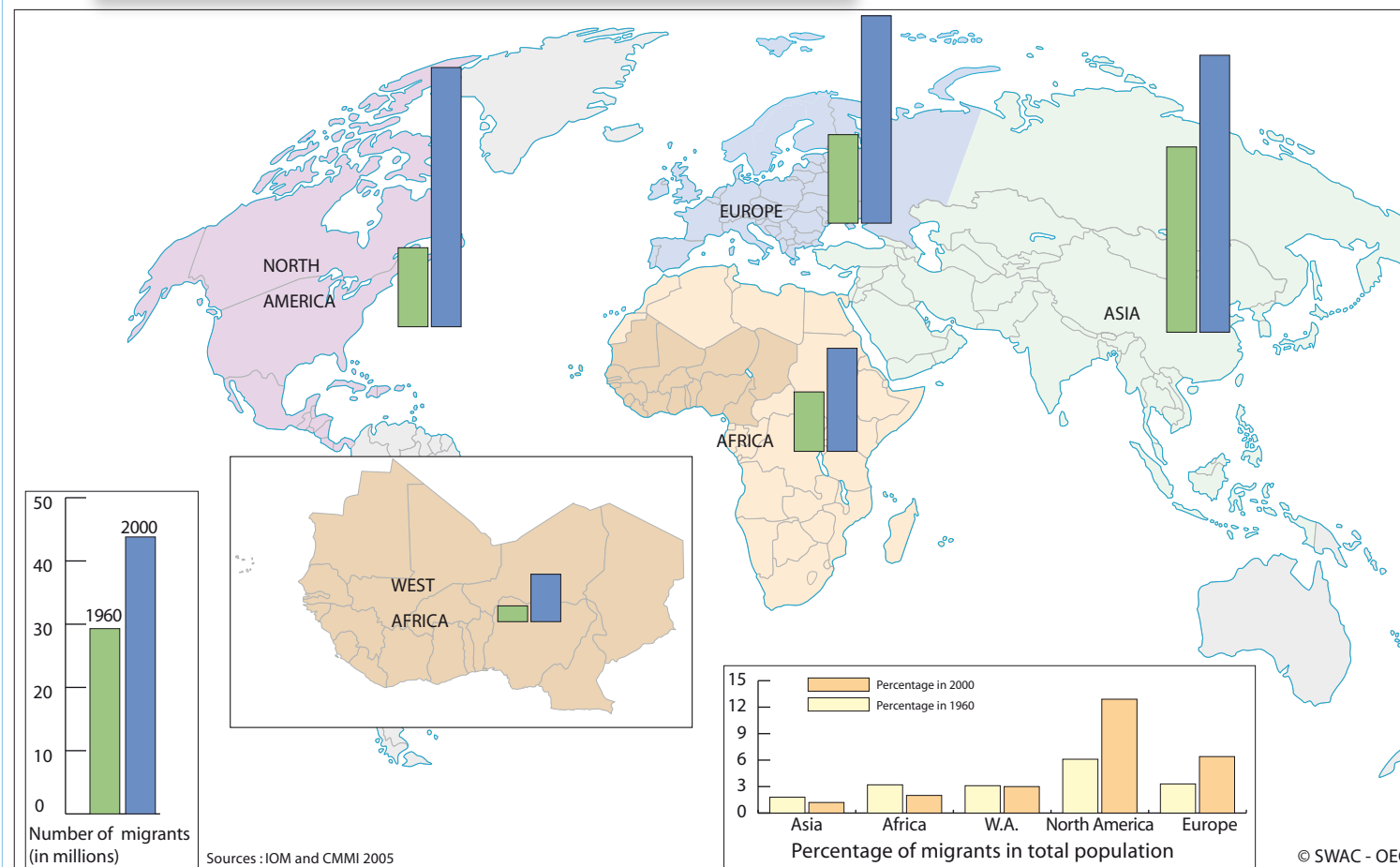
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Map 1. Number of Migrants by Continent in 1960 and 2000



## Introduction

This summary of data and analysis of global, African and West African migration contains rough estimates as do all the documents and studies regarding this subject. Official statistics are hardly reliable or accurate, including those of some OECD countries. Population surveys are not using the same criteria to differentiate nationals, migrants and foreigners: nationality, place of residence, and length of stay outside country of birth. There is consensus on the definition of a migrant as a person over 15 years old living for more than one year in a country of which he is not a national; the Atlas refers to this definition, but also cites available information on more rapid population movements in West Africa. Clandestine migrations, on the other hand, elude any serious quantitative evaluation.

Furthermore, the definition of “foreigner” is relative and changing. One can be a foreigner, but may not have migrated (for example, the children of migrants born in the host countries of their parents). Economic and social crises, political exploitation, and the evolution of world geopolitics are some of the factors which provoke or maintain confusion, and move debate on migrations away from the analysis of facts.

## I. International Migration Overview: From a Global View to the African Level

### 1.1 Two Hundred Million Migrants

In 2005, there were 200 million migrants in the world, representing 3% of the global population. This figure is more than double that of 1970. The 1980s is marked by a sharp increase in migration (100 million migrants in 1980, 150 million in 1990). Since then, the growth rate has returned to the levels comparable to those of the 1960s and 1970s.

The migration boom of the 1980s was due mainly to the dismemberment of the former Soviet Union and the development of mobility within the Asian continent (particularly to India). Currently, the host regions, in decreasing order, are: Asia (44 million), North America (41 million), Europe (33 million), the territories of the former Soviet Union (30 million), and Africa (16 million).

More than half of the migrants are concentrated in 15 host countries. The United States tops the list as this country was built on immigration, sometimes receiving several millions of people each year between the mid-19th century and the early 1920s.<sup>1</sup> Despite the downward trend of movements, the USA remains an important host country,<sup>2</sup> and about 35 million migrants currently live there. Only three other members of the G7 are on the list of main

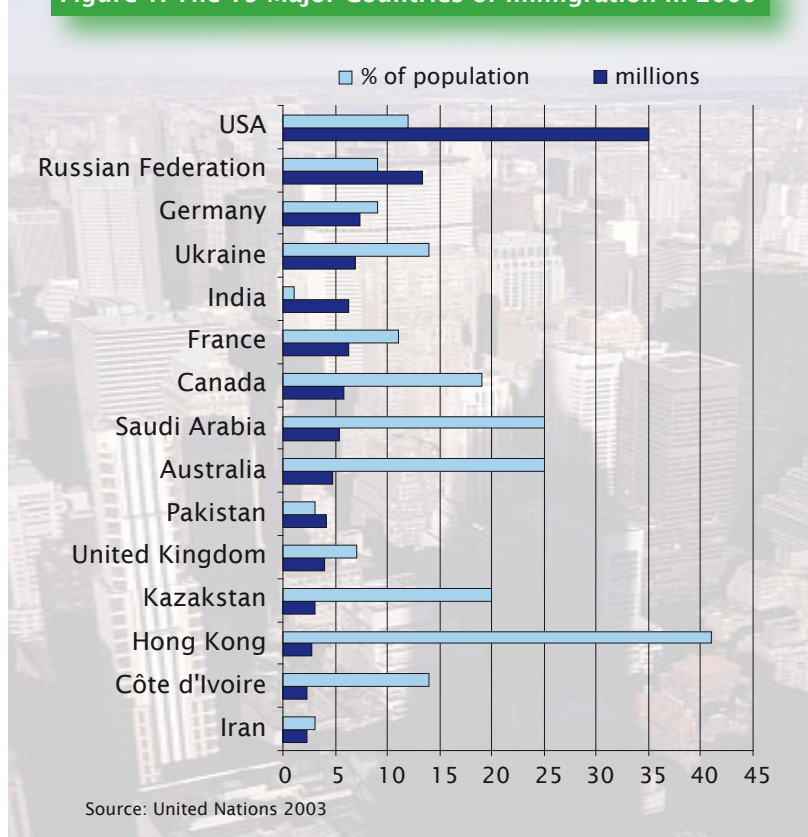
immigrant recipient countries alongside developing countries which are nevertheless regional economic hubs (for example, Côte d'Ivoire in 14th position with 2.4 million migrants).

OECD countries, with wealthier economies and more affluent lifestyles, receive a little less than half of the migrants identified in the world (97 million in 2000). 40% of these migrants come from other OECD countries. Migration is far from being oriented only from South to North.

### 1.2 African Migration to Developed Countries

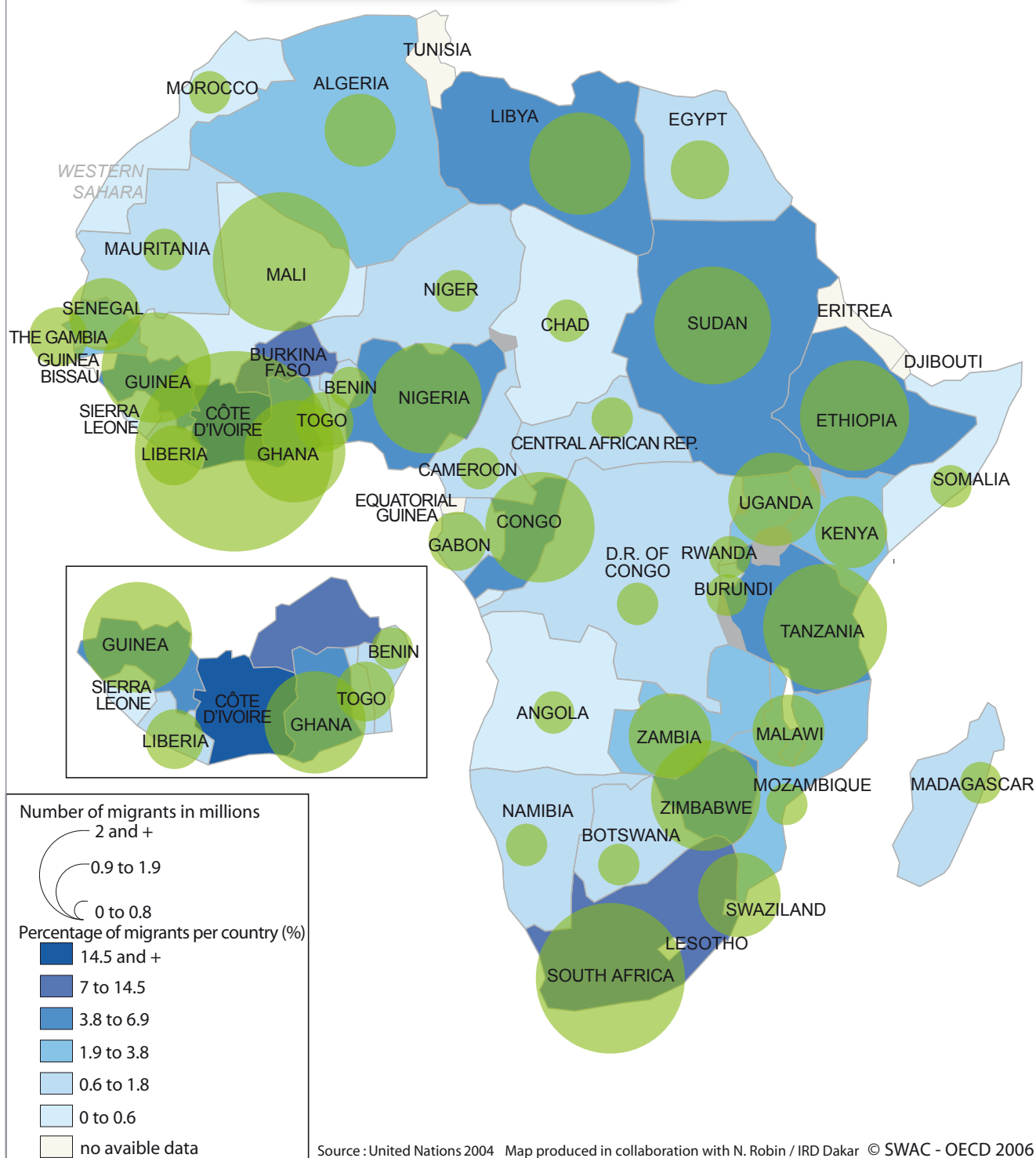
African migration to developed countries is marginal. In 2004, there were 7.2 million officially identified African migrants in OECD Member countries, representing 13% of immigrants from non-member countries.

