

WILEY



CHATHAM HOUSE

The Security of Africans beyond Borders: Migration, Remittances and London's Transnational Entrepreneurs

Author(s): David Styan

Source: *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 83, No. 6, Africa and Security (Nov., 2007), pp. 1171-1191

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of the [Royal Institute of International Affairs](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4541917>

Accessed: 11/02/2014 09:28

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Wiley and Royal Institute of International Affairs are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

The security of Africans beyond borders: migration, remittances and London's transnational entrepreneurs

DAVID STYAN

The economic security of growing numbers of Africans is linked to migration. Employment and educational opportunities rest increasingly either on openings to leave the continent or on having a family member established overseas. This is hardly new, yet it has now become of increased economic importance, particularly for Africa's urban dwellers and middle classes, whose social and financial capital is increasingly transnational. Simultaneously, African governments are now acknowledging their growing reliance on remittances and inward investment sent home by Africans settled in OECD states. While these trends, which accelerated markedly in the final two decades of the twentieth century, are clearly of economic importance, for individuals as well as for both home and host states, their broader security implications are rarely considered.

In 2006–2007 a series of high-profile international gatherings examined the complex realities of contemporary migration flows. Having been largely silent on the issue of migration for decades, diverse UN agencies, the EU, the World Bank, the OECD and the African Union suddenly appear to be outbidding each other in highlighting the *positive* contribution that migration can make to development in Africa and elsewhere. This shift is significant; notwithstanding the crucial role that migration played in the generation of jobs, wealth and economic security for industrializing states in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, until very recently migration has been excluded from discussion of *contemporary* global economic inequality and development. Yet the current scale of labour migration, and its enhanced economic importance for both sending and receiving countries, including the counterflows via both individual remittances and fast-expanding transnational diaspora economic networks, are now belatedly being recognized.

This article reviews specific aspects of the relationship between Africans' recent migrations and their (largely economic) 'security'. A single article evidently cannot explore all aspects of the linkages between migration and security; nevertheless, it is worth initially sketching the contours of the wider context and the ramifications of issues raised, many of which are necessarily excluded from this analysis for reasons of space.

First, the debate in Europe is inescapably dominated by the security of the *receiving* states. The article illuminates some of the tensions and contradictions between immigration policies and European strategies of economic growth, which

recently have relied heavily on inward labour migration. However, over the past five years *economic* growth and security have evidently become intertwined with fears of domestic terrorist attacks. While the links between transnational terrorism and sub-Saharan Africa remain exceedingly tenuous,¹ their importance cannot be ignored, given the salience of counterterrorism in shaping external policies towards Africa, most explicitly those of the United States.

Similarly, debates over transnational crime, including the narcotics trade and money laundering, and their connections to illegal migration and people trafficking, both within and from sub-Saharan Africa, are clearly significant. This is true for OECD states hosting African migrants, but the extent to which such activities are both transnational and beyond the control of the state highlights the degree to which such activities have become increasingly important to governments within Africa. The vast majority of African migration occurs *within Africa itself*, with South Africa in particular having become a major destination for migrants from the north.²

This point is linked to a final dimension of the contemporary migration of Africans and their overseas diasporas: namely, the degree to which existing governments of African states, and their security, are *already* the product of migration.³ There are numerous examples: Liberia's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female head of state, spent many years abroad, and her government has a particularly high proportion of ministers drawn from Liberia's US diaspora. Like Ahmad Kabbah, Sierra Leone's president to 2007, Johnson-Sirleaf worked within UN bodies, while cultivating diasporic support. Côte d'Ivoire's Alassane Ouattara, as former deputy head of the IMF, and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a former World Bank staffer who served as Nigerian finance minister to 2006, are simply among the most prominent examples of a far broader trend of African politicians who have drawn on extensive overseas support and experience. Diasporic influence goes well beyond individuals: the Rwandan government owes its origins directly to the diaspora; current Eritrean and Ethiopian leaderships, while waging successful internal military struggles in the 1980s, nevertheless drew much of their logistical and financial support from diasporas. Eritrea's beleaguered leadership continues to exert extraordinary control over its citizens abroad; many Somali factions draw

¹ The four men convicted of the abortive 21 July 2005 bombs in London were all born in the Horn of Africa. However, all arrived in the UK as children; their path to violent Islamism was via delinquency and British youth prisons. Their alleged leader received his inspiration and training via UK-Pakistani networks. On the failures of Islamism in Africa, see Alex de Waal, ed., *Islamism and its enemies in the Horn of Africa* (London: Hurst, 2004).

² On crime, see J.-F. Bayart et al., eds, *The criminalization of the state in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999). On migration *within* Africa, see Dilip Ratha and William Shaw, 'South-South migration and remittances', World Bank working paper 102, April 2007. This puts intra-African migration at 69%, while the Bank's *Migration and remittances factbook* puts the figure at 63% of an estimated 16 million African migrants. This World Bank study suggests that by far the largest number of Africa's economic migrants move *within* the continent, 60–70% of Africa's migrants moving to work in neighbouring states.

³ A more comprehensive survey evidently also requires a deeper historical perspective, not simply on the impact of slavery in forging diasporic identities, but also on the degree to which the anti-colonial and pan-African movements were in part a product of migration and diasporic education and cohesion. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 'Rewriting the African diaspora: beyond the Black Atlantic', *African Affairs* 104: 414, Jan. 2005, pp. 35–68, relates the 'new' African diasporas of late twentieth-century migrations with earlier epochs.

extensively on followers and their funds abroad; Zimbabwe's economy limps along largely thanks to remittances.

Indeed, these last three examples illustrate the degree to which—through extensive outward migration and the counterflow of remittances—Africa's weakest states, far from being marginal to globalization, in fact exhibit the highest degree of extroversion. These states' very survival depends on global flows of people and funds; thus their hapless citizens find themselves among the world's most transnational, with their families, and their social and financial capital, increasingly stretched across continents.

The more modest aim of this article is to examine some of the linkages and contradictions surrounding economic security and African migration. It does this in five separate sections, each of which is used to highlight a specific thematic argument.

The first section concerns the emerging policy discourse around the relationship between African migration and economic development within the continent. It briefly surveys the recent spate of international reports and conferences on 'migration and development' linkages. Despite the still embryonic, and often highly contentious, nature of many of the debates around these issues, in the UN Secretary General's May 2006 report on international migration and development, Kofi Annan claimed that 'there is an emerging consensus that countries can cooperate to create triple wins: for migrants, for their countries of origin and for the societies that receive them'.⁴ This report provided a baseline for the UN's 'High Level Dialogue' on migration and development, which was inaugurated on the margins of the September 2006 General Assembly meeting. A larger, follow-up conference (now re-branded the 'Global Forum on Migration and Development') convened in Brussels in July 2007. Meanwhile, in both July and November 2006 EU and African ministers met in the Maghreb to discuss linkages between migration, development and EU border controls. Portugal, president of the EU to December 2007, is pledged to 'stimulate progress on a new international consensus' on the issue, and a further Euro-Mediterranean migration ministerial meeting has been arranged to take place in Faro on 18–19 November 2007. Migration–development linkages also form part of a draft new EU–Africa strategy to be discussed at the full Europe–Africa summit in Lisbon in December.

