

# End the 'harmful narrative'; migration is a net-gain for Africa, finds UN report

The large-scale migration of people within Africa tends to boost growth and lifts the continent's whole economy, a new United Nations report has said, urging the world to dispel misconceptions and "harmful narratives" targeting migration.

Cross-border movement offers "[a chance for a better life](#), with the social and economic benefits extending to both source and destination countries, as well as future generations," said Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary-General of the [UN Conference on Trade and Development](#) (UNCTAD), launching the agency's [Economic Development in Africa](#) report on Thursday.

"Our analysis shows this to be true for millions of African migrants and their families," he said, adding that public perception, "particularly as it relates to international African migration, is rife with misconceptions that have become part of a divisive, misleading and harmful narrative."

According to the report, remittances travelling back home from migrant workers both outside and inside Africa rose – on average – from \$38.4 billion between 2005-2007, to \$64.9 billion, during the two-year period up to the end of 2016. By that point, remittances accounted for over half of the capital flows within the continent. Likewise, migrants contributed nearly 20 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Côte d'Ivoire according to figures from 2008, and 13 per cent in Rwanda (2012 figures).

Overall, some 19 million international migrants moved within Africa, and 17 million Africans left the continent during last year. The continent was also the destination for about 5.5 million people from outside, the report found.

## **Close relation between trade and migration**

The report also provides evidence of the "intimate correlation" between migration and trade – two sides of the same coin – said Junior Roy Davis, the lead author of the report.

"Africa is on the cusp of tremendous change," he said, noting the recently agreed African Continental Free Trade Area and the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons.

"In this context the report contributes to a better understanding of the implications of intra-African migration for the continent's socio-economic transformation," added Mr. Davis.

## **Continent hosting majority of the world's refugees and displaced persons**

However, alongside the numbers of migrants moving and working within Africa, the continent also has some of the [highest number of people forced from their homes](#) due to conflict or natural disasters.

On top of the development gains lost at home, there is a significant economic and social burden faced by host countries, leaving many migrants dependent on international humanitarian aid.