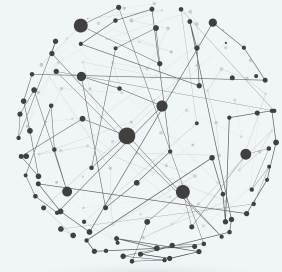


MIGRATION STRATEGY GROUP

ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT



POLICY BRIEF HOW TO UPGRADE GERMANY'S POLICY TOWARDS AFRICAN COUNTRIES ON MIGRATION

November 2019

Jessica Bither and Astrid Ziebarth

ABOUT THE MIGRATION STRATEGY GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Migration Strategy Group on International Cooperation and Development (MSG) is an initiative by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Bertelsmann Foundation, and the Robert Bosch Foundation. The MSG brings about 25–30 representatives from different German ministries and other relevant actors together at regular intervals, in order to discuss current migration-related foreign and development policy issues. From 2018–2019, the MSG focused on ‘mixed migration’ flows from African countries to Europe – and particularly focused on Germany’s cooperation with countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

While this policy brief is part of the MSG project, it is not the direct result of any specific MSG discussions and reflects the opinions of the authors alone.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Relations with African countries have become more important for Germany, and its political engagement with them has noticeably increased. The issue of migration is not the only reason for this, but it has been one of the most important political drivers in recent years. Most likely, the African continent will remain a focal point for migration-related policy issues for Europe. Geographic proximity, demographic changes, geopolitical upheavals, and the forces of climate change, conflict and war, as well as an increasing desire of many to migrate to Europe, mean that Germany has a key interest in deepening partnerships and cooperation with African countries in order to better manage migration between the two continents.

The increased political attention that relations to the continent is receiving in Germany is laudable and a step in the right direction. But overall, despite an abundance of new initiatives and significant financial investments, Germany's approach on migration-specific goals is still focused more on shorter-term technical cooperation, at times timid in using the political leverage it may have, and less part of a greater diplomatic engagement strategy. Building a deeper partnership with African countries may seem daunting. But, done properly, this could be the beating heart of a real migration diplomacy and a serious German foreign policy on migration.

The basis of an upgraded German policy must be durable partnerships between German and African actors and a more coherent foreign policy on migration. The way partnerships with African countries are built and which principles they apply will determine whether Germany can come closer to meeting this goal. Partnerships will also only be possible with African states that have a genuine interest in building one. But, if successful, they can serve as blueprints for Germany to engage with other countries and regions. The following measures would help Germany achieve this:

ESTABLISH REGULAR TRUST-BUILDING VENUES BEYOND OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

A partnership approach would involve a deliberative process of finding common interests, building trust, and managing expectations, and it would be part of improving the awareness and legitimacy in Africa of German interests as well. This should include policymakers willing to listen to African partners, rather than simply stating demands in a quid pro quo negotiation. To achieve this, government consultations should be flanked by more informal or Track Two processes that involve other actors and stakeholders from diasporas, civil society, the private sector, or academia. These could be supported through Germany's government or non-state actors, or through a mixture of public and private finance.

BUILD COUNTRY AND REGIONAL EXPERTISE IN GERMAN INSTITUTIONS

In Germany, more expertise on African countries — in ministries, in the policy planning units, or in think tanks — will be crucial to bolster more robust and strategic policymaking, including on migration matters. This could in turn help Germany develop a long-term strategy to maneuver more systematically and strategically in the new geopolitical environment in Africa.

INCORPORATE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

It will be important to increase strategic communication capacity and to develop more strategic messaging of what Germany's aims overall are on migration with regard to specific African countries or regions. This includes defining more clearly what aims it has with partnership countries. It also includes thinking through how the government can communicate this domestically. A different domestic narrative (from

the current one still dominated by Africa as a poverty- and conflict-stricken continent) would provide more room for maneuver externally—say, through engaging small and medium German enterprises, or by laying the groundwork to provide more mobility options for African citizens to come to Germany for study or for work.

UPGRADE GERMANY'S OF INFORMATION CENTERS FOR JOBS, MIGRATION, AND INTEGRATION INTO PARTIAL OUTPOSTS OF A FOREIGN POLICY ON MIGRATION

The role of Germany's new information centers should be rethought and reconfigured to make at least parts of them outposts of a foreign policy on migration. With additional sections they could become places where different ministries (that is, the Foreign Office, the Interior Ministry, and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) incorporate certain services, where ties to private actors (for example, German firms) are established, or where new programs (say, on reintegration efforts) in conjunction with local actors or international institutions are tested and coordinated.