The second section argues how awkwardly, at least at first glance, this burgeoning international 'migration and development' discourse sits alongside European concerns over an upsurge in illegal inward migration into Europe. In 2006–7 these concerns prompted a strengthening of EU border security policy, most notably via joint border patrols by the EU's 'Frontex' force, targeting illegal African migrants and their traffickers in the Mediterranean. A ministerial meeting in Rabat in July 2006, while convened under the rubric of 'Migration and Development', in reality focused primarily on tightening controls on illegal migration. Organized by Morocco, Spain and France, the meeting was prompted by

⁴ UN General Assembly, 'International migration and development; report of the Secretary General' (A/60/871), May 2006, p. 5.

the sharp upsurge in clandestine migrants from West Africa since 2005, with tens of thousands of migrants successfully landing on the beaches of Gran Canaria, Lampedusa and Malta, and untold numbers drowning en route.

While concern over border controls dominates both public and policy discourses, OECD states such as the UK and Spain are nevertheless increasingly acknowledging their dependence upon migrant labour. As such, successful management of inward migration is beginning to be seen not simply as a key component of sustained economic *domestic* growth and security, but also as a component in these states' policy dialogue with African governments, and thus, at least in theory, an increasingly important part of foreign and overseas development policies. Such migration management includes a revival of discussions around short-term, contract or 'circular' migration, particularly as understandings of migrants' own motivations improve. As one migration specialist notes, 'recognition of the prevalence and importance of transnational practices among migrants has spurred new thinking, especially about remittances and the development potential of organized migrant labour schemes'.⁵ It is increasingly apparent that the focus on the benefits of managed migration, for both European host and African home countries, and the desire to control illegal people trafficking, are two sides of the same coin, being contradictory yet related aspects of similar and complex global trends. While the popular yet often vacuous notion of 'co-development', which featured in the 2007 French presidential campaign, is viewed by critics as simply a Trojan horse for migration control,⁶ such debates do appear to be becoming more than simply a euphemism for repatriating undesirable migrants. Nicolas Sarkozy, when still France's interior minister, himself stated his 'profound conviction that, under certain circumstances, African immigration can be an opportunity both for Europe and Africa'.⁷

The third section of the article examines how African governments are coming to view their migrant workers abroad as something more than simply a secure source of foreign exchange. Rather, they seek to retain and nurture ties with migrants, and with the nascent diaspora communities they form abroad. The perceptions of those who leave to work abroad are shifting away from static, zero-sum notions of 'brain drain' towards a view of their overseas compatriots as potentially important dynamic actors whose continued economic ties with their homeland contribute significantly to domestic economic development.

The fourth section focuses in some detail on the most publicized aspect of the migration and development discourse: the role that financial remittances play in the economic security of migrants, their families and national economies at home. The section notes some of the methods through which OECD governments are currently seeking to promote the role of remittances, and the problems associated

⁵ Steven Vertovec, 'Circular migration: the way forward in global policy?', working paper 4 (Oxford: International Migration Institute, 2007).

⁶ Richard Banégas, Roland Marchal, Julien Meimon, 'La fin du pacte colonial?', *Politique Africaine*, no. 105, March 2007, p. 24. Sarkozy's new immigration minister, Brice Hortefeux, has explicitly revived the idea of payments to returnee migrants.

⁷ Nicolas Sarkozy, speech to Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Migration and Development, Rabat, 10 July 2006, <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/actu/bulletin.gb.asp?liste=20060719.gb.html>, accessed 18 July 2007.

with these. It briefly examines African governments' reactions to the rise of remittance economies, highlighting the tensions between the role and responsibilities of individual African governments, on the one hand, and on the other the desire of the African Union (AU) to develop a common position on migration. With African diasporas fast becoming a key source of external finance for a growing number of African states, it also notes the paradox that while western donors often exert significant leverage and conditionality over African governments, those governments' accountability to their citizens overseas remains weak or non-existent.

Nevertheless, while African governments lag behind those in Central America and South-East Asia in terms of fostering economic ties with their overseas populations, member states of the AU are now increasingly mindful of the political and economic importance of the growing number of African citizens abroad. In 2003 the AU itself debated formally recognizing Africans living outside the continent as its 'sixth region'. Since then, more governments have adopted policies designed to secure investment and engagement from their diasporic, migrant populations. These moves reflect a belated acknowledgement, not just of the haemorrhaging of skilled manpower from African states (several states have well over half their graduates working overseas), but also of their fast-growing dependence upon remittances as a stable and sustainable source of external finance. As such, Africa appears to be belatedly adopting migrant-linked development strategies (encouraging collective remittances, securing co-financing and bond securitization linked to remittances) similar to those already adopted in significant migrant-sending countries elsewhere, for example India, Mexico and the Philippines.

The final section of the article illustrates these issues with specific reference to the UK's fast-growing African populations, highlighting a trend (which is equally evident in many other OECD states) whereby increasingly established diaspora communities *within* western states are rapidly altering the nature of those states' economic relationships with Africa. Africans based in Europe and the United States are increasingly trading with, and investing in, Africa. Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa have constituted the fastest-growing black and minority ethnic (BME) group in the UK over the past 15 years. Their concentration in Greater London has accentuated their economic impact on the capital. The fact that London's Africans have a higher propensity both to send money back to, and to trade with, their countries of origin than any other UK migrant group suggests the beginning of a transformation of the UK's relationship with the African continent. A key argument here concerns the relationship between British-based Africans and the agencies of the 'development industry' (both in government and the mainstream NGOs), who all too often speak on behalf of Africans to UK audiences. The article suggests that over coming decades the growing number of transnational Africans of migrant origin, including the growing number of people with dual nationality, are likely to reconfigure aspects of these debates, as British-born and British-based Africans challenge existing perceptions of the UK's post-colonial ties with the subcontinent.

Moving 'migration and development' up international agendas

The UN Secretary General's 2006 report on international migration and development, and two subsequent meetings on the same topic, all reflect a broader awareness of the urgent need for coordinated international policy-making on international migration. The Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), an independent panel of commissioners, originally issued recommendations to strengthen the governance of migration in its report of October 2005.⁸ In May 2006 the first meeting of the new ad hoc Global Migration Group was held. This brought together a wide range of UN agencies, the World Bank and the International Organization on Migration, in an attempt to coordinate and improve coherence across a wide range of migration policy issues. Kofi Annan's subsequent report of the same month aimed to inform the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (UNHLDIM), held at the UN General Assembly on 12–13 September 2006. This gathering brought together 130 representatives from member states, alongside non-state actors and civil society representatives. The dialogue was not a decision-making body, but rather an opportunity to debate and share concerns and ideas. Its significance lay in the fact that for the first time a global forum was openly airing the central contradiction in the emerging 'migration and development' equation.

