

GP Conference

# Jobs or Migration?

An African Perspective

Factsheet

November 2019

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**Global Perspectives Initiative (GPI)**

GPI brings together actors from politics, business, science, the media and society, discusses approaches for sustainable global development and advocates for more German responsibility.

As a non-profit and neutral platform, the initiative provides new impulses, raises awareness for the opportunities and challenges of a global society, shares different views and the potential of African countries and thus shapes the political discourse in Germany.

This document is largely based on the 2019 Ibrahim Forum Report "Africa's Youth: Jobs or Migration?".

The Global Perspectives Initiative would like to express special thanks to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation for granting permission to use their material and data.

# Talking Facts: Migration from an African View

**“Migration is about aspirations, not desperation.** People who migrate are mostly capable, ambitious young people who are migrating to work and to build successful lives. They add wealth to the countries they go to.” — *Mo Ibrahim*

### There is no “recent critical hike” in migration numbers

Since 1990, migrants worldwide increased only marginally: from 2.9% of the global population to 3.4% in 2017.

### African migrants are not “overwhelming” the world nor Europe

The total number of African migrants amounts to only about 14% of the global migrant population, much less than Asia’s and Europe’s shares (41% and 24%); only 20% of Africans on the move are refugees.

### Africa is not “a continent of massive exodus”

Around 70% of sub-Saharan migrants stay within the continent, only a minority heads to Europe.

### African migrants are not mostly “uneducated single men, looking for welfare coverage”

They tend to be young, educated and gender-balanced.

### Migrants are not “a burden on local services”

They often constitute a key solution to labour shortages and have a positive impact on the economy of hosting countries.

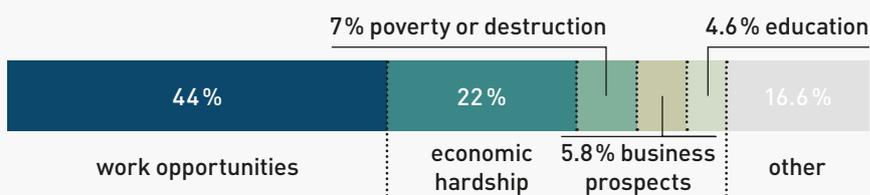
### Remittances currently represent 3.5% of Africa’s 2018 GDP

This is more than the net 2017 Official Development Assistance.

Source: *Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019)*

Chart 1

### Reasons for Africans to consider migration



Source: *Afrobarometer (2019)*

# Development in Africa: Generating a Robust Labour Market

**A growing number of young people is mostly devoid of prospects,** as the economic growth of the last decade has been mainly jobless.

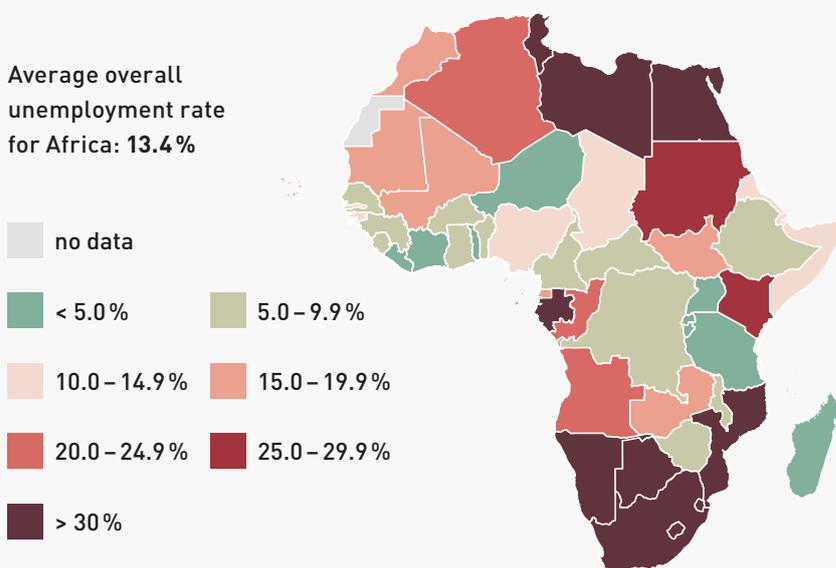
In sub-Saharan Africa alone, while **18 million new jobs would be needed annually to absorb new entries in the labour market**, only 3 million are currently being created.

