

Intra-Regional Migration in West Africa

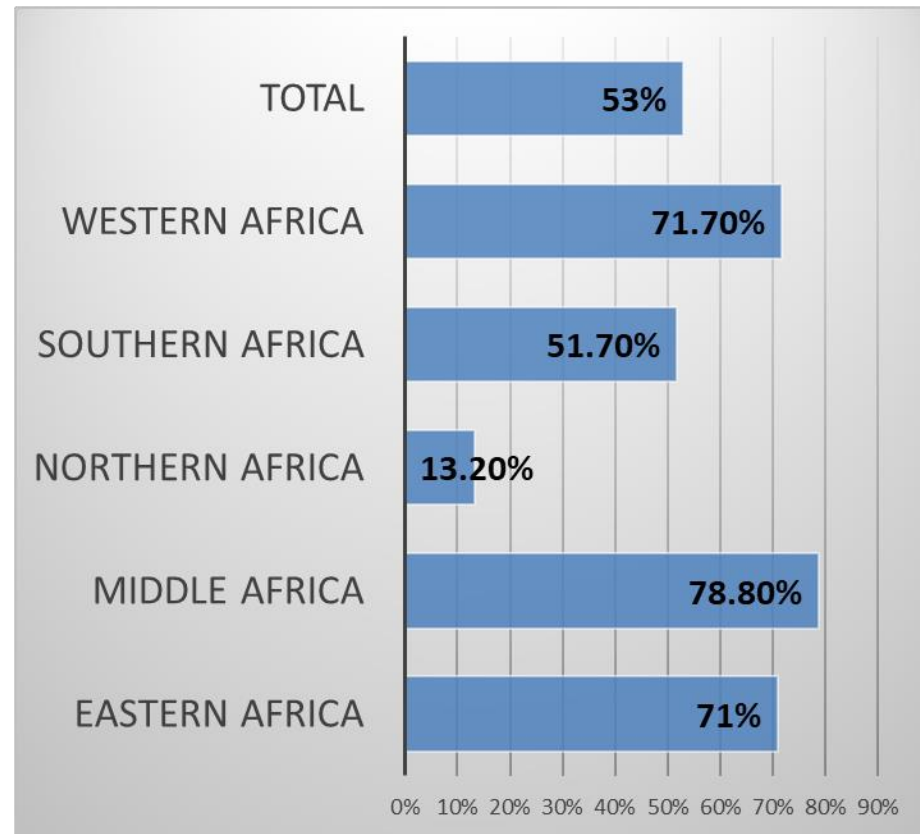
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Introduction

- ❑ While media narratives suggest exodus from Africa to Europe, a majority of migrants from West Africa are in destinations within the sub-region (UN DESA, 2018).
- ❑ Although these movements are important for livelihoods, they have received little attention.
- This presentation will focus on patterns of intra-regional migration in ECOWAS region,
- Presentation will also highlight current and potential effects of climate change, conflicts and covid-19 on migration in the region.

EMIGRANTS LIVING WITHIN REGION AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STOCK OF EMIGRANTS (UN DESA, 2018)



Migration Patterns in West Africa: A Historical Context

- ❑ Current migration patterns in West Africa are deeply rooted in historical antecedents.
- ❑ In **the pre-colonial era**, West African sub-region was seen as a **borderless area** within which goods and people moved freely.
- ❑ The **colonial regime** altered the motivation, direction and composition of migration through eg :
 - *Establishment of national boundaries*
 - *Export-oriented economic policies and recruitment measures eg plantations, mines*
 - *Transportation development, especially the construction of rail and road networks*
- ❑ These stimulated movement of migrants from the northern countries to the mining and plantation areas in south (**north-south movements**).
- ❑ Contemporary migration patterns are similar.
- ❑ Although males continue to dominate migration streams, female migration is on the increase. the increased participation of women as labour migrants.