This contradiction may be summarized as follows. On the one hand UN member states wish to retain sovereign rights, in the belief that they can control or manage migration (and thus are instinctively wary of any multilateral fora seeking to facilitate migration to aid development and poverty reduction in Africa); yet on the other hand they are becoming aware that if they want to achieve development outcomes in migrant-sending states, they must listen to, and align themselves with, the agendas of migrant and diaspora groups in their own states. The September 2006 High-Level Dialogue thus provided a first, tentative step towards enhancing the benefits of outward migration from Africa for development, by acknowledging that such benefits depend largely on the decisions that migrants and diasporas *themselves* make. The second high-level meeting, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), held in Brussels in July 2007, was significant both for its scope—800 participants from 155 countries—and for the increased presence of migrant representation, with 200 groups attending its civil society day. Closing the event, its Belgian chair, Régine de Clerq, stated: 'we now understand better how migration policies can contribute to development and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and we all recognize migration as an opportunity, not a threat', claiming optimistically that the meeting forged 'a new common vision on migration and development, based on cooperation and partnership, rather than on confrontation'.⁹

⁸ Global Commission for International Migration, 'Migration in an interconnected world: new directions for action', 2005. <http://www.gcim.org/en/>, accessed 18 July 2007.

⁹ See <http://www.gfmd-fmmd.org/>, accessed 18 July 2007.

Europe's fears: small boats versus secure borders?

The vast majority of Africans who have arrived in OECD countries in recent decades, including the growing number in Britain, have done so legally. However, since 2005 much of the urgency and public outcry surrounding African migration into Europe has focused on illegal crossings of the Mediterranean. Growing numbers of African men and women, risking their savings and lives, crammed into tiny, unseaworthy vessels, have come to symbolize both the unfortunate situation of unemployed Africans and that of a Europe 'besieged' by desperate African migrants.

The scale of such illegal migration from West and North African coasts has increased since late 2005, when broader European awareness was prompted by the longstanding plight of Africans stranded outside Spain's enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the northern Moroccan coast.¹⁰ An assault by migrants in October 2005 successfully breached the enclave's fortified fences, yet left eleven people dead and prompted a further strengthening of Spanish and Moroccan security controls. The subsequent two years have seen a steady escalation of attempts at seaborne illegal immigration. Spain's Canary Islands, Malta and the Italian island of Lampedusa find themselves on the front line of a struggle to cope with tens of thousands of migrants. Spanish authorities put the number of Africans landing illegally on the Canary Islands during 2006 alone at 31,000—six times more than the previous year—estimating that a further 6,000 Africans perished during the perilous crossing from the West African coast.¹¹ The authorities in Rome claim that 16,000 illegal migrants made the 300-kilometre crossing from Libya to Lampedusa during 2006. While mainland Italy and Spain have capacity to absorb migrants, Malta, an EU member since 2004 with a minuscule population and limited infrastructure, faces more acute problems. Malta put at 1,780 the numbers landing on its coastline during 2006, with many hundreds more attempting the crossing in the first half of 2007. In a high-profile case in July 2006 the Maltese authorities resisted the landing of illegal Eritrean migrants, a scenario repeated in May and June 2007 during a series of stand-offs between migrants and Maltese, Italian and Libyan coastguards, as Maltese fishermen increasingly found themselves ensnared—literally in some cases—in the sinking vessels carrying migrants. Dramatic pictures of Africans clinging to Maltese tuna nets heightened international awareness of the scale of the problem.¹² The proximity of Lampedusa and Sicily to mainland Europe made them a target for small boats trafficking migrants who have moved through Libya's porous southern borders. West Africans arrive via Agadez in Niger, while since 2006 large numbers from the Horn of Africa, including significant numbers of young Eritreans, have entered Libya from Sudan, via the south-western town of Kufra.¹³

¹⁰ The London-based film-maker Sorius Samura provided voice and testimony to these migrants in his 2001 TV film *Exodus*. Abderrahmane Sissako, the Paris-based Mauritanian film-maker, refers to the trans-Saharan migration as 'collective suicide' in his 2006 film *Bamako*.

¹¹ BBC News Online, 'Canaries migrant death toll soars', 28 Dec 2006.

¹² Peter Popham, 'Europe's shame', *Independent*, 28 May 2007.

¹³ On the plight of migrants from the Horn of Africa in Libya, see Human Rights Watch, 'Stemming the flow: abuses against migrants, asylum seekers and refugees', Sept. 2006, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/>

Europe's response to this migration has been twofold: first, the strengthening of border patrols; second the increased urgency (although not necessarily enhanced clarity) around the need for what the EU terms 'partnership with third countries and regions of origin and transit' in order to manage migration. As noted above, in July 2006 heightened concern at illegal migration across the Mediterranean was the catalyst for a ministerial conference in Rabat, Morocco. Convened by Spain, France and Morocco, the conference brought together representatives of 57 EU and African countries. They made a commitment to strengthen security, migration management and control, with Europe providing economic assistance to African states in exchange for cooperation over migration control. France's foreign, interior and cooperation ministers, alongside Spain's foreign minister, claimed the Rabat meeting established 'the basis for a genuine partnership' for a balanced model of migration 'in the interests of all'.¹⁴ The EU countries agreed a joint monitoring of illegal migration by the embryonic EU maritime border force, 'Frontex', which dispatched its first joint operation, *Nautilus*, to patrol the waters around the Canary Islands in October 2006. This was deemed successful, both in stemming illegal migration and in saving migrants' lives. However, a second expedition, launched in June 2007 to patrol around Malta, was hampered by lack of adequate vessels and financial wrangles. Significantly, Italy refused to participate, citing the lack of Libyan cooperation, and the force was suspended in August 2007. When President Sarkozy of France visited Libya on 25 July 2007, the matter of illegal immigration was raised. Sarkozy was accompanied by Immigration Minister Brice Hortefeux; his spokesman declared that 'All migration questions must be handled with Libya. It is a transit point for all the clandestine immigration networks from sub-Saharan Africa.'¹⁵ One of the reasons why Libya has been lukewarm over the Frontex initiative is reportedly that it wants any EU surveillance of migrants to be extended to its southern borders with Sudan and Niger.

During 2007 the EU has evolved the notion of 'mobility partnerships', the idea being to facilitate circular migration via temporary visas which are tailored to specific, short-term labour shortages in EU states. This is coupled with funds targeted at the return of illegal migrants; in July Franco Frattini, the EU commissioner for justice, freedom and security, announced the release of €15 million, under the heading of 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows', to fund both the return of illegal migrants and the employment of returnees in their country of origin. At the AU–EU migration and development meeting in Libya in July 2006, Frattini stated that 'we need to address legal migration, combat illegal migration and deal with subjects covered by the migration and development agenda, such as migrant remittances, brain circulation and working with migrant communities in Europe'. He further maintained that 'Immigration is not a problem of security. It's a problem of eradicating its root causes—poverty, armed conflict and unemploy-

libya0906/libya0906webwcover.pdf, accessed 18 July 2007. The Italian-based 'Fortress Europe' group maintains a comprehensive list of deaths and detentions of migrants at www.fortresseurope.blogspot.com, accessed 19 July 2007. They report that Libya arrested 2,137 Eritreans in May 2007 alone.