**Weak governance, poor service provision and the lack of opportunities for young people** to express grievances or demand change contribute to the desire to migrate and a brain-drain effect.

**Creating high-quality jobs in the formal sector** is amongst the biggest challenges for the continent – various strategies are imaginable, including a focus on digital technologies and the 4th industrial revolution.

Source: Afrobarometer (2019), Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019)

Chart 2  
**Youth unemployment rates (aged 15–24) in Africa, 2019**



Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019)

# Development in Africa: Harnessing the Demographic Dividend?

**The demographic dividend describes the economic surplus generated by a decline in birth rates**, a decline in the number of young dependents and an increase in the proportion of working-age adults.

The projected larger workforce can improve economic productivity, savings and investments; **Africa could expect its annual GDP per capita to grow by up to half a percentage point by 2030** if enough jobs for youth are created.

**In 2020, Africa is expected to have the highest dependency ratio in the world with 78.0 dependents** (children aged 0–14 and people 65 or older) per 100.0 working-age people (aged 15–64).

However, the projected growth of Africa's youth and labour force means that **by 2060 Africa is expected to have the lowest dependency ratio in the world** (58.1 dependent people per 100.0 working-age people), which could potentially trigger a demographic dividend.

If the right investments are made, Africa's **growing youth population offers enormous potential for the continent**. Improvements in health, family planning, education and the labour market could put Africa's youth in a more advantaged position than the generations before.

Source: Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (2018), Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019)

Chart 3  
**Regional distribution of the global population, 2017 and 2100**

Global population mid 2017: 7.55 billion



Global population mid 2100: 11.18 billion

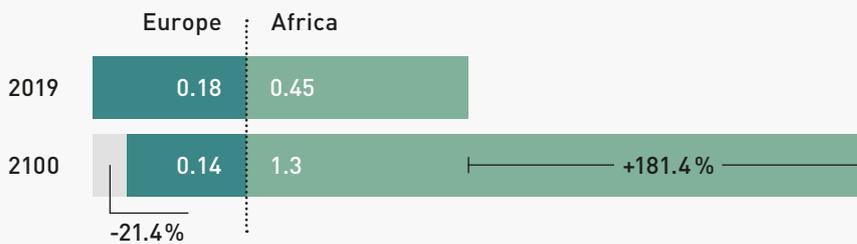


Asia	2017: 59.7% (4,504 mio) 2100: 42.7% (4,780 mio)	Africa	2017: 16.6% (1,256 mio) 2100: 40.0% (4,468 mio)
Europe	2017: 9.8% (742 mio) 2100: 5.8% (653 mio)	Latin America and Caribbean	2017: 8.6% (646 mio) 2100: 6.4% (712 mio)
North America	2017: 4.8% (361 mio) 2100: 4.5% (499 mio)	Oceania	2017: 0.5% (41 mio) 2100: 0.6% (72 mio)

Source: Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (2018)

Chart 4

### Youth and young adult population (aged 15–34), in billion



Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019)

## Towards Holistic Migration Regimes in Africa and Europe

Human mobility within Africa is still restricted, with few regional exceptions – the new African Continental Free Trade Agreement is a key step forward, **aiming to create a single market for goods, services, as well as a custom union with free movement of capital and persons**, in line with Agenda 2063.

**African and European countries have dual narratives on migration, the former focusing on its positive impacts for development and the latter on its security and stability consequences.** This has led to contrasting policy responses, with migration policies from Africa to Europe being entrenched within tighter border control and more restrictive immigration and asylum policies.

**Finding new legal pathways for human mobility both within Africa and from Africa to Europe** could limit the profitability of smuggling networks, reduce the economic costs and physical insecurity for migrants, while offering possibilities to react to labour market needs and realities and create new ways for economic cooperation.

**The negotiations around the post-2020 Cotonou Agreement could provide a suitable setting to develop a new framework** for migration that balances out the interests of African and European countries.

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019)

### Sources

**Afrobarometer, 2019:** “In search of opportunity: Young and educated Africans most likely to consider moving abroad”.

**Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung, 2018:** “Soziale und demographische Daten weltweit: DWS-Datenreport 2018”.

**Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019:** “Africa’s Youth: Jobs or Migration?”.

**Global Perspectives Initiative**

gemeinnützige UG (haftungsbeschränkt)  
Schönhauser Allee 10/11  
10119 Berlin

office@globalperspectives.org  
Phone: +49 (0)30 726 26 75 30



@gpi\_germany



Global Perspectives Initiative