Figure 1. The 15 Major Countries of Immigration in 2000



1. 1.5 million Irish went to the United States in 1848; 1.3 million Italians in 1913.
2. In 2002, there were 1.06 million foreigners who entered the country (OECD, 2004).

▼ Map 2. Number of Migrants in Africa

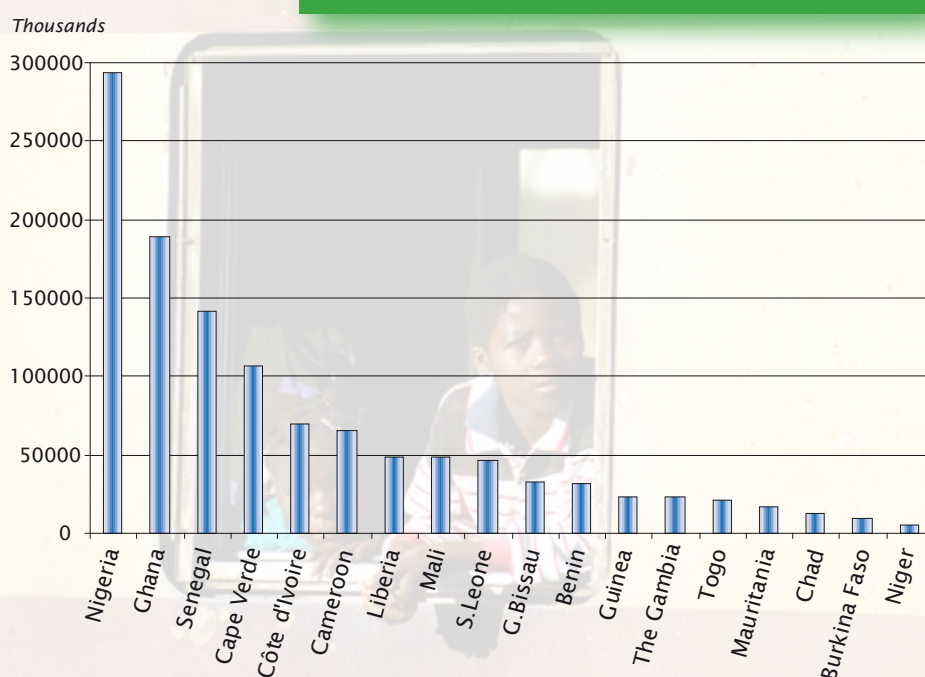


They include 3.8 million North Africans and 3.4 million sub-Saharan Africans.<sup>3</sup> Immigration is very concentrated whereas nine OECD countries are host to 90% of African expatriates.

In North America, African immigration is quantitatively high (1.2 million people), but low in comparison to other communities. For example, in 2000, there were 8 million Mexicans and 900,000 Africans in the United States; in Canada there were 300,000 Africans, 750,000 Chinese, and 150,000 Vietnamese.

3. Statistics obtained after processing DELSA-OECD data for the 2000s, excluding Germany.

Figure 2. Migration from West African Countries to OECD Countries in the 2000s



Source: DELSA/OECD

In four European countries, African migration is sizeable without being the majority:

- While in the Netherlands, the three highest numbers of foreign communities (excluding developed countries) come from Surinam, Indonesia and Turkey (about 200,000 people for each of them), the Moroccan community is high (150,000 people).
- In Spain, South American communities are twice as numerous as African communities, among whom Moroccans are the majority (310,000 people).
- In the United Kingdom, nationals of the Indian sub-continent (1 million) exceed those from the African continent (830,000). Three African communities each comprise about 100,000 people: South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria.

**Table 1. Major Host Countries in OECD excluding Germany in the 2000s (in thousands)**

	West Africa	Benin	Burkina Faso	Cameroon	Cape Verde	Côte d'Ivoire	The Gambia	Ghana	Guinea	Guinea Bissau	Liberia	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Nigeria	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Chad	Togo
USA	351	1.1	0.7	12.4	27.1	7.6	6.0	67.2	5.2	0.5	40.9	2.8	2.2	1.1	140.2	10.9	21.3	0.4	3.0
France	288	12.0	4.7	36.0	12.4	45.2	1.0	4.4	7.8	7.6	0.7	40.2	9.6	3.4	2.6	82.1	0.7	4.4	12.8
United Kingdom	176	0.2	0.1	3.2	0.3	2.8	3.9	56.1	0.3	0.4	1.6	0.1	0.0	0.1	88.4	0.7	17.0	0.2	0.6
Italy	82	0.8	2.5	2.3	3.3	7.2	0.3	17.5	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	15.4	29.4	0.5	0.1	0.8
Portugal	68	0.0	0.0	0.1	44.9	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	21.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Canada	41	0.4	0.4	2.4	0.3	1.9	0.2	17.1	1.4	0.1	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.2	10.7	1.9	1.0	0.6	0.8
Belgium	14	0.4	0.4	2.4	0.4	1.4	0.2	2.7	0.8	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	1.5	1.5	0.4	0.2	1.0
Switzerland	12	0.2	0.2	2.5	1.2	1.1	0.2	1.7	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.5	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1031</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>

Source: DELSA/OECD Database 2004

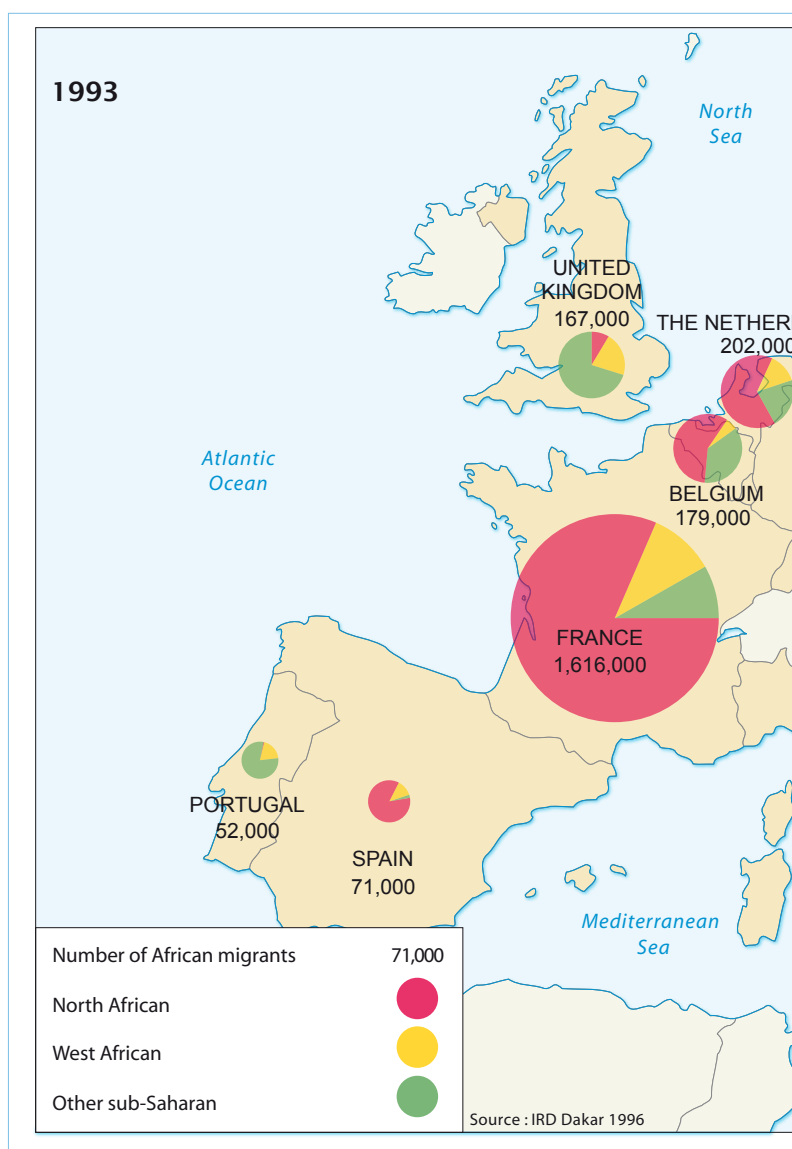


■ Italy receives 1.3 million immigrants from developing countries. The largest immigrant community comes from the former Yugoslavia (200,000) and the second from Morocco (155,000). Africans represent one-third of the immigrants.

In three other European countries, more than 50% of immigrants from developing countries are Africans:

- In Belgium, the main community is Moroccan (100,000 people), followed by the Turks (70,000), and the Congolese (DRC 40,000).
- In Portugal, immigration is mainly from the former colonies: the Angolan community dominates (175,000), followed by the Mozambique community (75,000), the Cape Verde community (45,000), and the Guinea Bissau community (20,000). Apart from Africa, Brazil has the largest community, with 50,000 people.
- In France, Africans represent more than 75% of immigrants from developing countries. Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia represent a total of 2.3 million people. Sub-Saharan African communities are much less represented: Senegal (80,000), Madagascar (70,000), Côte d'Ivoire (45,000), and Mali (40,000). Turkey (180,000) and Vietnam (115,000) are the largest non-African communities.

Germany, an important country of immigration, in 2000 officially had a little more than 100,000 Africans and more than one million Turks on its territory.



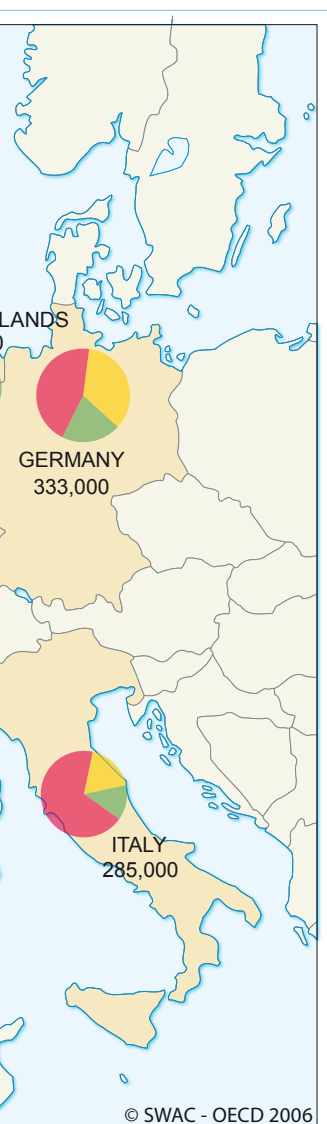
▼ Maps 3 and 4. Major Host Countries

## II. West African Migration Dynamics

### 2.1 To OECD Countries

In the early 2000s, OECD countries officially received 1.2 million West Africans. Despite the geographic proximity of Africa to Europe, North America is the main destination for West African nationals. This is mainly due to the immigration of Nigerians and nationals of other former English colonies. There is still a link between the former French colonies and their former colonizers; this also applies to Portugal and its former West African territories.