¹⁴ *Libération*, 11 July 2006.

¹⁵ Agence France-Presse, 25 July 2007.

ment.' Frattini repeated this message to EU immigration ministers gathered in Lisbon in September 2007, where he declared that the EU required an additional 20 million African and Asian workers over the coming two decades.

African governments: piecemeal policy responses

African governments themselves have been relatively slow to react to the importance of migrants. While now acknowledging the scale of remittances and their financial impact, identifying and implementing appropriate policies to shape interaction between African states and their diasporas have been far more piecemeal. The Economic Commission for Africa notes that African government responses to migration have been

very limited and fragmentary. Few countries have implemented international conventions and related policies on migration. International migration barely features in national development plans and strategies, and has not been adequately addressed in any of the regional development frameworks such as NEPAD, the Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.¹⁶

The lack of a coherent African policy stance, coupled with European governments' sense of urgency about stemming illegal African migration, has meant that the migration–development agenda has to date largely been driven by Europe. Nevertheless, the Libyan government did host a full EU–African ministerial conference on the issue on 22–23 November 2006 in Sirte.¹⁷ This was in many respects a follow-up to July's Rabat summit, albeit under full AU auspices. Bience Gawanas, the AU commissioner for social affairs, claimed that the aim was

to find common ground between Africa and Europe as far as managing migration is concerned ... to engage in a political dialogue with Europe and to say that migration cannot and should not be seen as just a security issue where we have to create buffer states, or where we have to create electric fences. What we are saying is that migration is inter-linked with development.¹⁸

The Sirte meeting further examined the convoluted interface between migration and its development benefits, including balancing tighter controls on illegal migration with the facilitation and management of legal migration into Europe. Ministers from African and European countries adopted a joint agreement on migration and development in which they agreed to enhance cooperation to tackle illegal immigration through development.

Following the AU's adoption of a common position on migration and development, endorsed by the AU executive in Banjul in June 2006, African ministers at the Sirte meeting proposed the establishment of a large development fund aimed

¹⁶ Economic Commission for Africa, *International migration and development: implications for Africa* (Addis Ababa, Sept. 2006).

¹⁷ During the conference, Libyan Foreign Minister Mohammed Abdel-Rahman Shalgam claimed that the country hosted two million illegal migrants: Reuters, 'EU, Africa seek ways to cut illegal migration', 22 Nov. 2006.

¹⁸ Voice of America, 22 Nov. 2006, voanews.com, accessed 18 July 2007.

at generating employment within Africa as a means of reducing flows of migrants and addressing the loss of key professionals.

However, in Sirte the European Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel, instead offered a modest fund of €42 million aimed at managing African migration to Europe, with a focus on further facilitating remittances and channelling diaspora investment into the continent. Michel stated his conviction that 'African countries need to establish migration agencies that could co-ordinate supply and demand',¹⁹ suggesting that the new fund could aid migration bureaux in order to facilitate legal economic migration into Europe. In June 2007 Spain took unilateral steps to facilitate such bureaux, ministers accompanying business leaders, including representatives from McDonald's and leading construction firms, to seek seasonal African labourers in Dakar, Senegal.²⁰

Concern over the flight of skilled labour, often dubbed the 'brain drain', was an explicit catalyst for the AU's engagement with the migration and development dossier during early 2006, and was a component of the AU policies presented in Sirte. Data from the International Organization for Migration suggest that over 80,000 skilled professionals currently emigrate from Africa annually, and that at least a third of graduates from African universities now reside outside the continent. Over a third (36 per cent) of all highly skilled Nigerians are estimated to work outside the country; the 2000 US census indicated that 83 per cent of the 109,000 adult Nigerians living in the United States are highly educated. World Bank data suggest that 42 per cent of all skilled Ghanaians, and around a quarter of highly educated Kenyans, Senegalese and Ugandans, all work abroad.²¹

In the UK it has been the employment of African health professionals in the National Health Service that has generated particular concern and publicity. A recent survey suggests that almost a quarter of new overseas-trained physicians recruited into the NHS came from sub-Saharan Africa. In 2002 the government drew up a voluntary code in an attempt to prevent the poaching of nurses from Africa by the NHS.

However, there is growing awareness that the term 'brain drain' is inadequate, with the new migration and development discourse suggesting that 'circular migration' can be both harnessed and planned to secure longer-term national economic benefit. Given that India exports computer engineers, and the Philippines trains and exports health professionals, apparently successfully harnessing the benefits of outward professional migration, there appears to be a resurgence of interest in this concept.²² With such a huge portion of Africa's skilled workforce already abroad, African governments are belatedly recognizing the need to study such schemes, a point acknowledged in the AU's statement at Sirte. The de facto recognition of

¹⁹ Louis Michel, 'Promouvoir une migration accompagnée', 23 Nov 2006, <http://europa.eu>, accessed 19 July 2007.

²⁰ 'Spain pioneers policy on African migrants', *Financial Times*, 22 June 2007.

²¹ Frédéric Docquier and Abdeslam Marfouk, 'International migration by educational attainment', in Caglar Ozden and Maurice Schiff, eds, *International migration, remittances and the brain drain* (Washington DC: World Bank/Palgrave, 2006).

²² Vertovec, 'Circular migration', p. 7; Philip L. Martin, Susan Martin, Patrick Weil, *Managing migration: the promise of cooperation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2006) p. 28.

the size and importance of the diaspora is also behind both the adoption of the diaspora as the AU's 'sixth region' and the launch of the Diaspora African Forum (DAF) at the AU's Ghana summit in July 2007.²³

Financial lifelines: rethinking remittances

Much of the attention in the burgeoning analytical and policy literature on the links between African migration and economic development in the continent has focused on the growth of remittances. In 2006 *officially recorded* remittances sent home to developing countries by their migrants totalled \$206 billion—double the amount recorded just five years earlier. However, official figures capture only part of the actual financial transfers between migrants and their families at home.²⁴ This is particularly the case in sub-Saharan Africa, where informal remittances (sending money home via unofficial agencies or friends) often predominate, reflecting low confidence in the banking sector. With the liberalization of foreign exchange controls relatively recent in many states, long-established informal transnational trade and credit systems often continue to be the fastest and safest route for sending money to Africa.²⁵ The 'informal' (yet highly structured and efficient) trade and credit networks of Senegalese migrants and their Sufi brotherhoods provide a good example of the complexity and recent mutation of informal remittance systems.²⁶

Notwithstanding the statistical doubts, it is clear that remittances have become an increasingly vital element both in the economic security of the growing numbers of African households with members overseas, and in the macroeconomic stability of individual African economies. The fragmentary official data available suggest that total remittances into sub-Saharan Africa were around \$9 billion in 2006. While this represented barely 5 per cent of global remittance flows, and is far exceeded by the sums sent to the major recipients of remittances (Mexican migrants, primarily in the United States, sent home \$11.5 billion in 2006), nevertheless these funds have become increasingly important to African economies.