In addition, specific migration-related policy approaches should focus on the following:

USING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS AND MOBILITY OPTIONS MORE, WITH A CLEAR LOGIC IN MIND

The creation of more legal migration pathways is always at the top on the policy agenda of African countries of origin as they benefit from increased remittances as well as the skills and know-how of diaspora members. The call for more legal pathways, however, is often vague and ill defined. Germany could include legal channels into its migration policy mix far more strategically and with a clearer view of which goals they can serve. Different reasons for offering legal pathways (for instance, in negotiations, or to reduce irregular migration more structurally, or to help recruit and attract labor) should be used more purposefully and specifically.

FOSTERING MOBILITY IN SKILLS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Germany's government could promote mobility options for short-term stays or longer apprenticeships such as the global skills partnerships mentioned in Objective 18 of the Global Compact on Migration.¹ The new labor-migration law that will come into effect in 2020 could be used as a starting point to better bundle and promote mobility opportunities, such as the new job-search visa for skilled employment or apprenticeship/training positions for citizens of select countries. Opportunities for exchange and visas should be provided especially in higher education and employment training.

FINDING NEW SOLUTIONS TO THE CHANGING DISPLACEMENT AND PROTECTION LANDSCAPE

There are significant structural challenges in the medium-to-long term that Germany will have to adjust to. This will require being creative and innovative with local partners and international organizations to find alternatives to refugee camps. It will also require addressing internally displaced persons that may often end up in rapidly urbanized areas alongside refugees and migrants from other countries, potentially increasing tensions among different groups. Refugee protection in this sense will move beyond short-term humanitarian-aid approaches. Creating smart solutions to unmanaged urbanization will be part of this. Germany could also test options for setting up a system or legal pathway for displaced people that have certain skills needed in the country. These developments need to be part of a wider migration outlook toward Africa.

¹ Michael Clemens, "Global Skill Partnerships: A Proposal for Technical Training in a Mobile World (Brief)", Center for Global Development, 11. October, 2017.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a notable increase in Germany's political engagement towards African countries over the past few years. The issue of migration is not the only reason for this, nor is it always an explicit one, but it has been one of the most important political drivers since the record number of arrivals of migrants in Germany in 2015 and 2016. Those years highlighted the many deficiencies of the country's migration-management system and showed just how essential cooperation with third states is. Most likely, the African continent will remain a focal point for migration-related policy issues for Europe. Geographic proximity, demographic changes, geopolitical upheavals, and the forces of climate change, conflict and war, as well as an increasing desire of many to migrate to Europe, mean that Germany has a key interest in deepening partnerships and cooperation with African countries in order to better manage migration between the two continents. Doing so is a daunting task, however, given the complexity of the migration picture and the diversity among African countries and regions. But, designed and pursued sensibly, it can also provide the opportunity to embed migration more holistically into a coherent strategy toward the continent that also includes Germany's economic, trade, security, and foreign policy interests.

With regard to managing migration, Germany's interests in developing closer relations with African countries include measures to make migration safe, regular, and orderly. This includes stopping people from coming to the country irregularly in the first place, as well as increasing cooperation on the return of rejected asylum seekers or voluntary returnees, while at the same time strengthening multilateral approaches and commitments to refugee-protection standards and stability in refugee-hosting countries, notably in East Africa. These goals mirror those of the Global Compact on Migration and the Compact on Refugees, to which Germany is a signatory. They also stand in contrast to Germany's political relations to certain African states (in particular in sub-Saharan Africa) that until recently were still relatively weak. Moreover, compared to countries such as China, the United Kingdom, France, or the United States, Germany has economic and business relations with Africa that are still in their infancy. EU-level initiatives and coordination, meanwhile, have significant limitations in terms of delivering sustainable results on improving migration-related goals. The increased political attention that relations with the continent is receiving in Germany is laudable and a step in the right direction. But overall, despite an abundance of new initiatives and significant financial investments, Germany's approach on migration-specific goals is still focused more on shorter-term technical cooperation, at times timid in using the political leverage it may have, rather than being part of a greater diplomatic engagement strategy.

COOPERATING ON MANAGING MIGRATION

There are several migration-related reasons for Germany to pursue closer relations with select African countries. The pressing imperative to continue to find ways to stop the drowning of thousands of migrants at sea remains, as does that of cooperating closely with countries of origin when it comes to returning rejected asylum seekers. So does that of supporting countries hosting large numbers of displaced persons and refugees, like Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Beyond these immediate considerations lies the specter of demographic trends and continued economic inequalities that will require European and African countries to work together closely if migration is to be managed and largely orderly.