An analysis of the host countries of the 65,000 West African students in the university education system in OECD Member countries supports this observation. While the majority of francophones study in France (from 84% Senegalese to 52% Guineans), anglophones prefer the United States (60% of Gambian students, 50% of other nationals of Anglophone countries).



Countries in Europe in 1993 and 2000

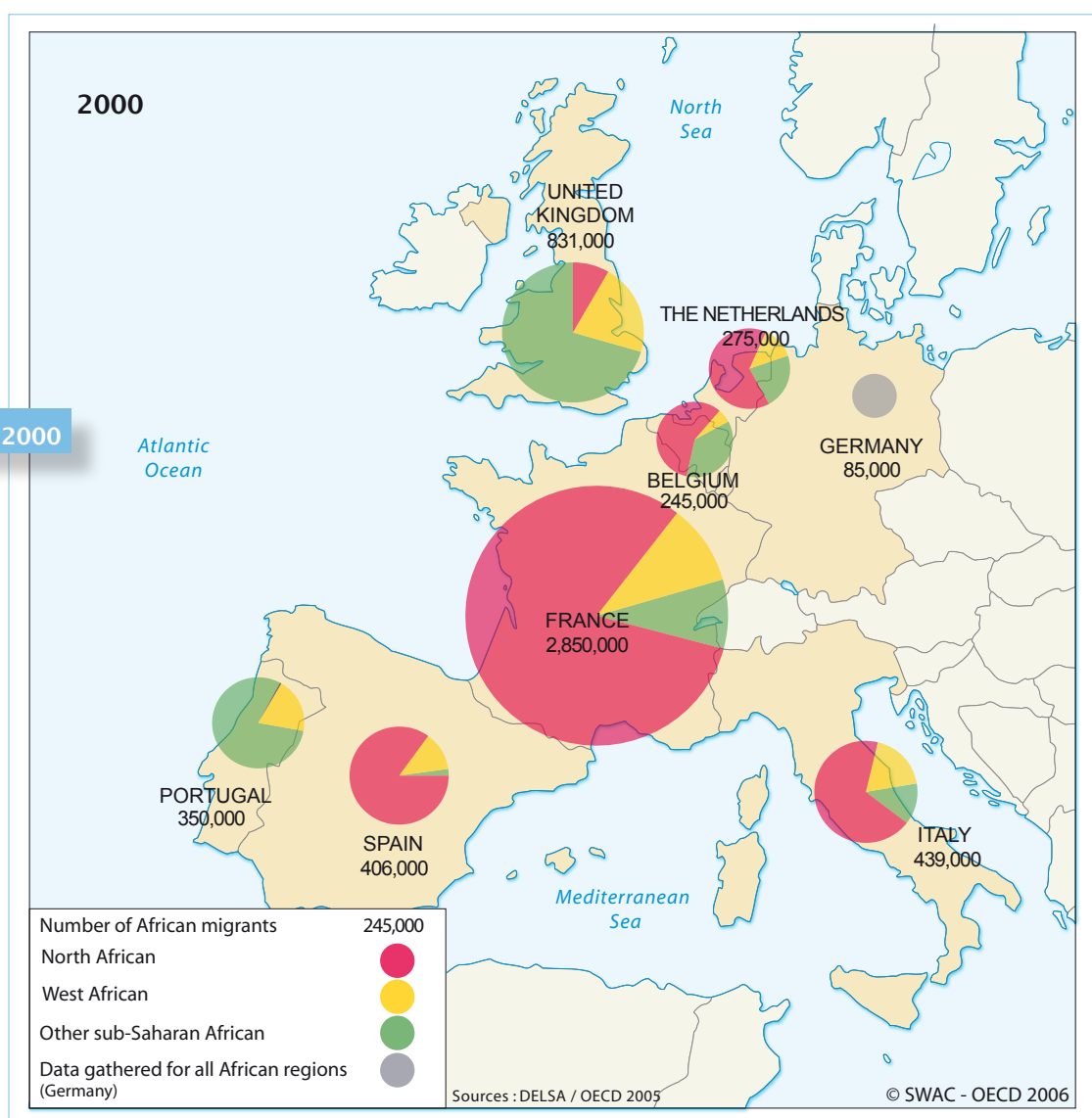
4. Giri, 1994.

Though initially temporary and essentially unskilled and male, West African emigration became more sustainable as a result of family reunion policies implemented by some European countries in the 1970s and 1980s. Then there were new types of migrants: more women, students and skilled people. With migration policies in traditional host countries becoming more stringent, destinations began to be more diversified in the early 1990s to Mediterranean countries (Italy, Spain) and North America (United States, Canada).

## 2.2 Labour and Transit Migration to North Africa

### 2.2.1 Few West Africans are Officially in North Africa

The links between West Africa and North Africa have long been based on the trans-Saharan caravan trade. The trade was in gold, kola nuts, fabrics, copper, salt, ivory, European manufactured goods, and slaves; there were probably more than one million individuals involved in the trans-Saharan slave trade in the 19th century.<sup>4</sup> The 20th century and



colonisation witnessed the decline of trade along with population flows. On one hand, human traffic declined sharply at the end of the 19th century. On the other hand, the colonial powers promoted trade through the ports. As from the 1960s, the development of the agricultural frontier (Office du Niger, Senegal's groundnut basin, and the cocoa and coffee basin in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire) lured populations to the South.

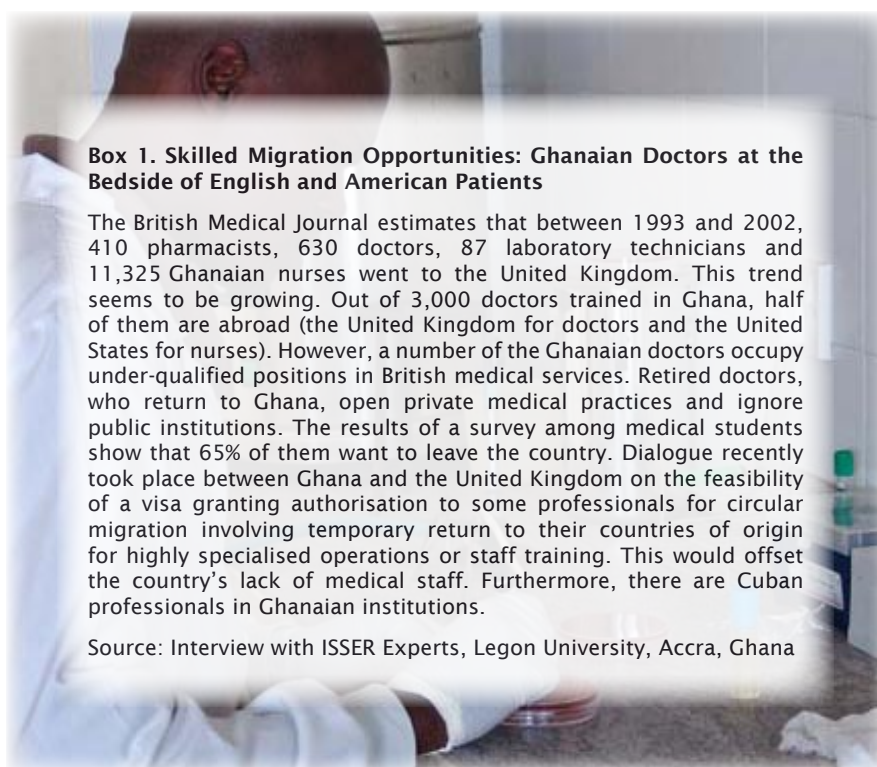
During the last quarter of the 20th century, new circumstances emerged that revived trans-Saharan trade and labour flow to North Africa. The development of the petroleum sector in Libya and Algeria led to pendular migration of workers, mainly West Africans and Sudanese. After encouraging the immigration of North Africans to offset chronic labour shortage, the Libyan authorities forced many of them to leave in the mid 1980s. The country then opened up to sub-Saharanans in the early 1990s. The economic crisis of 1995 led to another expulsion of 200,000 workers, half of whom were Sudanese. The establishment of the Community of Saharan-Sahelian States in 1998 helped improve relations with sub-Saharan Africa.

However, today Libya probably remains the North African country that receives most Sub-Saharanans (nearly 300,000 according to the 1995 census; certainly more today<sup>5</sup>). The census data obtained in the 2000s in other countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt) show a total of 20,000 West African migrants.<sup>6</sup> It is very difficult to have a precise idea of the actual situation in view of the pendular, and often illegal, movements of the population.

In recent years, it seems that sub-Saharan migration to North Africa has increased. These trends do not concern only "transit migration". Some sub-Saharan migrants become established for long periods, while a minority of them goes on to Europe.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.2.2 Understanding "Transit Migration"

Who are "transit migrants"? How many are there? The phenomenon is complex and changing. The surveys conducted and testimonies gathered indicate that it is neither the poorest nor the weakest who attempt this perilous adventure. They are mainly men, relatively young and capable of financing a long, costly and physically painful journey. They are also relatively well-educated; many of them hold the equivalent of a GCE A level and above; only a minority is illiterate.



#### Box 1. Skilled Migration Opportunities: Ghanaian Doctors at the Bedside of English and American Patients

The British Medical Journal estimates that between 1993 and 2002, 410 pharmacists, 630 doctors, 87 laboratory technicians and 11,325 Ghanaian nurses went to the United Kingdom. This trend seems to be growing. Out of 3,000 doctors trained in Ghana, half of them are abroad (the United Kingdom for doctors and the United States for nurses). However, a number of the Ghanaian doctors occupy under-qualified positions in British medical services. Retired doctors, who return to Ghana, open private medical practices and ignore public institutions. The results of a survey among medical students show that 65% of them want to leave the country. Dialogue recently took place between Ghana and the United Kingdom on the feasibility of a visa granting authorisation to some professionals for circular migration involving temporary return to their countries of origin for highly specialised operations or staff training. This would offset the country's lack of medical staff. Furthermore, there are Cuban professionals in Ghanaian institutions.

Source: Interview with ISSER Experts, Legon University, Accra, Ghana

5. Newspaper articles show the figure of one million or more in 2000/2001, including 500,000 Chadians.  
6. Lahlou, 2004.  
7. Bredeloup and Pliez, 2005.



It is very difficult to quantify these flows. An annual figure of about 100,000 sub-Saharanans is most often given for the 2000s. The routes through Libya, then Italy through Algeria and Morocco then Spain, seem to represent the bulk of flows to date.<sup>8</sup> The number of those arrested in North Africa and on the European coasts is better known. In 2000, Spain arrested 3,500 West African migrants (7,000 today). The same year, Morocco<sup>9</sup> announced the arrests of 3,000 West Africans and in Algeria 4,000 sub-Saharanans were arrested. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that just over 4,000 Malians, Nigerians and Sudanese were arrested for illegal immigration in Libya in 2004. However, it seems that in 2000 arrests of sub-Saharanans remained below those of emigrants from North Africa.