According to IMF estimates of formal remittances, Nigeria receives the continent's largest inflows, with an estimated \$2.27 billion in 2006; South Africa and Uganda both received around \$650 million, and Kenya and Senegal \$500 million each; next is Lesotho with \$355 million, followed by Ghana, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Mali and Togo. Even on the basis of such fragmentary official statistics, Lesotho, Cape Verde, Gambia, Senegal, Togo and Uganda all depend

²³ www.diasporafricanforum.org, accessed 6 Aug. 2007.

²⁴ See the Migration and Remittances programme of the World Bank, notably the *Migration and remittances factbook* (Washington DC, June 2007); also Dilip Ratha's 'Leveraging remittances for development', policy brief (Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, June 2007), which suggests that remittances now amount to twice the value of official aid received by developing countries.

²⁵ The IMF cautiously estimates Africa's informal remittances as 45–65% greater than suggested by official data: see S. Gupta, C. Patillo, S. Wagh, 'Impact of remittances on poverty and financial development in sub-Saharan Africa', working paper WP/07/38 (Washington DC: IMF, Feb. 2007).

²⁶ Barbara Jettinger, *Senegal country study: report on informal remittance systems in Africa* (Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, Jan. 2005), concisely examines how these systems work.

for over 5 per cent of their national income on remittances. In major receiving states such as Uganda and Senegal officially recorded remittances account for over 20 per cent of foreign exchange earnings, eclipsing the economic importance of traditional sources of exchange, such as coffee and groundnuts.

Such lists may nevertheless obscure more than they reveal, for dependence on remittances is highest in those African states *without* any credible data. Eritrea and Somalia are both critically dependent on remittances for foreign exchange; Zimbabwe's economic collapse is estimated to have left over half of the population dependent on remittances, highlighting not simply the well-established fact of the countercyclical nature of remittances, but the vital role that remittances frequently play in contexts of acute crisis.²⁷

As many African governments have become aware of their enhanced dependence on remittances, and migrant transfers increasingly rival earnings from established primary commodities, so more African governments have become solicitous of their migrant populations. To take one of the most prominent recent examples, in Ghana President Kufor has been assiduous in courting Ghanaians in the diaspora, notably in Britain and the United States. Bank of Ghana figures suggest that \$1.27 billion of individual remittances were sent to Ghana in 2005, far more than was earned by exporting either gold or cocoa.²⁸ The Governor of the Bank of Ghana typifies the new thinking on the enhanced significance and benefits of remittances, noting in 2006 that they 'bridge the gap between the standard of living between the family members resident abroad and the beneficiaries living in the home country, and can directly mitigate poverty', adding that 'some may represent repatriation of savings and capital for portfolio or direct investment that can contribute to higher growth'.²⁹ Mindful of the impact of remittances, Ghana has also strengthened its statistical monitoring of such flows, and is one of the few African countries to have opened a debate on granting voting rights to members of its diaspora. In Uganda there have been similar moves, with President Museveni pledging in 2004 to create formal links with the diaspora, and to consider parliamentary representation for its members.

Clearly, such initiatives are not unprecedented in Africa: Senegal and Mali, for example, with their long-established diaspora populations in Europe, have long had government offices dedicated to migrant affairs. However, it is the increased scale of the migration, and the growing economic importance of remittances *throughout* the continent, which during 2006 moved migration and remittances prominently onto the agenda of the AU. As already noted, in January 2006 the AU summit in Khartoum agreed for the first time to examine Migration and Development linkages, including the brain drain and remittances. The following

²⁷ Kevin Savage and Paul Harvey, eds, *Remittances during crises: implications for humanitarian response* (London: Overseas Development Institute, May 2007), <http://www.odi.org.uk/HPG/remittances.html>, accessed 19 July 2007.

²⁸ Cameron Duodu, 'Tapping investments from Ghanaians in the diaspora', *Ghanaian Times* (Accra), 7 March 2006. Such vast disparities between IMF figures (e.g. in Gupta et al., 'Impact of remittances') and national data on remittances are not uncommon.

²⁹ Address to regional trade and remittances conference, March 2006, www.watradehub.com, accessed 18 July 2007.

month ministers from the 50 least developed countries (which includes 34 African states) met in Cotonou, Benin, solely to examine the importance of remittances. In April an AU experts' meeting convened in Algiers, leading to the formal adoption by the AU's executive of a 'common position on migration and development' in the Gambia in June. This document highlighted the importance of remittances, while noting both their private nature and the fact that they should not be seen as a substitute for official development assistance. This AU position provided the framework for the July 2006 EU–Africa summit in Libya on the management of migration and development, mentioned above, and was complemented by a report prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for the September 2006 UN High Level Dialogue.³⁰

Promoting remittances: pragmatic development policy or 'a new mantra'?

In addition to belatedly acknowledging the international economic importance of remittances, the upsurge of policy interest in this phenomenon reflects two other factors: first, policy-makers' perception of them as the 'most tangible, and least controversial' aspect of the migration and development nexus;³¹ and second, the belief that the impact of remittances can be improved by simple, market-based policies focusing on reducing the cost of remittances by enhancing competition between remittance agencies. This approach, pursued by providing migrants with better information as to the cost and means of transferring money to specific countries, has been promoted by the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), which aims to 'improve access, transparency and choice of remittance service providers; lower costs; [provide] links to other financial services (such as savings accounts); and increase the positive impact remittances have on development'.³² Launched in March 2005, the fulcrum of this policy has been its 'sendmoneyhome.org' website. This initially provided information on the comparative cost and speed of remittance agencies, serving six countries with significant diaspora communities in the UK, including Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. The DfID claims that in its first two years the initiative contributed to a 30 per cent reduction in the cost of remittances to these countries. The scheme has subsequently been expanded to provide information on remittances from UK-based Africans to Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Africa and Tanzania. Mindful of the importance of South–South migration, and of evidence that remittance costs are even higher for such transactions,³³ in May 2006 the DfID further extended the service to provide similar online comparison of money transfer services for migrants based in South

³⁰ African Union Executive Council, EX-CL/277 9IX, http://www.queensu.ca/samp/migrationresources/Documents/African_Common_Position.pdf, accessed 18 July 2007; Economic Commission for Africa, *International migration and development*.

³¹ Ratha, 'Leveraging remittances', p. 1.

³² Department for International Development (DfID), *Moving out of poverty: making migration work better for poor people* (London, March 2007), p. 17.

³³ Ratha and Shaw, 'South–South migration and remittances'. Most of Africa's economic migrants move *within* the continent, and these migrants tend to remit informally, often at punitive rates.

Africa remitting to neighbouring southern African states. The site now also covers the Balkans.