According to the UN, the world population is projected to grow by 2.2 billion by 2050, to which African countries will contribute 59 percent. For example, Nigeria is expected to double its population to more than 400 million by 2050 and Niger may triple its population to 68 million.² Moreover, migration has

² "World Population Prospects - The 2017 Revision", UN Population Division, 2017.

Beyond these immediate considerations lies the specter of demographic trends and continued economic inequalities that will require European and African countries to work together closely if migration is to be managed and largely orderly.

Meanwhile, the population of most countries in Europe is aging and shrinking. Germany faces serious labor shortages in many sectors. According to a recent study, it would require a yearly net migration of 260,000 until 2060 in order to meet the projected labor demand.⁴ Meanwhile, the educational and qualifications offered in African countries rarely match those required by German immigration rules. The question of whether and how migration from African countries could help fill labor shortages remains unanswered and will determine the policies shaping relations between Germany and Africa.

Contrary to what media reporting may suggest, migration from African countries to Germany over the past years has been rather low compared to that from other regions. This is true for labor migration and asylum application channels. For Africans, Germany is not a main destination country in Europe. Overall, this migration is highly diverse, including labor migration, family reunification, students, people displaced from war or persecution, and irregular migrants that do not fit any of these categories. People from African countries or of African descent in Germany currently make up less than 1 percent of the

Political and diplomatic engagement must accordingly include many different migration-related aspects, including in some cases focusing more on issues of democratic governance, human rights, or security aspects rather than migration alone or primarily.

African countries, building better relationships with key African states and actors to better manage migration is crucial. Political and diplomatic engagement must accordingly include many different migration-related aspects, including in some cases focusing more on issues of democratic governance, human rights, or security aspects rather than migration alone or primarily.

been an important asset for economic development for many African countries. In 2015, migrants sent over \$30 billion in remittances to the continent.³

population, of which roughly half are from North Africa.⁵ In 2017 and 2018, Nigeria, Eritrea, Somalia, Guinea, and The Gambia (the top five African countries) accounted for about only 15 percent of all asylum applications in Germany. In 2018 this amounted to a little over 25,000 people.⁶ However, given the demographic trajectory and likely continuing structural drivers for migration in many

3 Aderanti Adepoju, “Migration within and from Africa. Shared policy challenges for Africa and Europe”, Delmi Research Overview, 2016, p. 26. The report uses World Bank 2015 figures of \$32 billion in remittances toward Africa in 2014 and estimates of \$37 billion for 2018.

4 Johan Fuchs, Alexander Kubis and Lutz Schneider, “Zuwanderung und Digitalisierung: Wie viel Migration benötigt der deutsche Arbeitsmarkt künftig?” [Immigration and digitalization: How much migration does the German labor market need?], Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2019.

5 “Microzensus 2018”, German Federal Statistical Office of Germany, 15. August 2018.

6 “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2017”, German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 29. October, 2018; “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2018”, German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 6. August, 2019.

MANY INITIATIVES, LITTLE STRATEGY

Earlier this year, Germany's Foreign Office updated its Africa Policy Guidelines (*Afrikapolitische Leitlinien*) that initially dated from 2007. For the first time they now include migration as a key crosscutting aspect, which is indicative of the new centrality of the topic. This is one of many government initiatives in recent years that focused on Africa (see text box). More engagement in Africa has centered around the call to combat the “root causes” of migration. Many migration actions are subsumed under this heading directly, such as the Commission on “Root Causes” of Forced Displacement (*Kommission “Fluchtursachen”*), launched by the government in September, or indirectly, such as the economic development impetus inherent in the Compact with Africa or the Marshall Plan with Africa. The largest share of migration-specific initiatives is financed by the Foreign Office and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development while the private sector is still largely absent on migration-related efforts.