The transit period is getting longer. More stringent control of European borders makes clandestine migration land routes longer and more difficult. This leads to more or less temporary settlement of migrants for several years. This trend is confirmed by specific observations. Accordingly, the link town of Tamanrasset in South Algeria increased from 3,000 inhabitants in 1966, including 10% sub-Saharanans, to 65,000, including 50% sub-Saharanans, at end of 1990.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in 2005 the port town of Nouadhibou in North Mauritania has 10,000 West Africans who want to emigrate to Europe, representing 10% of its population. Morocco estimates, for the same year, that there are 20,000 sub-Saharanans around the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla as well as the border town of Oujda<sup>11</sup> at the Algerian border.

This migration generates a transit economy in the major link towns (hotel trade, itinerant trading, transport, but also prostitution). Human traffic is developing on former trans-Saharan salt trade routes. On these migratory routes, mutual aid and religious structures, as well as associations,<sup>12</sup> operate in the presence of smugglers, document forgers, as well as law enforcement. Some migrants also attempt to go by sea (canoes from Mauritania and Senegal to the Canary Islands).

## 2.3 Intra-Regional Migration

### 2.3.1 A Territory of Extreme Mobility

World history shows that demographic transition corresponds to a period of great population mobility. Indeed, it is when the population increases rapidly that the need to change from one environment to another (from urban to rural areas, from poor to rich areas) is greatest. West Africa,<sup>13</sup> like the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, is at the core of this transition and mobility phase, which other developing regions have already experienced.

Over the past 45 years, the number of inhabitants in West Africa increased from 88 million to 290 million (that is, multiplied by 3.3) while the urban population increased from 13 million to 128 million (that is, an increase of 10-fold). Over the same period, it is estimated that more than

8. Lahlou, 2004.

9. National Indicative Programme MEDA with the European Commission in 3 stages: management of border controls, institutional support for the movement of persons, and strategies for the development of North Provinces.

10. Lahlou, 2004.

11. This town is not only the main point of entry into Morocco, but also from where migrants are repatriated once arrested by the Moroccan authorities. See Wender, 2004.

12. Bredeloup and Pliez, 2005.

13. Defined here as the group formed by ECOWAS 15 member countries plus Mauritania, Chad and Cameroon.

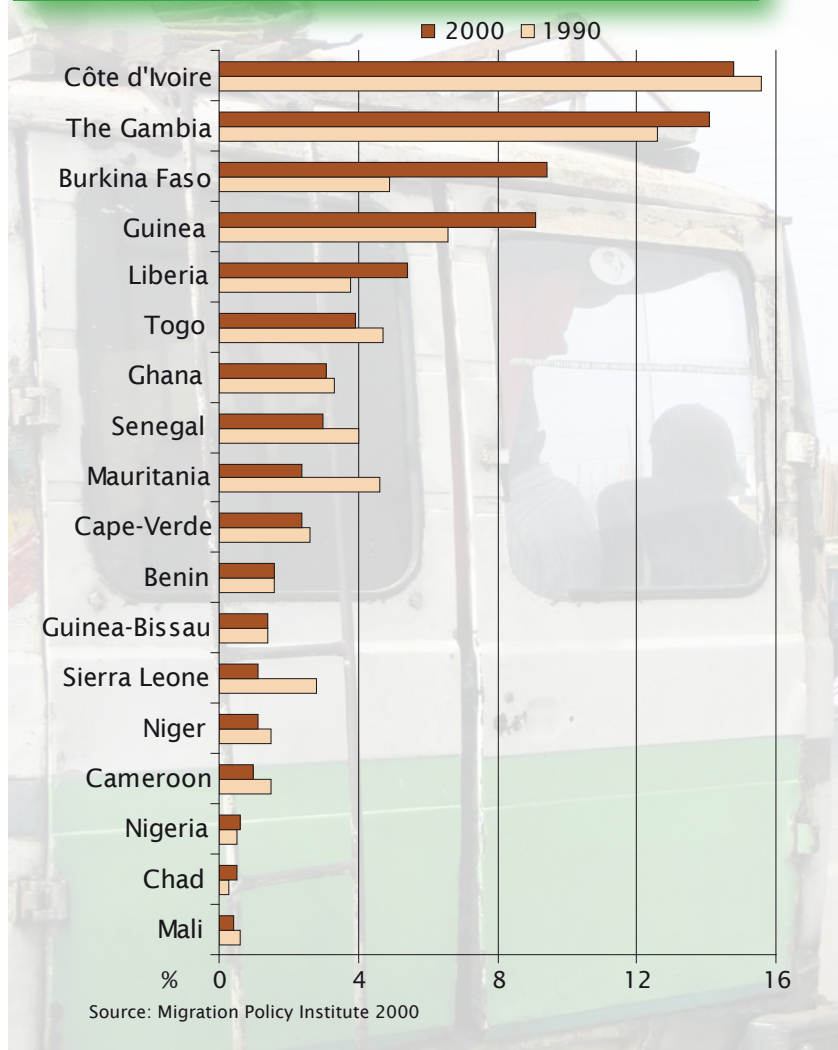
80 million West Africans migrated from rural to urban areas. Urbanisation was the first result of mobility of the West African population, even though urbanisation is no longer one of the major reasons for mobility.<sup>14</sup>

Quantitative estimates of intra-regional migration are more random. Calculations based on population censuses indicate that countries of the region currently host about 7.5 million migrants<sup>15</sup> from another West African country, representing 3% of the regional population. This rate, which has been increasing since 1990, is above the African average (2%) and largely exceeds that of the European Union (0.5%). Furthermore, it should be noted that these evaluations of migrant populations do not adequately portray the reality of the flows. The movements were seriously studied only for the 1976–1980<sup>16</sup> and 1988–1992<sup>17</sup> periods during which between 500,000 and 1 million people moved from one country to another each year. The West African Long-term Perspective Study (WALTPS)<sup>18</sup> estimates that nearly 30 million West Africans changed country of residence between 1960 and 1990, representing an average of one million people each year. Despite statistical uncertainties, West Africa therefore appears as an area of intense intermixing of populations.

A spatial analysis over a long period shows that, to date, most migration is to coastal areas, as a result of the development of cash crops, port urbanisation and degradation of the natural environment in the Sahelian areas of the region. This migration responds to the need to seek economic opportunities and diversify risk and poverty reduction strategies.

While mobility is a lifestyle initially linked to nomadism, colonisation gave rise to new types of movements, mainly reflecting the agricultural ambitions of the colonizers. Forced recruitment led to the migration of entire families, particularly from Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and Guinea, to the Office du Niger in Mali, and from Sahelian countries to the cocoa and coffee plantations in Ghana and forestry industries in Côte d'Ivoire. The movements from Mali and Guinea to groundnut production areas in Senegal and The Gambia consist more of seasonal male workers. At the same time, the development of transport infrastructure (particularly the railway) enables and encourages individual mobility over long

**Figure 3. Proportion of Migrants in West African Countries**



14. Today, two-thirds of the increase in the urban population is due to births in urban areas; this proportion should increase in the future.

15. Migration Policy Institute, 2000.

16. World Bank, 1990.

17. Migration Networks and Urbanization in West Africa.

18. SWAC/OECD, 1998.

distances. Many links were established between the areas of origin and the host countries. Furthermore, neither colonisation nor independence had any significant impact on the high mobility within traditional socio-cultural areas, such as the Hausa Kanuri area, the Fulani area (from Lake Chad to Futa Djallon), the Mande area, etc.

After independence, for a decade Ghana became the main regional immigration pole particularly because of its cocoa and gold. This period ended with the Alliance Compliance Order (1969) and expulsion of several hundred thousand immigrants. Over the long term, the “epidermic” reactions to migration (rejection and/or expulsion of “foreigners”) do not seem to have sustainably constrained the structural trend of regional mobility.

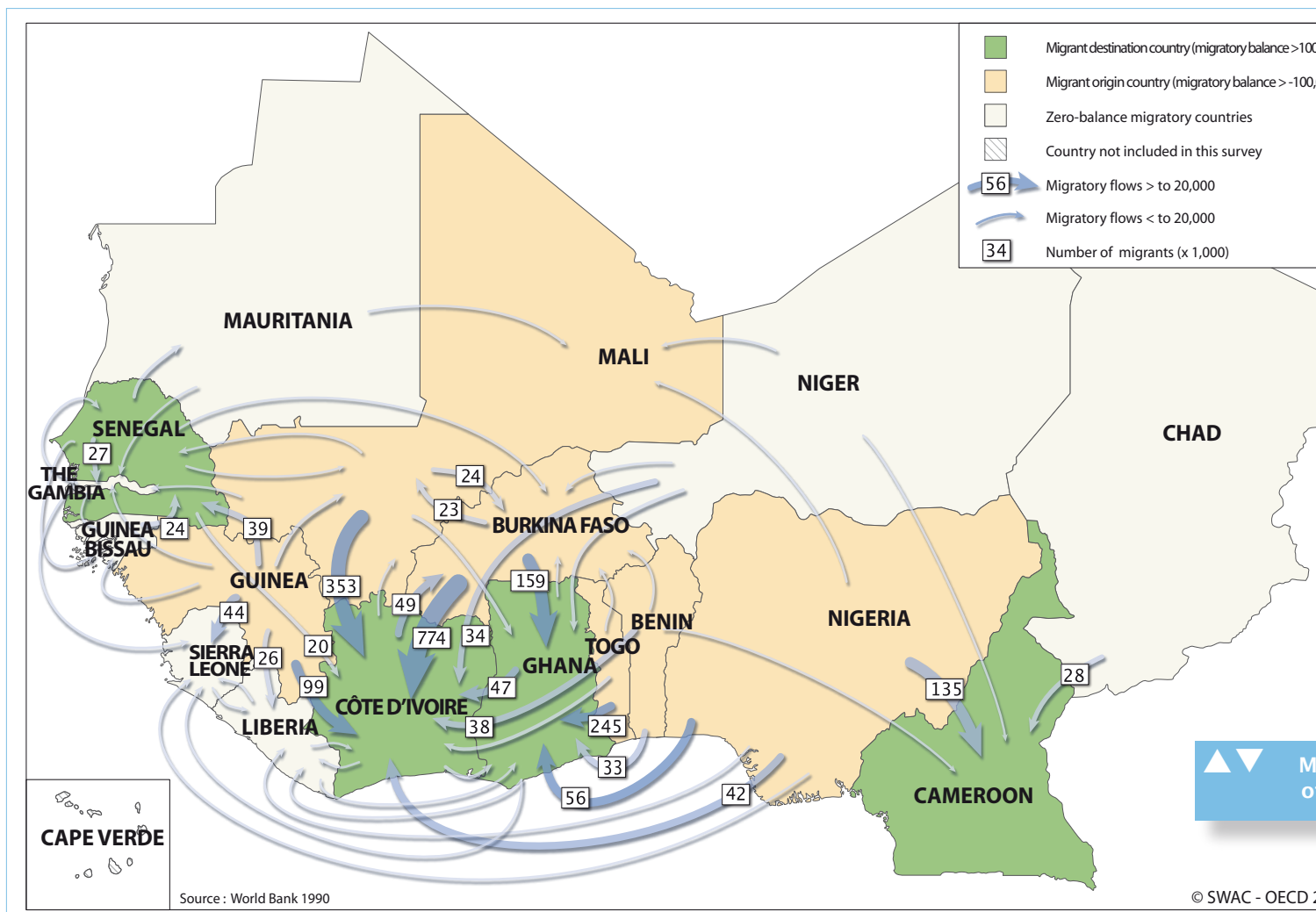
From the 1970s, three migratory sub-systems guided regional movements: the Ghana-Côte d’Ivoire pole mainly because of the cocoa and coffee economy, and Nigeria and its petroleum godsend, as well as Senegal because of trade and groundnuts.