		IMMIGRATION, 2020						
		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Top Five Countries of Origin</i>				
No	Country	2020	2020	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
1	Benin	394,276	3.25	Niger	Togo	Nigeria	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana
2	Burkina Faso	723,989	3.46	Côte d'Ivoire	Mali	Ghana	Togo	Niger
3	Cabo Verde	15,788	2.84	Guinea-Bissau	São Tomé & Príncipe	Senegal	Portugal	Russian Federation
4	Côte d'Ivoire	2,564,857	9.72	Burkina Faso	Mali	Guinea	Liberia	Benin
5	Gambia	215,659	8.92	Senegal	Guinea	Guinea-Bissau	Mali	Mauritania
6	Ghana	476,412	1.53	Togo	Burkina Faso	Nigeria	Côte d'Ivoire	Liberia
7	Guinea	121,437	0.92	Sierra Leone	Liberia	Mali	Côte d'Ivoire	Senegal
8	Guinea-Bissau	17,945	0.91	Senegal	Guinea	The Gambia	Liberia	Portugal
9	Liberia	87,947	1.74	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Sierra Leone	Ghana	Nigeria
10	Mali	485,829	2.40	Côte d'Ivoire	Burkina Faso	Guinea	Mauritania	Senegal
11	Mauritania	182,286	3.92	Senegal	Mali	Guinea	Algeria	France
12	Niger	348,056	1.44	Mali	Nigeria	Burkina Faso	Benin	Togo
13	Nigeria	1,308,568	0.63	Benin	Ghana	Mali	Togo	Niger
14	Senegal	274,929	1.64	Mauritania	Guinea	Mali	Guinea-Bissau,	Sierra Leone
15	Sierra Leone	53,746	0.67	Guinea	Liberia	The Gambia	Nigeria	Ghana
							Niger	Côte

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Top Five Destination C</i>		
No	Country of Origin	2020	2020	First	Second	Third
1	Benin	681,800	5.62	Nigeria	Côte d'Ivoire,	Togo
2	Burkina Faso	1,600,000	7.65	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Mali
3	Cabo Verde	187,600	33.74	Angola	Portugal	United States
4	Côte d'Ivoire	1,100,000	4.17	Burkina Faso	Liberia	France
5	Gambia	139,200	5.76	Spain	United Kingdom	United States
6	Ghana	1,000,000	3.22	Nigeria	United States	United Kingdom
7	Guinea	550,800	4.19	Côte d'Ivoire	Sierra Leone	Senegal
8	Guinea-Bissau	111,800	5.68	Portugal	Senegal	The Gambia
9	Liberia	233,600	4.62	Guinea	Côte d'Ivoire	United States
10	Mali	1,300,000	6.42	Côte d'Ivoire	Nigeria	France
11	Mauritania	130,200	2.80	Senegal	Nigeria	France
12	Niger	399,700	1.65	Nigeria	Benin	Côte d'Ivoire
13	Nigeria	1,700,000	0.82	United States	United Kingdom	Cameroon
14	Senegal	693,800	4.14	France	The Gambia	Italy
15	Sierra Leone	152,500	1.91	Guinea	United States	United Kingdom
16	Togo	545,400	6.59	Ghana	Nigeria	Côte d'Ivoire