The government has also conducted visits and negotiations with African states regarding taking back their nationals who are obliged to leave Germany, though with limited success. Germany also takes part in EU capacity-building missions in Niger and Mali that include breaking human-smuggling networks. It also backs many other EU and multilateral initiatives on migration. Germany is the biggest bilateral contributor to the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa through which EU engagement in implementation of the Valetta Action Plan⁷ is funded. One key initiative of this support is the EU- IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration that assists the voluntary and safe return of migrants in African transit and destination countries (for example Libya) to their home countries and provides support for their reintegration. Another example of German support is assistance as part of the Khartoum Process,⁸ under which in 2016 the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development co-financed the Better Migration Management program with select countries of origin and transit in Africa—including Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

At the bilateral level, the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has stepped up the establishment abroad of Information Centers for Jobs, Migration, and Integration. Following promising experiences with similar centers in the Balkans, such centers have been set up in ten countries, five of them in Africa: Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria. The service spectrum of these centers varies, but in general they cater to returnees to help them with orientation in the local job market as well as to the local population on matters ranging from legal migration opportunities to informing about the dangers of irregular migration options. Having begun operations very recently, their local reach has been limited, so it is hard to estimate so far what contribution they can make. But the centers point to a potential that can be employed as part of a greater engagement strategy with individual countries. As a development-cooperation program, the ultimate aim regarding these is to transfer the management and operation of the centers to local authorities eventually.

At the European level, Germany's efforts on migration toward African countries are embedded in a complex environment of EU and bilateral initiatives and consultative processes, which are mostly not coordinated. Other member states continue to dominate EU relations with key third countries; for instance, Spain with Morocco and Italy with Libya. In addition, the matter of legal migration channels remains firmly in the hands of member states, hamstringing many EU efforts. There are various funding instruments that include migration-linked financing. The latest and most flexible is the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.⁹ A main challenge for Germany is thus to take a pragmatic approach, acknowledging that in certain cases “European solutions” will remain elusive while still searching for a role for EU initiatives and a more coordinated effort between actors where this matches its interests and ambitions.

7 In November 2015, at the Valetta Summit on Migration, African and European leaders adopted the the Joint Valetta Action Plan on Migration as a framework for cooperation.

8 The Khartoum Process is non-binding dialogue process on migration matters for countries along the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe.

9 David Kipp, “Vom Notfall zum Regelfall – der EU-Treuhandfonds für Afrika”, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), October, 2018.

A main challenge for Germany is thus to take a pragmatic approach, acknowledging that in certain cases “European solutions” will remain elusive while still searching for a role for EU initiatives and a more coordinated effort between actors where this matches its interests and ambitions.

The debate in Germany on “root causes” of migration has focused almost exclusively on its developmental aspects, and more recently on trade and economic policies more broadly, as opposed to the conflicts or regional stability that may force displacement. Having a development-oriented approach to migration and a focus on creating more jobs through economic and trade policies is not wrong, but having

many initiatives is not a substitute for a more focused strategy of political engagement in order to meet specific migration-related goals and to employ migration-related tools more deliberately. This weak strategic underpinning ultimately may undermine the effectiveness of each individual initiative.

The lack of strategic direction also results in deficiencies when it comes to communicating on Germany’s migration priorities. According to some advisors of African governments, there is confusion in some countries about what priorities Germany is pursuing with its many Africa initiatives (not all of which are migration-related). Strategic communication is key to conveying policy priorities and strategies for any government. However, it cannot gloss over strategic voids or unclear policy priorities. This can certainly be said about Germany’s communication regarding Africa. The government invests in information campaigns in certain African countries to deter irregular migration and it informs about certain mobility options to a limited degree through its information centers. However, what Germany’s engagement with African countries on migration strives to be beyond that is very rarely communicated—in Germany and in Africa.

RECENT GERMAN MIGRATION-RELEVANT ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA

- **Chancellor Angela Merkel has visited ten African countries since 2016.** She has also met African heads of states on numerous occasions and summits since then.
- **Germany is the largest bilateral donor to the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. It is also the second-largest country donor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** and one of the **top-three contributors to the World Food Program.**
- **It currently participates in the following EU and UN missions:** EU Capacity building missions (EUCAP) in Mali and Niger, including training and advising local security forces, for instance on combatting organized crime and EU Training Mission (EUTM) Mali; United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), Sudan; United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), South Sudan;
- Germany, under the leadership of the Foreign Office, has updated its ***Africa Policy Guidelines*** to better align various concepts and initiatives that exist across different ministries. For the first time these guidelines also address migration.
- The Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has set up **Information Centers for Jobs, Migration, and Integration in 5 African countries:** Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria.
- **Fair and free trade between the EU and Africa** will be one major themes of the **2020 German presidency of the EU.**
- **Germany is one of the top funders of the African Union**, which it has supported since 2003.
- Since 2001, Germany has a **Commissioner for Africa** who functions as a personal representative of the chancellor for Africa.