Within this context, movements were, however, irregular. In a short period, they could change or reverse. This illustrates the remarkable capacity of the regional population to adapt. The case of Côte d’Ivoire is a good example:

- 1975-1978 was a period of economic boom. Between 1975 and 1977, coffee and cocoa prices tripled. Producer prices increased sharply. State revenue and public investment programmes exploded. Stimulated by demand, private investments increased at an average annual rate of 19%. From 1976 to 1980, the net migration of Côte d’Ivoire was +1.3 million people, including 700,000 from Burkina Faso, 300,000 from Mali and 100,000 from Guinea.<sup>19</sup> The “settlement boom” therefore followed the “economic boom”.
- From 1986 to 1993 was marked by recession. From 1981 to 1993, there were successive phases of adjustment marked by the downward trend of private investment and a sharp decline in public investment. A new reversal of the terms of trade in 1986 (-20%), which continued until 1993, plunged the country into economic crisis, which affected migratory movements (reduction and reorientation of movements).
- The 1998 census showed that up to 4 million foreign nationals lived in Côte d’Ivoire out of a total population of 16 million. Since the outbreak of the crisis in 1999, it has been more difficult to estimate. However, it is too early to talk of a structural change in intra-regional economic migration.

In Nigeria, between 1970 and 1980, the economy was influenced by the oil boom. Oil revenue was invested in trade, services, and industry, attracting skilled and unskilled labour. In 1983, the country had 2.5 million West African immigrants, 81% of whom were from Ghana, 12% from Niger and 3% from Togo and Benin. In the mid-1980s, the economic recession led to the expulsion of irregular migrants, who

19. World Bank, 1990.



would subsequently return. After polarising West African migration for more than one decade, Nigeria itself became a country of emigration to the outside world.

**I**n Senegal, migratory movements came from neighbouring countries (Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Mauritania) and from the Gulf of Benin (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo). The first foreign community was from Guinea (from 300,000 to 47,000 people between 1970 and 1997). The Guineans are active in wholesale and retail trade, as well as in urban transport and laundry. Other communities are also involved in the urban economy. Furthermore, Senegalese emigration is historically linked to the movement of skilled labour in the francophone zone during the colonial period, particularly to Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Gabon. The political and economic instability of traditional host countries explains, among other things, the circular nature of this migration. At the moment, Senegalese emigrants are turning increasingly to new African destinations (Cameroon, Angola, Congo, and South Africa) or international destinations.

**N**owadays, the three sub-systems continue to attract West African migrations. However, their role has changed: Côte d'Ivoire has become a transit country, a stepping stone for wealth accumulation before

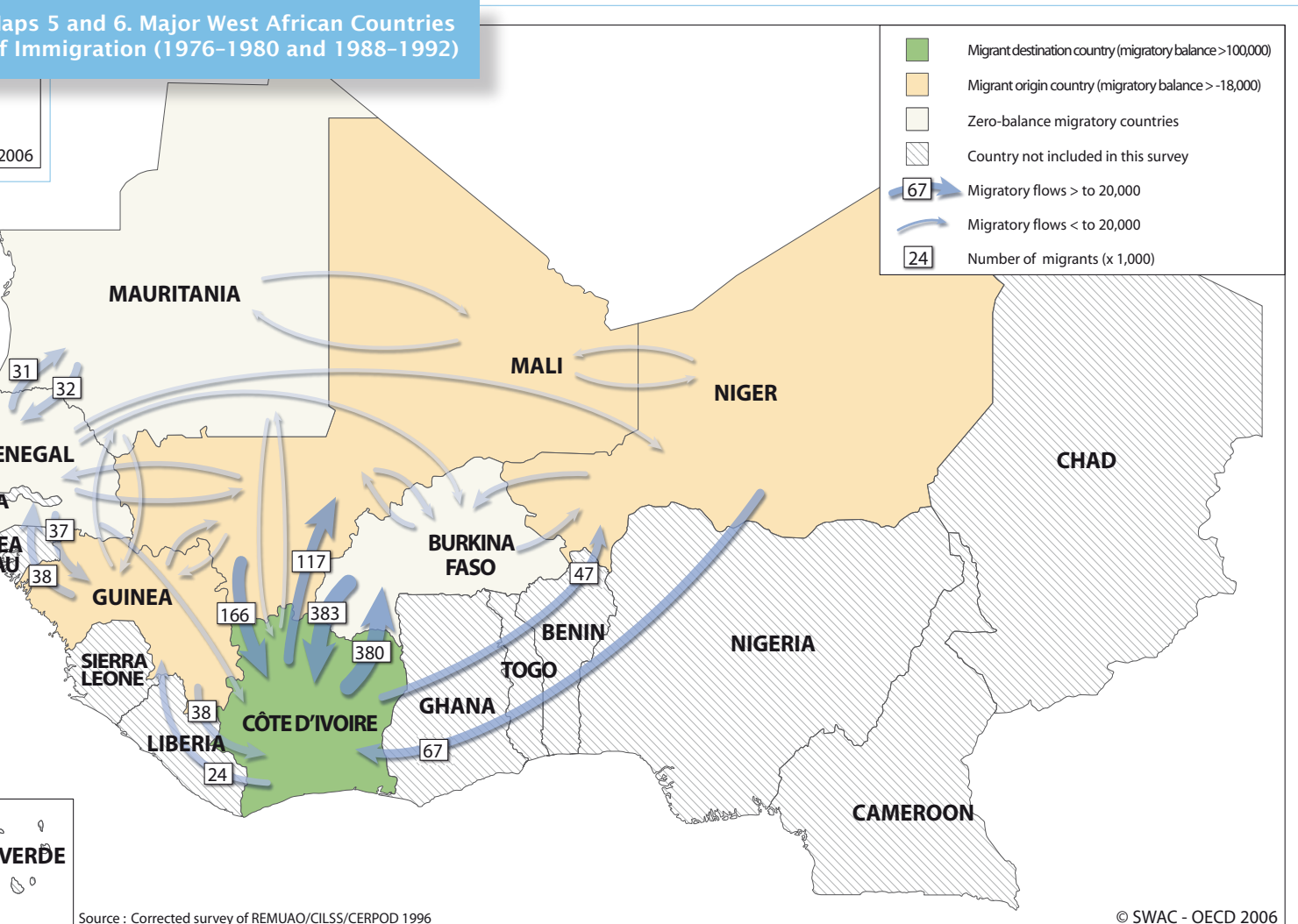


The existence of employment and production areas was at first enough to satisfy this intra-African circular mobility. This mobility henceforth opens up to other areas in search for new opportunities.

Since independence, there have been successive tensions in West Africa, in particular: the Biafran war in Nigeria from 1967 to 1970, the elimination of the political opposition leaders of the Sékou Touré regime in Guinea, the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau from 1963 to 1973, border tensions between Senegal and Mauritania in 1989, the Chadian crisis from 1982 to 1990, the Tuareg conflict in Mali and Niger from 1990 to 1997, conflicts in the Mano River countries from 1989 to 2000 and, more recently, the crises in Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan. These episodes generate more or less a massive exodus within the countries concerned (internally displaced) and abroad (refugees).<sup>20</sup>

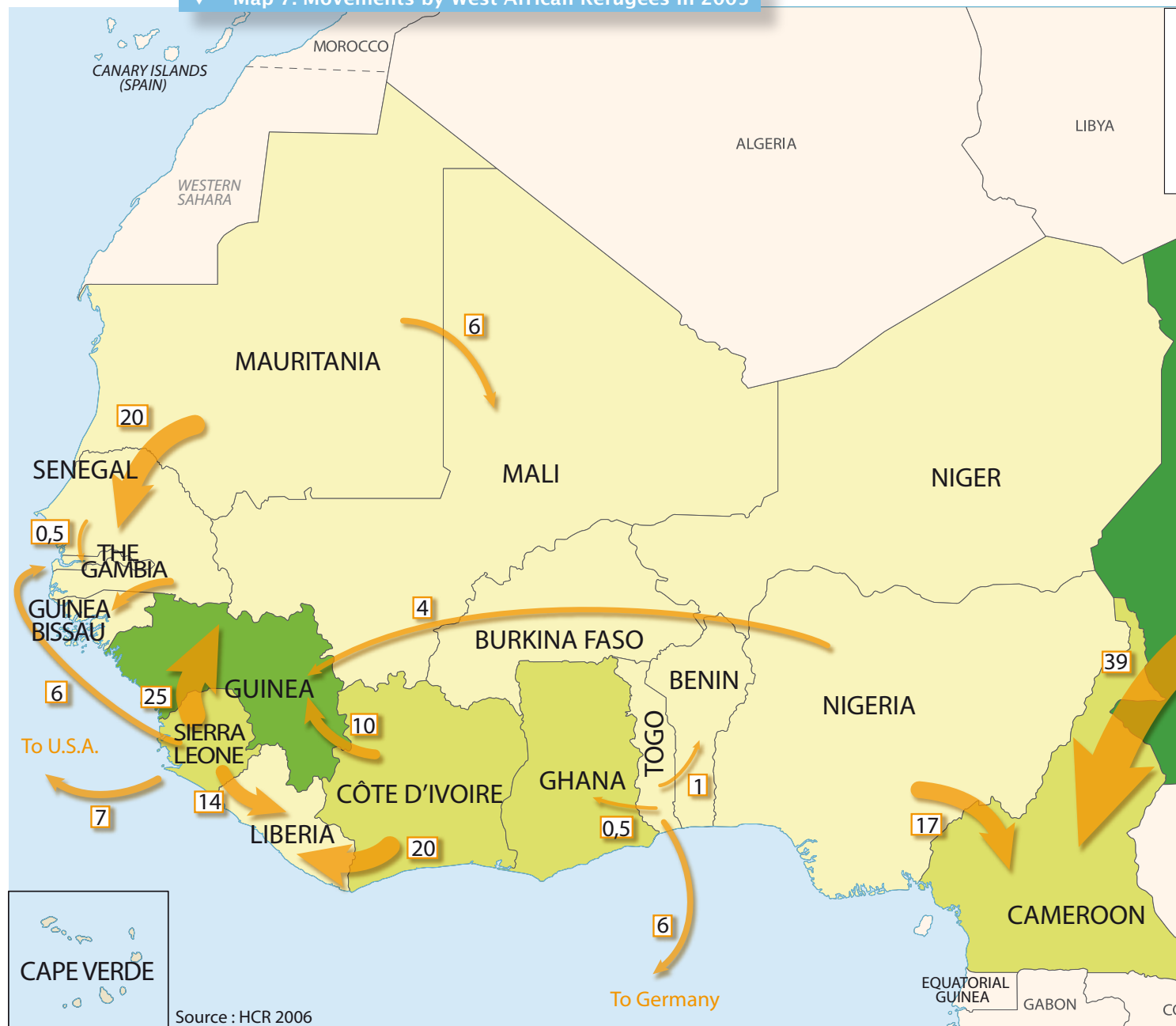
20. At the global level, refugees account for 4.6% of the migrant population (9.2 million out of 200 million). 70% live in developed countries. Even though this figure remains very high, it has been falling sharply since 2000 (-24%). In West Africa, 52.7% of the refugees were women.