Key Features of Migration Patterns

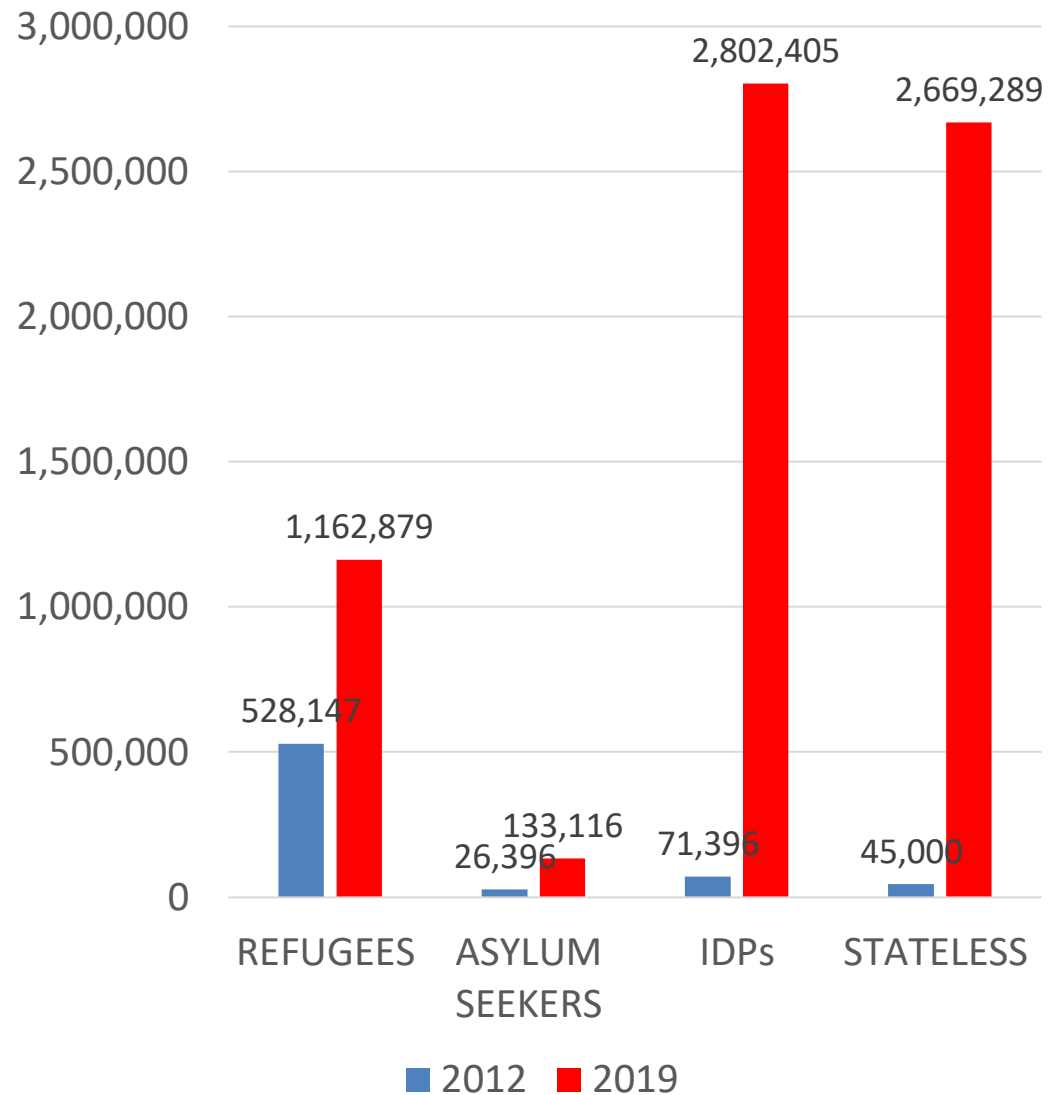
- Intra-regional labour migration flows are still dominated by a north-south movement from countries of Sahel West Africa (e.g. Mali and Burkina Faso), to the mineral-rich and plantation-rich coastal countries.
- The Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment, facilitates intra-regional migration, despite challenges
- Migration patterns are explained by proximity, colonial legacy; ethnic ties.
- Most labour migrants work in the informal sector (70-80% of workers in the sub-region work in the informal sector). Cross border traders and migration for work on farms.
- Competition between migrants and citizens leading to tensions
- Low levels of education of most intra-regional migrants.

Climate Change and Migration

- Climate change as important driver of migration
- Climate induced migrants tend to move to rural areas in forest zone
- Policy makers do not recognize migration as an important adaptation strategy to be incorporated into migration management (Teye, 2017)

Conflicts and Forced Displacement

- The forced displacement situation deteriorated in the last decade, as a result of a sharp increase in conflict situations.
- Percentage changes in numbers between 2012 and 2019: *Refugees 120%; asylum seekers 404%; IDPs 3825%.*
- **Sahel crisis:** Violent extremists' activities started in Mali in 2012 and expanded to Burkina Faso and Niger.
- **Boko Haram:** Insurgency and counter-insurgency by security forces have led to the forced displacement in Nigeria, Niger and Chad



Effects of Covid-19 on migration and livelihoods

- Border closures
- Effects on cross-border trade and livelihoods
- Effects on agricultural labour supply (APRA, Cocoa value chain studies)
- How will covid-19 affect future migration patterns in and from West Africa? – Reduced number of visas to developed countries? Automation reducing job opportunities for low-skilled migrants? Increased Irregular migration? Trafficking?

Conclusions

- Intra-regional migration dominated by movement from Sahel region to plantation and mineral rich countries.
- Informality of labour markets, lack of formal jobs, fears of competition are major labour market constraints that must be addressed.
- Conflicts and climate change influencing migration patterns
- Covid-19 disrupting intra-regional mobility and livelihoods.
- Need to incorporate migration management into Covid-19 management protocols

Thank you