SELECT MINISTRY-LED INITIATIVES

Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development: Marshall Plan with Africa¹⁰

- Initiated in the beginning of 2017.
- Aims to create employment opportunities by improving investment conditions and to improve conditions in: economy, trade and occupation; peace, security and stability; and democracy, constitutionality and human rights.

Finance Ministry: Compact with Africa Initiative¹¹

- Initiated in 2017 under the German G20 presidency within the G20 finance track.
- Seeks to increase private investment in participating reform-minded countries by improving macro, business, and financing frameworks there.
- Open to all reform-oriented African countries and based upon their own initiative to participate. The African countries are said to be the drivers of the process and work in partnership with international organizations (International Monetary Fund, African Development Bank, World Bank) and bilateral G20 partners.

¹⁰ "A Marshall Plan with Africa", German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2017.

¹¹ "[G20 Compact with Africa](#)", German Federal Ministry of Finance, 2017.

- Twelve African countries have joined the initiative so far overall. Germany is contributing bilaterally with three of them: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Tunisia. More bilateral discussions are underway with Ethiopia, Morocco, and Senegal.
- The three current partner countries form a central element of the Marshall Plan with Africa.

Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy: Pro!Africa¹²

- Initiated in 2017.
- Seeks to boost economic development, sustainable growth, and German private-sector investment and cooperation in African countries.
- Main focus areas are projects and initiatives in new technology, innovation, and digitalization, based on local needs as well as the extension of the network of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad.

OTHER NOTABLE GERMAN ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN AFRICA INCLUDE:

German Cultural institutes, such as the Goethe Institutes and German-language schools, foundations affiliated with German political parties, German Chambers of Commerce Abroad, and German Academic Exchange Programs (DAAD).

LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

Legal migration channels are few and not used by Germany's government with a clear logic.¹³ They should be used more purposefully and specifically. The creation of more legal migration pathways is always at the top on the policy agenda of African countries of origin as they benefit from increased remittances as well as the skills and know-how of diaspora members. The call for more legal pathways, however, often remains vague and ill defined.¹⁴ When it comes to migration initiatives specifically geared toward North or sub-Saharan Africa, Germany has piloted a few mobility programs, such as in the hospitality or engineering sectors with Tunisia and Morocco, but involving very small numbers (around 100 persons or less). Beyond that, there has been no discernible use of legal migration channels as part of a broader engagement package with any one African country. One important constraint is the mismatch between the skills needed in the German labor market and those of many potential migrants in African countries,

meaning that such channels may need to involve upskilling or training measures to begin with. The fact that it is hard for many African nationals to get a visa to travel to Germany or the rest of Europe remains a grievance for African governments and citizens alike.

Germany could include legal channels in its migration policy mix far more strategically and with a clearer view of which goals they can serve.

¹² "Strategiepapier Pro! Afrika", German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, 4. May, 2017

¹³ For an overview of legal migration options available to select European countries, see "Legal migration for work and training: Mobility options to Europe for those not in need of protection", The Expert Council's Research Unit (SVR Research Unit)/Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPI Europe), Berlin, October, 2019.

¹⁴ See: Jessica Bither, Astrid Ziebarth, "Creating Legal Pathways to Reduce Irregular Migration? What We Can Learn from Germany's 'Western Balkan Regulation'", The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Bertelsmann Foundation, Robert Bosch Foundation, 8. October, 2018.

Germany could include legal channels in its migration policy mix far more strategically and with a clearer view of which goals they can serve. In order to better align its interests with those of its partners, legal migration channels could:

- reduce irregular movements,
- help attract and recruit skilled workers, or train a potential workforce,
- serve as a bargaining chip to have third countries collaborate on readmission agreements, say through visa facilitation, or
- eventually offset a flatlining and aging population in Germany.

However, as politicians and civil society actors alike often present legal pathways as one option to address the irregular movement of people, it is important to highlight that it is not entirely clear whether or how “redirecting” migration movements from irregular to regular actually would work toward that goal. There are no studies that definitively prove the impact of any of the regular channels on irregular movements.

As of now, considerations of more mobility options remain vague and are not part of discussions on building closer relationships on migration and other issues, in particular when it comes to sub-Saharan countries.