### Maps 5 and 6. Major West African Countries of Immigration (1976-1980 and 1988-1992)

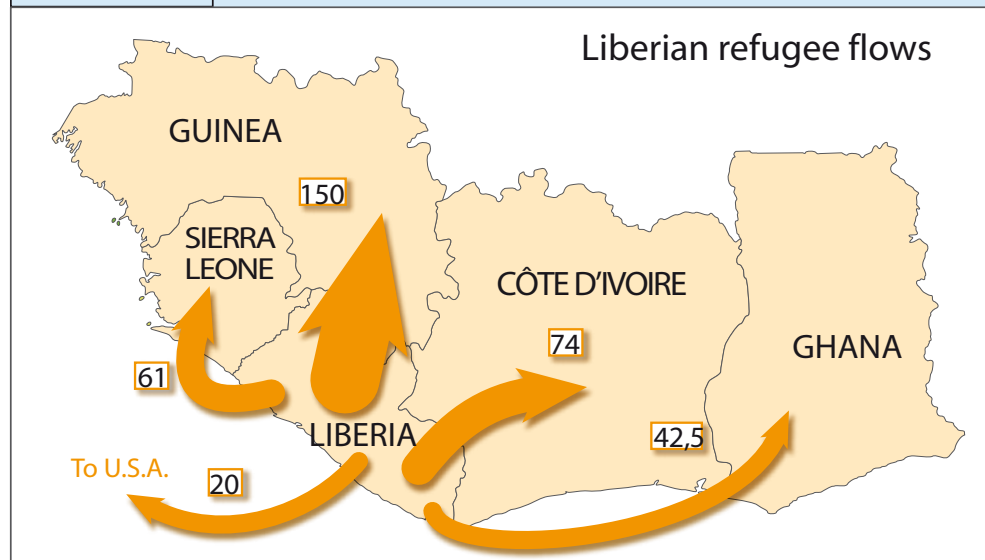


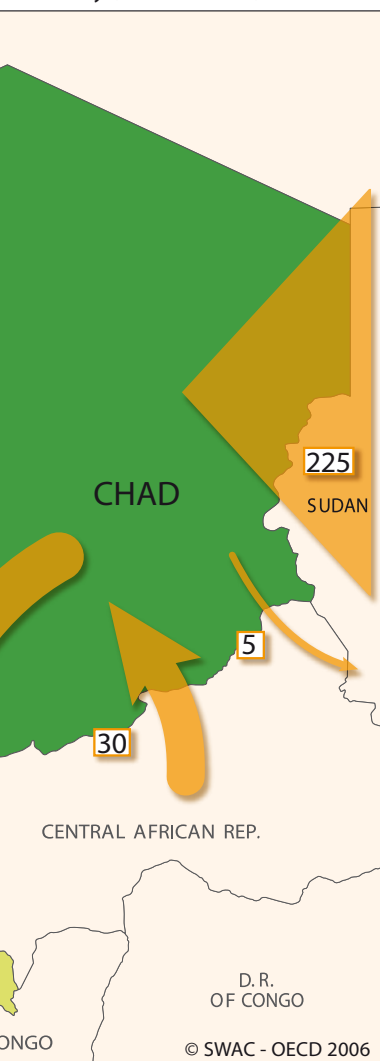
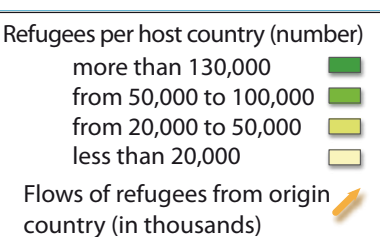


▼ Map 7. Movements by West African Refugees in 2005



Liberian refugee flows





Africa is the continent which receives the highest number of refugees in the world: 2.7 million.<sup>21</sup> After Central Africa, West Africa in 2004 was the second region of asylum on the continent with 725,000 refugees. This figure does not take into account the numerous daily cross-border movements of people going back and forth between their work place and the refugee camps along the borders, rest areas for the night. From one year to another, statistics vary significantly. In the 1990s, Guinea received refugees fleeing from neighbouring Liberia, and then from Sierra Leone. Over the same period, Côte d'Ivoire received a large number of Liberian nationals who were then forced to go to Ghana in 2002. In 2005, Chad received 225,000 Sudanese.

Since the movements of West African refugees came as a result of poor people fleeing in emergency situations, they mainly fled to neighbouring countries, in particular the nearest border countries. The number of people who had the means to seek asylum in developed countries was marginal. Experience shows that the desire to return is very strong (nearly 600,000 Liberians returned to their country in 2004). The longer the exile, the more refugees engage in local economic activities, establish social relations and settle in the host area or country. These populations, some of whom lose their refugee status over time, then become migrants.

### III. Some Issues for the Future

#### 3.1 Emigration to Counterbalance Population Decline in Europe?

Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, is a continent in the process of populating. Though half as populated as Europe<sup>22</sup> in 1960, it now has 1.2 times the number of inhabitants. In 25 years, it will be twice as populated as the European continent. Africa's youth population is also significant. In 2005, 65% of the sub-Saharan population was below 25 years of age as compared to 30% in Europe.

On the contrary, many developed countries are in the process of depopulating. The European Union is no exception. According to Eurostat, no EU member country (apart from Ireland) attained the fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman required for rejuvenating the population. With zero immigration, the EU would lose 3% of its population, or 15 million inhabitants, by the year 2030.<sup>23</sup>

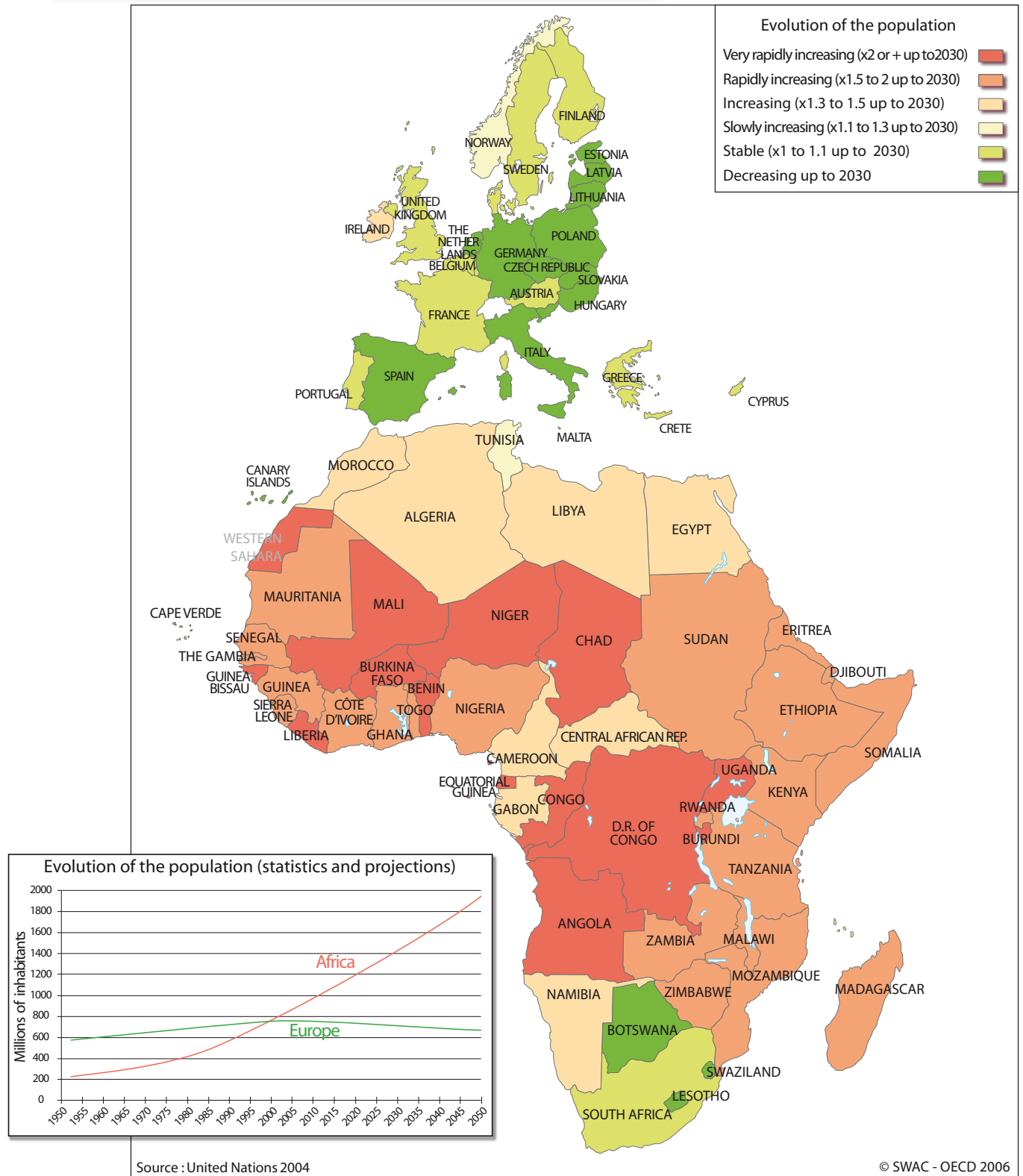
The United Nations has proposed projections taking into account immigration rates comparable to those of today. These calculations show that while the EU population will increase by 1.5% in 2030 (an increase of 8 million inhabitants), this would not prevent Italy from losing 2.6 million inhabitants; Poland would lose 2.3 million, and Germany 1.2 million, etc. Some countries, such as Ireland, Great Britain and France, are the exceptions. However, for all the countries, the ageing population poses the problem of maintaining the working population at an acceptable

21. The data concerns the population with "refugee" status as defined by HCR, thereby excluding other populations such as those who are stateless, internally displaced, repatriated, etc.

22. Definition of Europe by the United Nations: 47 countries including the Russian Federation, but not Turkey.

23. For example: Spain (-1.6 million inhabitants.), Italy (-5 million), Germany (-7.5 million). No country recorded a dynamic population, even though some of them fared better than others, in particular Ireland and France.