The drive to reduce transaction costs reflects broader initiatives spearheaded by the UK government since 2003, when it brought together banks and money transfer companies with Treasury, DfID and Customs officials in a domestic interagency, UK Remittances Working Group. The UK Money Transmitters Association, a commercial trade body representing smaller money transfer agencies, was also formed in 2005.³⁴ The DfID also signed specific partnership agreements with the governments of Ghana and Nigeria, designed to facilitate remittance flows; and the UK participated in the International Remittances Principles Task Force, led by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and the World Bank, which published its 'General principles for international remittance services' in January 2007.³⁵

In May 2006 the DfID released the first detailed survey of remittances from the UK. The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Remittance Survey found that black British Africans had the highest propensity to remit of any migrant group in the UK; although they comprised just 10 per cent of the migrant population, 34 per cent of total remittances surveyed were sent to sub-Saharan Africa, with Nigeria being the most frequent destination.³⁶ However, while Africans remitted an average of £910 per household annually, this was less than average UK Asian household remittances; the survey noted that 'a relatively high number of Black Africans do remit money, but they send relatively small amounts'.³⁷ This finding was reinforced by a recent survey focusing specifically on low-paid workers in London; again sub-Saharan Africans had the greatest propensity to remit, with 90 per cent of Nigerian and Ghanaian cleaners on the London Underground sending a portion of their meagre earnings to family members in Africa.³⁸

New technological developments are about to transform remittances further, via mobile phone-based services. In early 2007 Vodafone and Kenya's Safaricom launched their M-PESA mobile phone-based money transfer service, originally developed with seed money from the DfID. This allows both overseas (remittance) and domestic money transfers via mobile phone, opening up new possibilities for people without bank accounts.

While it is clear that remittances are a key aspect of economic security for a growing number of Africans, and are a central part of many British Africans' relationships with their relatives on the continent, two problems with the sudden mainstream interest in remittances are worthy of note. First, the move to reduce the cost of remittances may be jeopardized by the increased regulation of money transfer

³⁴ In 2007 the MTA had 200 members, with a further 500 affiliates. There are 2,700 money transfer agencies in the UK registered with HM Revenue and Customs: <http://www.ukmta.org/>, accessed 6 Aug. 2007.

³⁵ Bank for International Settlements, *General principles for international remittance services* (Basle, Jan. 2007), <http://www.bis.org/publ/cpss76.pdf>, accessed 18 July 2007.

³⁶ DfID, *BME remittance survey* (London: DfID/ICM, July 2006), p. 5, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/ukremittance-survey.pdf>, accessed 19 July 2007

³⁷ DfID, *BME remittance survey*, p. 28.

³⁸ Kavita Datta, Cathy McIlwaine, Jane Willis, Yara Evans, Joanna Herbert, Jon May, *Challenging remittances as the development mantra: perspectives from low paid migrant workers in London* (London: Department of Geography, Queen Mary, Sept. 2006), p. 13.

services. The 2007 EU Payment Services Directive obliges the UK government to regulate money transfer agencies fully by 2009.³⁹ In addition, concerns over both money laundering and the financing of terrorism have substantially reinforced calls for the tighter control of money transfer agencies, particularly of the small, informal, country-specific agencies often used by those remitting to Africa's poorest states.⁴⁰ Second, doubts have been expressed, by analysts and African migrants alike, about both the abruptness and the underlying motives of the new policy focus on remittances. In addition, very little attention has been paid to the *human* motivations for, and costs of, sending money home to relatives, a point which is often overlooked by non-migrants. These motivations often reflect complex, and frequently burdensome, social obligations rather than straightforward financial altruism.⁴¹ Academics working on London's low-paid service sectors also highlight the contradictions surrounding the reality of the poorest paid in London's workforce simultaneously being presented as Africa's latest economic saviours.⁴² Many UK-based Africans, having peaceably sent money home for decades, are bemused to find that the development industry, which is notoriously prone to policy fads, has suddenly 'discovered' remittances. They are also rightly wary of the scarcely concealed desire of some African governments to attempt to channel or tax remittances. A small number of African intellectuals and activists have sought to shape the UK debate, attempting for example to try to foster more effective collective remittances, although their voices are often marginalized. While the drive to boost remittances by reducing costs via market competition has been embraced by the DfID, other policies, requiring more substantive policy changes, have been resisted. For example, the idea that migrant remittances channelled collectively towards poverty reduction in Africa might be made tax-deductible, in the same way that donations to mainstream UK development charities working in Africa are—the Remit aid initiative—is far more controversial.⁴³

Britain's Africans: transnational entrepreneurs or coopted development 'partners'?

Given scant research and limited data, the true size and nature of recent African settlement in the UK are unknown. The 2001 census found that sub-Saharan Africans constituted Britain's fastest-growing minority group during the 1990s,

³⁹ William Vlcek, 'Development v. terrorism: money transfers and EU financial regulations in the UK', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10 (forthcoming 2008).

⁴⁰ The high-profile collapse of FirstSolution, an agency used by many UK-based Bangladeshis, in July 2007 has hastened calls for fuller regulation. In 2001 significant numbers of Somalis were hit by the abrupt suspension of Somalia's largest remittance agency's operations by the US authorities over allegations (which proved entirely erroneous) that it was a cover for Al-Qaeda funds: see Ibrahim Warde, *The price of fear: the truth behind the financial war on terror* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007).

⁴¹ A recent exception, chronicling the reality of Somali remittances from the UK, is Anna Lindley's working paper, 'The early morning phone call: remittances from a refugee diaspora perspective', WP 47 (Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, 2007), <http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/publications/Working%20papers/WP0747-Lindley.pdf>, accessed 19 July 2007. See also Datta et al., *Challenging remittances*, pp. 13–19.

⁴² Datta et al., *Challenging remittances*.

⁴³ See <http://www.gkpartners.co.uk/RemitAid.asp>, accessed 6 Aug. 2007.

with 486,000 respondents recording their ethnicity as Black African. Thus, to the surprise of analysts (though not to those familiar with the changing demography of the housing estates and high streets in places such as Peckham and Newham), for the first time Africans outnumbered Britain's Caribbean population. Yet illegal migration, habitual underreporting in poor migrant households, and the sheer speed, scale and dynamism of recent settlement, both prior to and since the 2001 census, suggest the 486,000 figure is a very significant underestimate. Taking into account the soaring demand for migrant labour in the UK over the past five years, Britain's African population must now stand at substantially over half a million.⁴⁴

Three characteristics of the UK's African migrant population are worth noting in relation to the themes of this article. First, the census data highlighted the degree of geographical concentration of UK Africans. Over 80 per cent live in Greater London, with significant concentrations in four of London's poorest boroughs: Africans represent over 10 per cent of the population in the London boroughs of Southwark, Newham, Lambeth and Hackney. The economic impact of African immigration is thus overwhelmingly concentrated in the capital.

The second characteristic is the rapid increase in not just the size, but above all the *diversity*, of Britain's African population, a phenomenon common to other large OECD states with similarly significant African immigration in recent decades.⁴⁵ British Africans are no longer simply 'Anglophone' West Africans: there has been significant settlement from Congo-Kinshasa, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda and other Francophone states, plus large inflows from the Horn of Africa, including a substantial expansion of the UK's long-established Somali population.