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REFUGEE PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS FOR LARGE-SCALE DISPLACEMENT

Forced displacement is a significant driver of migration in Africa. Any migration-oriented German policy will need to address this issue as part of broader migration considerations. In 2018, more than one-third of all refugees worldwide were in Africa.¹⁵ Uganda and Sudan are home to some of the world’s largest displaced populations, hosting 1.1 million and 1.2 million refugees respectively. The continued displacement of this many people in many places exacerbates the potential for social conflict in African countries that are already experiencing high population growth, a youth bulge with not enough labor-market absorption capacity, or high levels of poverty.¹⁶ There is also great potential for conflict related to ill-governance, corruption, or poor human-rights standard in many countries. This points to underlying structural factors that will likely make continued displacement on the continent likely.

Germany’s global engagement on displacement is significant. It is the second-largest country donor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)¹⁷ and one of the top-three donors to the World Food Program, in addition to other humanitarian aid commitments and bilateral support for many refugee-hosting countries. The Foreign Office also supports stabilization initiatives and crisis-prevention efforts in the Sahel and Central Africa.

However, new policies on refugee displacement that go beyond providing humanitarian aid are necessary. There are significant structural challenges in the medium-to-long term that Germany must adjust to. First, the increasing number of protracted refugee situation are making the model of temporary UNHCR camps obsolete. Second, the largest groups of displaced persons will be internal ones. Third, factors such as climate change will exacerbate these trends. Thus, the “same old” approaches to large-scale

¹⁵ “Global Trends 2018”, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Report, June 20, 2019.

¹⁶ “Europa als Ziel? Die Zukunft der globalen Migration”, [Destination Europe? The future of global migration], Berlin Institute for Population and Development, 2019, p.31.

¹⁷ “2019 Donor Ranking”, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, September 30, 2019.

There is also great potential for conflict related to ill-governance, corruption, or poor human-rights standard in many countries. This points to underlying structural factors that will likely make continued displacement on the continent likely.

forced displacement will need to be rethought. Displacement in many places is intertwined with rapid (and largely unmanaged) urbanization; for example, Nigeria's metropolis Lagos is growing by about 600,000 people a year (according to conservative estimates).¹⁸ The linkages between humanitarian aid, development approaches, displacement, and refugees will

require of Germany policy adaptation and new responses far beyond what is already being done. These developments need to be part of a wider migration outlook toward Africa.

18 ["The World's Cities in 2018"](#), United Nations iLibrary, 3. December, 2018, p.14.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CREATE STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS AND A COHERENT FOREIGN POLICY ON MIGRATION

Germany's *Africa Policy Guidelines* have at their core the principle of "working together in partnership." The question is what partnership means. The way partnerships with African countries are built and which principles they apply will determine whether Germany can come closer to a durable foreign policy on migration.

To be more effective, and in order to use migration policy goals to build a foundation of cooperation with African countries, a foreign policy on migration would need:

- a clear statement of what Germany's migration-related goals in the short and medium term are,
- an understanding how migration-related policies and financing initiatives contribute to reaching those goals,
- a clear outline of what type of cooperation with which African states could prove most promising,
- a consideration of their intersection with other political or economic interests in specific countries or regions, and
- a high degree of political and diplomatic backing toward this end.

This would amount to a more holistic foreign policy on migration, of which development initiatives would be a large part and where migration would not necessarily be explicitly at the center of any given relationship. It would also serve as guidelines to delineate which other actors to involve at which point, from international bodies such as the International Organization for Migration or the UNHCR to civil society to the private sector. EU-level measures can help but they cannot be a substitute for a German approach to partnership. Partnerships will also only be possible with African states that have a genuine interest in building one. But, if successful, they can serve as blueprints for other countries and regions. The following measures would help Germany reach this end:

ESTABLISH REGULAR TRUST-BUILDING VENUES BEYOND OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

The principles of a genuine partnership approach for migration policy would be based on clear interests according to the migration goals outlined above. This must include the common interests of Germany and African partner countries while being clear where their interests diverge. For instance, preventing dangerous migration is arguably in the interest of both parties while the issue of returns remains highly politicized, delicate, and controversial in countries of origins. A partnership approach would involve a deliberative process of finding common interests, building trust, and managing expectations, and would be part of improving the awareness and legitimacy in Africa of German interests as well. This should mean German policymakers being willing to listen to African partners, rather than simply stating demands in a quid pro quo negotiation. To achieve this, government consultations should be flanked

by more informal or Track Two processes that involve other actors and stakeholders from diasporas, civil society, the private sector, or academia. These could be supported through Germany's government or non-state actors, or through a mixture of public and private finance.