Map 8. Population Decline and Growth in Europe and Africa

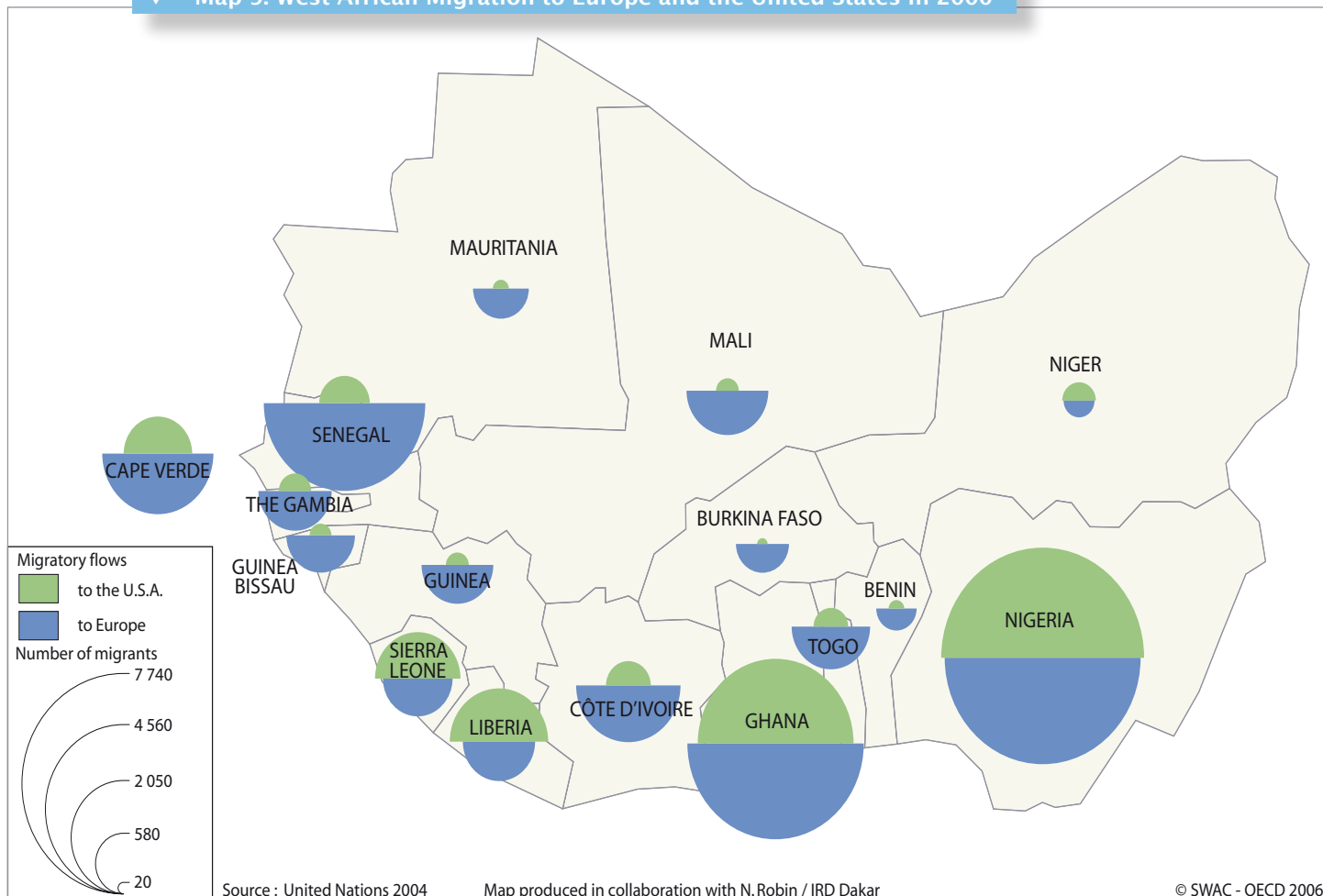


level. Some scenarios are alarming. Accordingly, the EU with 25 countries could lose 48 million of its working population between 2020 and 2050.<sup>24</sup> This median scenario indicates that the potential working population of the EU would fall after 2015. The replacement index for the working population would fall from the current 1.1 to 0.76 in 2020.

24. Median scenario of the Population Division of the United Nations, 2004.

In view of these prospects, the European Union met in Lisbon in 2000<sup>25</sup> and began a process of capitalizing as much as possible on the potential active population of member countries. The countries set the target employment rate at 70% of the working age population in 2010. The mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy shows that these targets would not be

Map 9. West African Migration to Europe and the United States in 2000



attained in many member countries. In order to offset the shortage of labour estimated at 13 million and attain the targets of 2010, the entry of 43 million migrants would be necessary.<sup>26</sup>

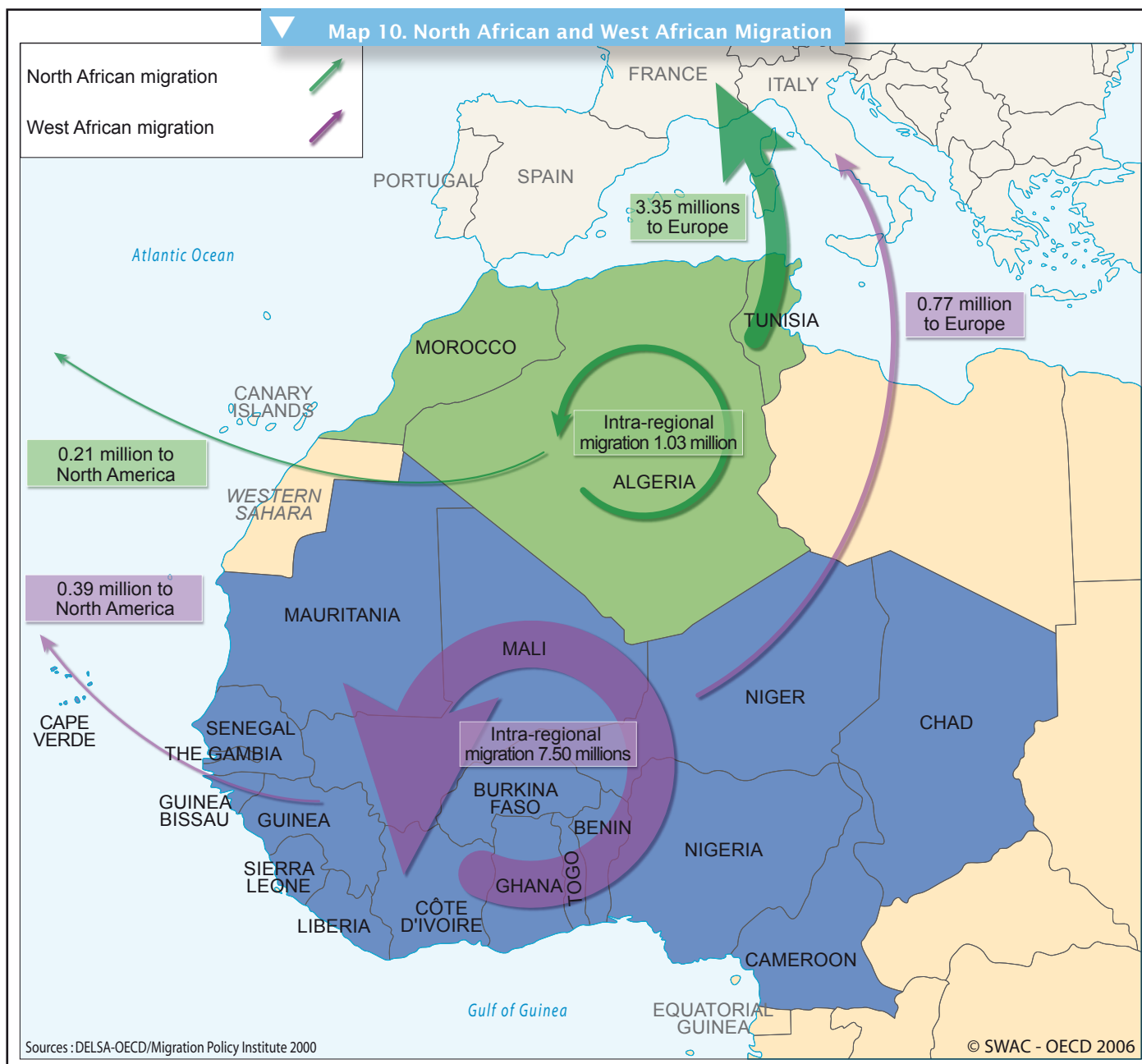
While debate by experts is not closed on the exact level of European labour requirements, the idea that Europe will have to meet the challenge of a declining population and the need for a working population from outside is now generally accepted.

### 3.2 A New Geography of Migration

In light of demographic challenges, many factors will determine the geography of world and African migrations in coming decades: economic growth in developed countries, emerging countries, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, increased exploitation of West African oil resources (Nigeria, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon,

25. Extraordinary European Council of Heads of State and Government held on 23 and 24 March 2000 on the theme "Employment, Economic Reform and Social Cohesion - Towards a Europe of Innovation and Knowledge".

26. Feld, 2004.



etc.) and its economic and financial impacts, the trend of commodity prices, world geo-strategic relations and risks of instability.

Within this context of major uncertainties, it seems that some trends will continue. The first trend concerns the increase in international labour migration, the consequence of economic globalisation and trade development. Unless exceptional circumstances arise, the growth recorded over the past five decades should continue. The United Nations suggests that the number of international migrants to developed countries should reach 2.2 million per year over the 2005–2050 period. This figure represents only 4% increase in the population of developing countries over the same period.

The second trend reinforces the first. It indicates that migration policies of developed countries are geared towards selective migration which will nevertheless increase because of problems of demographic recession.



27. For example, in Eastern Europe where most countries have the disadvantages of a decreasing birth rate and emigration. Forecasts suggest that Poland could lose 4% of its population by 2030, the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia) stand to lose 10%.
28. Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia / Spain, France, Italy, Malta, and Portugal.

The third trend is that of high mobility in Africa, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, due to very high demographic growth. This mobility will, as in the past, lead to internal, regional and international movements.

Despite these trends, the changing nature of migration throughout history makes it very difficult to propose any forecasts, and also raises a few questions. What will be the position of West Africa in migration to developed countries? Will West Africans find new host countries in Europe,<sup>27</sup> America, and even Asia? What will be the relationship between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa? What is the future of mobility within the West African region?

### 3.2.1 The Relationships Between West Africa, North Africa and Europe

A number of factors link North Africa to Europe: in the seven European countries where there is high African immigration (Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and United Kingdom), North African nationals are by far the highest in population, except in the United Kingdom. The Moroccan migrant communities are dominant in Italy, Belgium, Spain, and, to a lesser extent, in France and the Netherlands. Today, 5% of the population of Morocco lives in Europe. Algeria and Tunisia have historic

migratory links with France. The geographic proximity of Europe to North Africa is strengthened even confirmed by “migratory proximity”: the three large European countries bordering the Mediterranean (Spain, France and Italy) are the major host countries.

This double proximity calls for dialogue. Four considerations should be taken into account:

- North Africa has a reservoir of highly skilled labour. In Morocco, 75% of unemployed women have university degrees, and students with higher education wait for between one and three years to obtain their first job.
- North Africa is an important economic area for Europe (particularly for its energy supply, as well as for the solvent market it represents).
- The demographic pressure in North Africa is less than that of sub-Saharan Africa.
- A recent phenomenon, which could become significant, is developing: expatriation of retired Europeans to the southern Mediterranean coasts in search of more pleasant and less expensive living conditions. Several tens of thousands of French nationals have already settled in Tunisia and Morocco.

Europe considers North Africa a close neighbour and partner. Indeed, Europe could encourage North Africa to provide help in exchange for compensation and protection

#### Box 2. Will measures to restrict immigration to developed countries have any impacts on mobility within the West African region? The case of Senegal

For some time now, the authorities of Dakar airport (one of the busiest airports in the region with flights to Europe, North America and Middle East) are required to ensure that travellers transiting to Paris have airport transit visas issued by French Consulates; this obligation is based on a bilateral agreement between France and Senegal. Furthermore, Senegal is required to comply with the texts of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and in particular with Annex 9 of the Chicago Convention which stipulates that “operators shall take precautions at the point of embarkation to ensure that passengers are in possession of the documents prescribed by the States of transit and destination for control purposes”.<sup>28</sup>

The problem lies less in airport control itself than in the fact that movement within the ECOWAS zone is free and requires no visa. In other words, Gambian and Guinean nationals can enter freely into Senegal and be sent back from Dakar airport by the Senegalese authorities if they attempt to board a plane for Europe or North America without the documents required by the country of destination.

