

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION

Objectives and significance

Migration is not a new fact phenomenon. It has always marked the history of humanity. Migration was at the origin of the crosshatching of several civilizations whose radiation was made possible by ethnic and cultural mixing. For a long time, individuals who left their home country to search about a better future prospects, transferred their culture, their mode of life and thought and their religious practices to host countries.

These last years, legal or illegal migration has increased significantly. According to the estimations of Population Division of UNO's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the number of migrants¹ in the world passed from 173 million in 2000 to 244 million in 2015. According to the same source, 8,2% of international migrants, in 2015, are refugees². Concerning host countries, Germany became, in 2015, the second most popular destination for international migrants³, after United States⁴.

The issue of migration is complex. The traditional distinction between host countries, countries of origin and countries of transit is tending to diminish.

In addition, the profile of migrants has evolved considerably: from low-skilled rural people to qualified urban youth of middle-class and even highly skilled ones, in addition to independent women. Women represent 48% of the global number of international migrants in the world⁵. A new configuration of migration trends has emerged with the appearance of new forms, such as environmental refugees, forced relocation following incessant conflicts⁶ and labor migration ("brain drain" and "care drain").

Contrary to preconceived ideas, Africa knows an important development of internal migration⁷ movements. In 2015, nearly 50%⁸ of African migrants remain in the continent⁹, approximately 16 million Africans, and barely 28% head towards Europe. The remaining African migrants go to North America and some countries in the Middle East and Asia.

Migration flows in Africa are developing in a context still marked by a lack of capacity¹⁰ for some countries to respond effectively, individually or collectively, to issues and challenges generated.

At the gateway to Europe, Morocco is strongly concerned by the issue of migration. Once a transit country for sub-Saharan migrants to Europe, Morocco has become a host country for migrants.

In the perspective of joining the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS), the Kingdom of Morocco might have to ratify one of the fundamental principles of the Treaty¹¹ of this community, which is the free movement of goods and nationals of the Member States, and to face a potential massive migration coming from the countries of this community.

Nowadays, migration is considered one of the most crucial issues at the global, regional and national levels. A comprehensive and balanced approach is needed given the realities and challenges of migration and the links between migration and other important economic, social, political and humanitarian issues.

In order to deepen the reflection on response strategies to the issues and challenges of migration in Africa, the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES) will organize, in collaboration with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Tuesday, 9th January 2018, an international meeting in which will take part institutional actors as well as national and foreign experts on migration issues in their multiple dimensions.

After an opening session that outlines the reviewed theme, the meeting will be held in four sessions:

- The first session will address the issues and keys to understanding new migration phenomena around the world and will present some international experiences that succeeded in managing migration issue.
- The second session will highlight an overview of intra-african migration and discuss strategies that are able to provide substantive answers to the migration issue within the continent.
- The third session will examine characteristics and issues of african migration to Europe.
- The fourth session will be dedicated to identifying global and specific challenges raised by migratory phenomena within ECOWAS, in the perspective of Morocco's accession to this community. The session will conclude with the proposal of innovative strategies that would enable the Kingdom to face these challenges.

NOTES

¹ "At the international level, there is no universal definition of the term "migrant". This term is usually applied when the decision to emigrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of personal convenience "and without intervention of an external constraining factor. So, this term is applied to people moving to another country or region to improve their material and social conditions, their future prospects or those of their families " _ According to the International Organization for Migration

² A person who, "being afraid for good reason of being persecuted because of his race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of which he has the nationality and who cannot or, because of this fear, does not want to claim the protection of that country, or who, if he has no nationality and is outside the country in which he had his usual residence as a result of such events, cannot or, because of such fear, do not want to return to it "(Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, Article 1a, § 2).

³ Eurostat, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics/fr

⁴ The United States, a country that has historically hosted the highest number of migrants (44 million), has just set up a new and more restrictive migration policy since the end of 2016.

⁵ The IOM publishes a fact sheet on the trends of migration in the world in 2015. (<https://www.iom.int/fr/news/loim-publie-une-fiche-dinformation-sur-les-tendances-de-la-migration-dans-le-monde-en-2015>)

⁶ Four million refugees and 11 million internally displaced persons currently come from Africa (UNHCR, 2014 and 2015).

⁷ Nearly 32 million African migrants, which is about 3% of the continent's population. This number includes both voluntary and involuntary migrants. Nearly 28% of African migrants come from North Africa.

⁸ Calculations IRES_ United Nations, Department of Social and Economic Affairs, Division of International Migration, 2015.

⁹ According to the report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), International Migration in Africa: Framing the Issues, 2016 (<http://repository.uneca.org/handle/10855/23008>),

countries of destination are the most developed or the richest in resources African countries, mainly some North African countries, Gabon and South Africa.

¹⁰ Legislative capacities (lack of harmonization of migration policies at continental level), reception capacities and socio-economic integration ...

¹¹ Revised Treaty and being the object of the Protocol A / SP.1 / 5/79 signed at Dakar in May 1979.