Third, one can detect, even more palpably in the changing profile of London's schools, colleges and nightclubs than in the arid data of census statistics, generational shifts among African migrants: 34 per cent of those recorded as Black Africans in the 2001 census were born in the UK. These are both the children of the earlier, largely educated Anglophone West African migrants (16 per cent of UK Africans were born in Nigeria, 10 per cent in Ghana), but also those born here to the refugee arrivals of the last 20 years. Thus not just Yoruba and Twi, but increasingly Somali and Lingala, as well as dozens of other African languages, are spoken throughout the capital's schools. Politically and socially, this generational shift is reflected in the maturing of a more assertive generation of explicitly *British* Africans.

What does this mean in practice for the UK's (or, more specifically, London's)

⁴⁴ On both the Francophone influx and the problems of data, see David Styan, 'La nouvelle vague? Recent francophone settlement in London', pp. 17–36, in Khalid Koser, ed., *New African diasporas* (London: Routledge, 2003). Lindley, 'The early morning phone call', p. 30, well illustrates the vagaries of data on Britain's burgeoning Somali population, including uncertainty over the very recent and substantial influx of Dutch, Swedish and other Somalis with EU citizenship settling in the UK, primarily in London, Leicester and Birmingham.

⁴⁵ Over 50,000 Africans are reported to migrate to the United States annually: Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, 'African leadership for a transnational age', in Onyekachi Wambu, ed., *Under the tree of talking: leadership for change in Africa* (London: Counterpoint/British Council), p. 217. On recent African settlement in the United States, see Kwado Konadu-Agyemang, Baffour K. Takyi, John Arthur, eds, *The new African diaspora in North America: trends, community building and adaptation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2006); Koser, *New African diasporas*; Zeleza, 'Rewriting the African diaspora'; Ola Uduku and Alfred Zack-Williams, 'African diaspora–African development concerns: introduction', in Ola Uduku and Alfred Zack-Williams, eds, *Africa beyond the post-colonial* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

links with Africa itself? In what ways are these newly expanded African migrants, their families, community organizations and businesses, involved in the development of their home, or sending, countries? Unsurprisingly, just as the profile of Africans in the UK has become far more diverse, so the manner in which African migrants organize, both to represent themselves in the UK and to interact with their countries of origin, is extraordinarily varied. Among differing African 'communities' (a problematic label, which often conceals more than it reveals) there coexist religious, ethnic and linguistic-based bodies, professional and alumni associations, as well as avowedly political groups. Arts organizations, women's bodies, and welfare and refugee groups also proliferate, the latter often nurtured by voluntary sector funding from local authorities. Home-town associations, created by migrants originally from the same home town or locality within Africa, are also common. A recent survey of Ghanaian diaspora groups found over 1,000 such different organizations.⁴⁶ Coupled with the attention paid to remittances, the growth of such community bodies has contributed to the heightened awareness of the African diaspora's impact on development at home.

In part because of their small scale and highly scattered nature, there is little systematic information available on African-owned businesses in London, although Southwark, home to a high preponderance of African businesses, has undertaken a preliminary survey.⁴⁷ A report for the Greater London Council suggests that over 3,000 businesses in London are owned by black Africans, concentrated in the capital's poorest boroughs, from Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans in Southwark, to Somalis in Tower Hamlets and Wembley, and Congolese in Harringay.

Much recent wealth creation among Africans in London stems from servicing economic links between the growing new migrant communities and their homelands. Examples of this range from trade in specialized goods, often foodstuffs, to a myriad of specialized travel and forwarding services. The rapid fall in the cost of communications, including internet, pre-paid phonecard and mobile phone services, has spawned significant markets within most migrant communities. Often those outlets specializing in such communication services also serve as niche remittance agencies to specific African countries. Technological developments, coupled with the increased purchasing power of diaspora populations, have also acted as catalysts for the development of audio-visual media within African countries. Thus London is reputed to be the largest outside market for Nigeria's booming multi-million dollar, DVD-based *Nollywood* film industry.

While acknowledging the impact that remittances sent by British Africans have on the economic security of relatives in the continent, politically articulate British Africans are often wary of the new-found enthusiasm for remittances among mainstream development agencies. Alongside well-founded concerns of cooption of diasporas by these agencies runs a deeper concern about the image such agencies hold of Africa and Africans, which all too often remains suffused with charitable

⁴⁶ Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, *The contribution of UK-based diasporas to development and poverty reduction* (Oxford, April 2004).

⁴⁷ Southwark Council, 'Survey of BME and African businesses', mimeo (2005).

paternalism, essentializing Africans as passive recipients of 'aid' rather than agents of their own destiny and change.

Instead, many British Africans themselves prefer to highlight the entrepreneurship and dynamism of their compatriots' links with their homelands. African groups have thus begun to focus on the contribution made by UK-based African expatriates to job creation within the African continent. A recent initiative (Supporting Entrepreneurship and Enterprise in Africa, SEEDA) has seen teams of UK-based African professionals engaged on short missions to provide support for entrepreneurship and small-scale business creation in Sierra Leone and Ghana. This is part of the broader Diaspora Volunteering Initiative, coordinated by migrants within Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), which involves UK-based migrants from several continents engaging with development activities in their home countries; the African partner is the London-based African Foundation for Development (AFFORD).⁴⁸ Other initiatives focus on entrepreneurial skills transfers and temporary migration; these include the London-based AfricaRecruit.com, focusing on the circulation of professional elites.

Notwithstanding the wariness with which they are viewed by some Africans, mainstream development agencies are beginning to acknowledge the role that migrants in the diaspora play in African economic development, via collective agency rather than simply household remittances. Kofi Annan's May 2006 report stressed the need for both receiving countries and countries of origin to do more to promote entrepreneurship and facilitate investment, particularly through cross-border business links, encouraging collective action by home-town associations, and providing matching funds for collective remittance-funded projects (as in Mexico's decade-old '3 for 1' matching funds scheme, under which every dollar channelled to *collective* development projects via selected home-town associations generates a matching additional investment by each level of Mexico's authorities, federal, state and municipal). There is also a growing body of comparative economic research examining the impact that diasporas have on home-country development.⁴⁹

The DfID's 2007 report *Moving out of poverty* also highlights the way in which diasporas can aid poverty reduction, noting the significant economic role of Chinese and Filipino diasporas, the manner in which India has raised bond finance through non-resident Indians (NRIs), and how UK-based Sierra Leoneans assist reconstruction in their home country.⁵⁰ However, the department has been relatively slow to act on its 1997 commitment to 'build on the skills and talents of migrants ... to promote the development of their countries of origin'. In 2003 it signed a strategic grant agreement creating an umbrella group for migrant and BME groups, Connections for Development, designed to foster dialogue with disparate diaspora

⁴⁸ See <http://www.afford-uk.org>, accessed 6 Aug. 2007. Note also the 'Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriates' programme (TOKTEN) of the UN Development Programme.