Do decisions such as the institution of airport transit visas not run the risk of putting some West African countries in an awkward position as regards the integrated region to which they belong? Is there not the fear that the increasingly restrictive measures of the North will influence mobility, which has been defended for a long time by the ECOWAS treaties?

Source: IRD 2006

from clandestine sub-Saharan immigration. This is in line with the Community initiatives (Barcelona Declaration to establish a global European-Mediterranean partnership), bilateral initiatives (Spanish aid to Morocco and Italian aid to Libya for border surveillance) or multilateral initiatives (5+5 Forum associating North African countries and the five Mediterranean European countries).<sup>29</sup> European-Mediterranean dialogue therefore seems to be well on track.

On the other hand, co-operation in migration and development between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa is still far from being structured. For the moment, it is limited to bilateral discussions between a European country and an African country (Spain – Senegal, Spain – Mauritania, France – Mali, France – Senegal, etc.) for the implementation of more effective methods of limiting departures or incentives for the return of migrants in exchange for compensation. These bilateral approaches certainly have their limits. Clandestine emigration has become difficult through one country to another: from North Africa to Mauritania, then to Senegal and Guinea. New routes could develop through Egypt and the Red Sea. Furthermore, implemented bilateral measures are not coordinated and could lead to misunderstandings between West African countries. A bloc-to-bloc dialogue between the European Union and West Africa is probably a logical option, knowing that the EU and ECOWAS, joined by Mauritania, have embarked on the implementation of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) which envisages in the short-term the creation of a free trade area between the two entities.

Lastly, a tripartite European-Mediterranean-West African dialogue is also needed as a logical and necessary prospect, since it would help bring together, around the same table, the emigration countries of West Africa, emigration and transit countries of the same region (Senegal, Mauritania, in particular) as well as emigration and transit countries of North Africa.

### 3.2.2 What does the Future hold for Regional Mobility?

West African human geography has evolved significantly over the past few decades. Mobility has led to a network of towns that did not exist in

**Box 3. Migrant Remittances and ODA in West Africa per Capita in 1995 (in dollars)**

	Average years 90		2004	
	Remittances	ODA	Remittances	ODA
Benin	18	47	7	7
Burkina Faso	10	42	3	3
Cameroon	1	40	0.7	47
Cape Verde	205	312	186	282
Côte d'Ivoire	8	62	8	8.5
The Gambia	n.d.	60	5	42
Ghana	1	37	4	65
Guinea	0.4	55	5	30
Guinea Bissau	2	112	15	50.8
Liberia	n.d.	41	n.d.	66
Mali	11	46	12	43
Mauritania	5	105	0.7	60
Niger	1	35	2	40
Nigeria	8	2	18	4
Senegal	15	73	45	96
Sierra Leone	n.d.	33	5	68
Chad	0.2	36	n.d.	34
Togo	5	41	25	10

Source: World Bank and OECD

<sup>29</sup> Eleventh Edition, July 2002, ICAO.

1960, populated empty regions, and drawn the Sahelian fringes closest to the desert to the South. Intra-regional migration and urbanisation, in particular, have played a key role in the reconstruction of settlements.

While the movement of persons has always been a reality in West Africa, some migration has been forced during political or economic tensions: expulsions in Côte d'Ivoire (1964), Ghana (1969), Nigeria (1983 and 1985), Mauritania and Senegal (1989), Benin in 1998, or more or less massive fleeing of populations that feel threatened (Côte d'Ivoire since end 1999). A number of bilateral agreements have been signed between countries of origin and host countries: Burkina Faso – Mali in 1963, Togo – Mauritania in 1965 or Burkina Faso – Côte d'Ivoire in 1990. It is difficult to conclude that these events have had limiting impacts on intra-regional migration since such migration continues to develop.

Despite these tensions, intra-regional migration has played a beneficial regulating role for the areas of departure as well as for the host areas. There is consensus that the “Ivorian miracle” of the 1980s owes much to the inflow of Sahelian labour to the cocoa and coffee plantations of the south of the country. Similarly, it is very likely that the central plateau of Burkina Faso would have found it difficult to sustain a fast growing population on steadily deteriorating lands. If there had not been any urbanisation or migration since 1960, Burkina Faso would have had a rural population of 15 million inhabitants instead of the current 6 million. Migratory strategies are in response to the search for economic opportunities, and can adapt to markets by diversifying destinations or activities. While the freedom of movement reduces social and demographic pressure in the areas of departure, it “limits the propensity of migrants to settle permanently in host areas”<sup>30</sup> of the region or abroad.

30. Ouedraogo, 2002.





## IV. What are the Prospects?

In 1979, ECOWAS member States adopted the Protocol on free movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment.<sup>31</sup> These provisions partially entered into force in 1980. In particular, an ECOWAS passport was introduced,<sup>32</sup> with an identity card that is still sufficient for WAEMU nationals. The ECOWAS zone, despite the persistence of petty annoyances, is institutionally becoming a sphere of free movement. Migration takes place mainly by land, over more than 15,000 km of borders between ECOWAS countries and of which there is an additional 8,500 km between these countries and their neighbours, namely Mauritania, North Africa, Chad and Cameroon. These borders do not correspond to the transnational socio-cultural areas within which mobility is so natural that it is difficult to imagine that it can be forced. For example, the Hausa zone has 30 million people in North Nigeria and Niger, and the Mande zone has 15 million people in Senegal, Mali, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

Furthermore, it is expected that demographic pressure will continue in the future. Average projections by the United Nations indicate that the population of Niger could reach 50 million in 2050, that of Mali and Burkina Faso 40 million, and that of Côte d'Ivoire 34 million. Is the vision of a Sahel more densely populated than the coast realistic, and under what conditions? Can we imagine that this new (and last) phase of demographic transition in West Africa will not be accompanied by a spatial reconstruction of population distribution? How can we respond to the need for mobility of a population with 60% of people under 25 years of age? What will be the roles of urbanisation, intra-national mobility, as well as regional and international migration within this reconstruction?

Will the future host areas necessarily be the same as those of today? In West Africa are there any areas with significant agricultural potential, relatively low rural population densities and growing towns likely to offer opportunities and services to the rural areas? The areas eradicated from onchocercosis<sup>33</sup> covering 850,000 km<sup>2</sup> amply meet this profile. Being on the borders of Sahel countries and the Gulf of Benin, their populations are currently growing relatively rapidly. Their development requires a regional approach which alone will better optimise their hosting and development potential. Furthermore, is it possible to better promote the rapid development of the network of secondary towns in the region by

31. Protocol A/P1/5/79 on the free movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment.
32. Standard Model adopted by the Conference Heads of State and Government in 2000. The passport was issued in Benin and Senegal in 2003.



33. The entire zone covers the north of Côte d'Ivoire, the centre, the south and west of Burkina Faso, the north of Guinea, the south of Mali, the east of Senegal, the north of Togo, the north of Ghana, the north of Benin and the south-west of Niger..

making each of them a local pole of urbanisation and development? Is the varying “population” sufficiently present in the development programmes of the large regional river basins?

The best strategy for West African countries to meet the needs of mobility of the population and progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals defined by the United Nations would likely be dynamic action towards regional territorial development, development of new economic centres, and financing of infrastructure.

Could this strategy be incorporated in the implementation framework of the EU/ECOWAS-Mauritania economic partnership agreement? In the negotiation mandate provided by the Heads of State of the region to ECOWAS in collaboration with the WAEMU, support for the regional integration process is top priority.

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## Databases

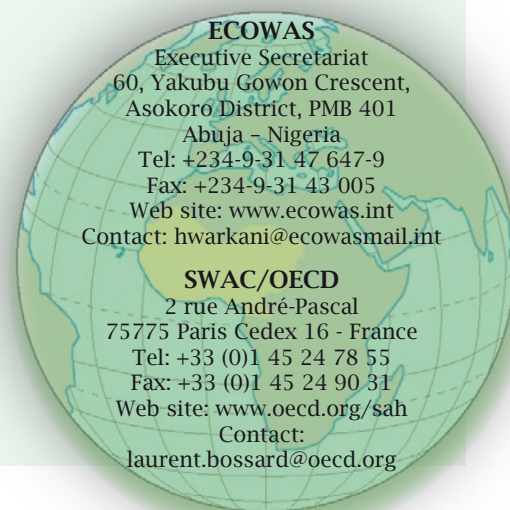
Migration Policy Institute	Data on world migrations	<a href="http://www.migrationinformation.org/index.cfm">http://www.migrationinformation.org/index.cfm</a>
OECD	Database on immigrants and expatriates in OECD countries	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/document/47/0,2340,en_2649_33931_34841519_1_1_1_1,00.html">http://www.oecd.org/document/47/0,2340,en_2649_33931_34841519_1_1_1_1,00.html</a>
UN	World Migrant Stock: The 2006 Revision Population Database	<a href="http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=1">http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=1</a>

## Glossary

Asylum (territorial)	Protection granted by a State to an alien on its own territory, based on the principle of non-refoulement, leading to the enjoyment of certain internationally recognised rights.
Asylum seeker	Person seeking to be admitted into a country awaiting decision on his/her application for refugee status.
Brain drain	Emigration of trained and talented individuals to a third country, due to causes such as conflict or lack of opportunities in their country of origin.
Clandestine/irregular migration	Secret or concealed migration in breach of immigration requirements. It can occur when a non-national breaches the entry regulations of a country, or having entered a country legally overstay in breach of immigration regulations
Country of destination	Country that is a destination for migratory flows (legal or illegal).
Country of origin	Country that is a source of migratory flows (legal or illegal).
Country of transit	Country through which migratory flows (legal or illegal) move.
Diaspora	Any people or ethnic population that leave their traditional ethnic homelands, being dispersed throughout other parts of the world.
Economic migrant	Person leaving his/her habitual place of residence to settle outside his/her country of origin in order to improve his/her quality of life.
Emigration	The act of departing or exiting from one State with a view to settle in another
Expulsion	Act by an authority of the State with the intention of securing the removal of a person or persons against their will from the territory of that State.
Family reunification/reunion	Process whereby family members already separated through forced or voluntary migration regroup in a country other than the one of their origin.
Forced migration	Movements of populations caused by the need to flee from danger, persecutions and violence.
Freedom of movement	This right is made up of three elements: freedom of movement within the territory of a country, the right to leave any country (including his own) and to return to his country.
Immigration	Process by which the national of a country moves into another country for the purpose of settlement.
Migrant flow	Number of migrants counted as moving to or from a country to access employment or to establish themselves over a defined period of time.
Migrant stock	Number of migrants residing in a country at a particular point in time.
Migration	Process of any movement of persons, internal or international, whatever its length and causes.
Protection	All activities aimed at obtaining respect for individual rights in accordance with international law.
Pull factors	Factors that attract migrants to the country of destination.
Push factors	Factors that drive migrants to leave their countries of origin.
Refugee	A person who, «owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country».

Source: <http://www.un-ngls.org/IOM-migration-Glossary.pdf>

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