A partnership approach would involve a deliberative process of finding common interests, building trust, and managing expectations, and would be part of improving the awareness and legitimacy in Africa of German interests as well.

BUILD COUNTRY AND REGIONAL EXPERTISE IN GERMAN INSTITUTIONS

In Germany, more expertise on African countries—in ministries, in the policy planning units, or in think tanks—will be crucial to bolster more robust and strategic policymaking, including on migration matters. Already after the record migration numbers of 2015, the Foreign Office introduced a new cohort of new refugee and migration experts within its ranks. Beyond that, much more Africa expertise is required in German policy circles. Experts and researchers should be able to cover geopolitical and macroeconomic developments in much greater focus and in real time. This could in turn help Germany develop a long-term strategy to maneuver more systematically and strategically in the new geopolitical environment in Africa as well as to build longer-term partnerships on managing migration.

INCORPORATE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Germany will have to continue to build up more strategic-communication capacity in countries of origin and at home. When it comes to communicating externally, the main focus of the Foreign Office in African countries is on supporting information campaigns regarding the perils of irregular migration. The recently created Information Centers for Jobs, Migration, and Integration have a broader mandate,

providing more detailed counseling services. However, it is important to develop more strategic messaging of what Germany's aims overall are on migration with regard to specific African countries or regions. This includes defining more clearly what aims it has with partnership countries. It also includes thinking through how the government can

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communicate this domestically. In Germany, the image of Africa as a poverty- and conflict-stricken continent that only produces migrants and refugees still prevails, intertwined with persistent racist views in segments of German society. A narrative that highlights that half of the twenty fastest-growing economies of the world are in Africa and the economic opportunities this may hold, or a more nuanced and differentiated picture of the great diversity in the continent, is strikingly absent. A different domestic narrative would provide more room for maneuver externally, say through engaging small and medium German enterprises, or by laying the groundwork to provide more mobility options for study or for work.

UPGRADE INFORMATION CENTERS INTO OUTPOSTS OF A FOREIGN POLICY ON MIGRATION

In line with their development-cooperation mandate, the Information Centers for Jobs, Migration, and Integration that have recently been established are set to be handed over to local authorities and actors one day. While this is understandable from a development perspective, their role should instead be rethought and reconfigured to make at least parts of them outposts of a foreign policy on migration. While the original mandate of working with local actors and counterparts could continue, with additional sections they could become places where different ministries (that is, the Foreign Office, the Interior Ministry, and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) incorporate certain services, where ties to private actors (for example, German firms) are established, or where new programs, say

on reintegration efforts, in conjunction with local actors or international institutions are tested and coordinated. This can only happen with political backing from the ministries or the chancellery, not least in order to overcome diverging interests between different ministries.

In addition, specific migration related policy approaches should focus on the following:

USE LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS AND MOBILITY OPTIONS MORE, WITH A CLEAR LOGIC

Using legal migration as part of the policy mix is useful, but the logic of why it is used needs to be made clearer. If the goal of Germany's government is to promote more regular migration (as opposed to irregular), then it should at least be able to convincingly demonstrate that it is not against migration or short-term visits by people from African countries per se. This can in turn improve cooperation on

readmission and return, which is so politically charged in many countries of origin. As outlined above, there are different migration-related reasons why opening legal channels might make sense, but they are often not explicitly thought through or mentioned by German diplomats and politicians. For instance, if the argument is to open legal channels to keep people from embarking on dangerous

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migration routes, then the implications are different than in the case of using them as basis for better cooperation with an African government. Other European countries, such as Switzerland and Austria, have found that offering even a small number of internship places, in firms from their own country either back home or in the country of origin led to a better relationship and basis for cooperation with them.¹⁹ A little can sometimes go a long way when it comes to using legal pathways.

A little can sometimes go a long way when it comes to using legal pathways.

Realism is required when it comes to assessing which type of migration is feasible through legal channels. In many

countries that Germany would have an interest in cooperating with, the majority of potential migrants are in the low-skilled sector and thus either not eligible for migration via a skilled worker visa or require an upgrading in qualifications. Moreover, high-skilled workers or academics face further challenges to traveling to Germany and Europe, which reinforces the knowledge gap and hinders exchange and learning. Another important caveat is that providing country-specific arrangements to increase legal pathways may create too many exceptions for different countries, create expectations in future negotiations, and clash with the more universal, skills-centered approach to labor recruitment that is based on individual candidates rather than nationality.

FOSTERING MOBILITY IN SKILLS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

German employers often have an interest in developing the skills of potential migrants abroad, while countries of origins have skills needs within their own market, and there is high demand for cooperation with Germany on vocational training. The German government could promote mobility options for short-term stays or longer apprenticeships that incorporate the combination of these two interests,

¹⁹ "Supporting Sustainable Return of Migrants through Private-Public Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships Reverse Migration (SUPREM)", International Center for Migration Policy Development, Austria, 2018.

such as the global skills partnerships mentioned in Objective 18 of the Global Compact on Migration.²⁰ Germany's new labor-migration law that will come into effect in 2020 could be used as a starting point to better bundle and promote mobility opportunities, such as the new job-search visa for skilled employment or apprenticeship/training positions for citizens of select countries. Opportunities for exchange and visas should be provided especially in higher education and employment training, either in the form of mobility campuses—outposts of German universities in countries of origin – or through more student exchanges via programs such as Erasmus Plus.

FINDING NEW SOLUTIONS TO THE CHANGING DISPLACEMENT AND PROTECTION LANDSCAPE

The international protection system will see several structural changes. German policy will need to adapt. This will require being creative and innovative with local partners and international organizations like the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration to find alternatives to refugee camps. It will also require addressing internally displaced persons that may often end up in rapidly urbanized areas alongside refugees and migrants from other countries, potentially increasing tensions among different groups. Refugee protection in this sense will move beyond short-term humanitarian-aid approaches. Creating smart solutions to unmanaged urbanization will be part of this, including upgrading and supporting models that are already working in camps, cities, and in hybrid forms. Germany can also increase refugee-resettlement places, not only for their own sake, but also to be used strategically as part of a partnership-building strategy with certain countries. It could also test options for setting up a system or legal pathway for displaced people that have certain skills needed in the country. Small programs in Australia and Canada are currently testing such options by focusing on matching displaced person with potential employers (for either UNHCR refugees or persons with another humanitarian status who are displaced).

20 Michael Clemens, “Global Skill Partnerships: A Proposal for Technical Training in a Mobile World (Brief)”, Center for Global Development, 11. October, 2017.

CONCLUSION: LIMITS AND PROMISE OF A MIGRATION-CENTERED APPROACH

Germany building up cooperation and partnership with African countries on migration as part of a wider strategy will be limited by the changing geopolitical context and will need to adapt, and relatively fast.

Germany building up cooperation and partnership with African countries on migration as part of a wider strategy will be limited by the changing geopolitical context and will need to adapt, and relatively fast. This will depend on how policymakers shift their approach away from its technical tilt and toward more geopolitical considerations, including the growing role of China, the relative retreat of the United States, looming Brexit, or actions by the likes of Russia, India, and Turkey. It will include combining economic and business interests, as well as changes to trade relations and investment at the EU level with other aims, and evaluating Germany's political leverage on certain countries. It also will mean embedding migration policy tools much more strategically into such considerations. It will further require a far greater political and diplomatic effort and backing from the chancellery and ministries than is currently the case, as well as a financial commitment that reflects the importance African countries will have in the future for Europe and Germany. As an advisor to African heads of state recently put it, referring to Germany's Marshall Plan with Africa, "we are not stupid, we know what the Marshall Plan was," meaning that the initiative may have a grand sounding name but does not come close to matching the scale and ambition of the original Marshall Plan. This could hurt Germany's credibility because it may raise expectations the country is unwilling to meet. Nevertheless, Germany still has a level of flexibility that allows it to use certain tools, such as legal pathways, as part of the overall approach. This is because it has a strong economy, its far-right, anti-immigrant party has not grown strong to the same degree as those as in some other European countries, and it recently passed the new Skilled Immigration Act that provides the legal framework to develop these new migration pathways. Building a deeper partnership with African countries may seem daunting. But, done properly, this could be the beating heart of a real migration diplomacy and of a serious German foreign policy on migration.

BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to ensuring that everyone in society is given a fair chance to participate. Our topics: Education, Democracy, Europe, Health, Values and Economy. Structured as a private operating foundation, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is politically non-partisan and works independently of Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA. The Stiftung is therefore able to act on the conviction that migration and development issues cannot be considered independently of each other. International cooperation on migration is necessary if we are to adequately address the interests of migrants, destination countries and countries of origin in achieving viable solutions for all stakeholders. The Bertelsmann Stiftung advocates this triple-win approach both within and beyond Germany. Founded in 1977, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has since provided some €1.5 billion for non-profit work.

For more information: www.faire-migration.de

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