⁴⁹ Y. Kuznetsov, ed., *Diaspora networks and the international migration of skills: how countries can draw on their talent abroad* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2006).

⁵⁰ DfID, *Moving out of poverty*, p. 22.

groups based in the UK.⁵¹ This was in part also facilitated by AFFORD, whose entrepreneurial board and staff have acted as leaders on several key initiatives aimed at getting DfID, along with other mainstream agencies as well as African governments, to acknowledge and work with migrant groups. However, as a comprehensive survey of diaspora involvement notes, 'the potentially positive role of migrants and migrant organizations in development *beyond remittances* has thus far seldom been incorporated into day-to-day practices of development cooperation and migration policies', a point reinforced by work commissioned by DfID from migrant groups.⁵²

While one reason for this omission may well be reluctance on the part of mainstream actors in the development industry (DfID and the NGOs) to engage with migrant groups, clearly there is also the danger that an oversimplistic vision of the economic role of African diaspora organizations is unlikely to improve the economic security of either African migrants or those dependent upon them at home. Indeed, as already noted, African governments' attitudes towards their migrant populations have, at least until very recently, often swung between opposite extremes, as politicized diasporas were alternatively courted and demonized by authorities at home.

In addition, the notion that African diaspora groups in the UK are homogeneous, or that they are likely to provide straightforward development partners, either for UK-based mainstream agencies or for African governments, is patently false. A useful recent survey correctly cautions against overly simplistic views of 'diasporas as a monolithic type of social formation'.⁵³ By their nature diasporas, particularly those formed by very recent migrants, are fissiparous. Organized diaspora groupings frequently conceal acute political divisions and tensions, which may simultaneously replicate and magnify divisions in the home country. This is predictable, mindful of their local, voluntarist nature, recent formation, precarious financial base, and the need to compete against each other for scarce local government funding. Thus it is hardly surprising if the myriad UK-based African diaspora groups have to date failed to generate a significant, never mind unified, advocacy voice, be it on behalf of Africans, or their compatriots in the continent. Nor are they likely to provide mouthpieces for the media seeking soundbites on simplified 'African' stories.

Recent incidents among the UK's Congolese and Somali populations provide just two examples of linkages between Africans' politics in the UK, and events within Africa. The sharp increase in Somali settlement in the UK, both from the Horn of Africa and from elsewhere in the EU, conceals considerable insecurity. In addition to the ever present domestic violence, a rise in intra-Somali clashes is evident in London, apparently reflecting generational divisions, disaffected youth

⁵¹ <http://www.cfdnetwork.co.uk/>, accessed 19 July 2007

⁵² Hein de Haas, *Engaging diasporas: how governments and development agencies can support diaspora involvement in the development of origin countries* (Oxford: International Migration Institute and Oxfam Novib, June 2006), p. 4, emphasis added. See also AFFORD and Asian Foundation for Philanthropy, *Framework for DfID-diaspora engagement* (London: DfID, Aug. 2005). Emphasis is in original.

⁵³ Steven Vertovec, 'Diasporas good? Diasporas bad?', WP 41 (Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, 2006), p. 6.

and localized rivalries, rather than imported clan divisions. However, beneath such localized social divisions, deeper national diasporic political rivalry is also endemic. During 2006 substantial funds were collected for the Union of Islamic Courts, several leaders of which had UK passports.⁵⁴ Such patterns of external political linkages and fundraising are now increasingly common, as exemplified by Ghanaian and Nigerian politicians courting wealthy diasporic benefactors abroad. In October 2006 violence linked to the Democratic Republic of Congo's presidential election spilled onto the streets of London, as rival Congolese politicians and their supporters fought outside a Congolese satellite TV station in a London suburb.⁵⁵ Such incidents reflect not only the growth of Congolese migrant communities in the UK (more accurately mirrored in the rapid spread of Francophone Pentecostal churches), but the degree to which such diasporas rapidly spawn print and broadcast media presences often linked more to 'home' than to 'host' country concerns.

Conclusion

This article has examined selected issues arising from the acceleration in outward African migration, highlighting just some of the policy implications stemming from interest in remittance flows and Africans living outside the continent. The promotion during 2005–2007 of a new international discourse stressing the *positive* benefits of migration, and its connections with economic well-being and development within Africa, is a welcome, if belated, recognition of reality—for millions of Africans working outside the continent, as well as their governments at home. However, much of the current thinking within the UN and EU, particularly on the inescapable tensions between the need of Europe's ageing, service-sector economies to facilitate large-scale legal inward migration, while stemming illegal flows of sub-Saharan migrants, remains unfocused.

Successful management of migration is thus likely to be an increasingly important component in European states' dialogues with African governments (as has long been the case, for example, in relations between France and its former colonies such as Mali or Senegal). African governments in turn are likely to demand more tangible benefits from outward migration, with notions of 'partnership' and 'co-development' becoming more than simply euphemisms for payments to accept repatriated illegal migrants. More direct recruitment from Africa, as begun by Spanish employers in 2007, coupled with the instigation of new regimes of temporary work permits to facilitate so-called 'circular migration', appear a distinct possibility, irrespective of their patchy history.⁵⁶ The EU's first practical step towards such action is likely to be the establishment of regional information and labour offices within Africa, as suggested by the EU Justice Minister Franco

⁵⁴ Some estimates suggested that \$1.1 million had been raised for the UIC in the UK during 2006, with a further \$300,000 from Somalis in Scandinavia: 'Britons held in Somali clash', *The Times*, 10 Jan. 2007.

⁵⁵ 'Shock over attack on Congolese', BBC News Online, 13 Oct 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6044316.stm>, accessed 19 July 2007.

⁵⁶ Vertovec, 'Circular migration'.

Frattini's allocating €10 million to establish such a centre in Mali in late 2007. A broader framework for such policy initiatives is likely to be found in the new EU–Africa strategy, scheduled for full debate under the Portuguese presidency of the EU at the EU–Africa summit in Lisbon in December 2007. Tensions will remain between the roles and responsibilities of individual African governments, and the desire of the AU, manifest since 2005, to develop its own common position on international migration, which needs to include the impact of extensive migration within the continent.

With African diasporas having fast become a crucial source of external finance for a growing number of African states, greater attention is likely to be paid to the paradox of conditionality and accountability. Western donors exert considerable leverage and conditionality over African governments, while these governments' accountability to their citizens overseas—whose financial contributions via remittances often dwarf donors' aid flows—often remains weak or non-existent. This may change, just as has happened in Central America and Asia, for national governments within Africa are already paying increasing heed to their overseas population, with initiatives including the provision of dual nationality and expatriate voting rights.

Finally, the article suggests that over coming decades the rising number of transnational Africans of migrant origin now resident within OECD states, including growing numbers with dual nationality, are likely to reconfigure key aspects of industrialized states' post-colonial relationships with Africa. In the UK, both politically and socially, new African migration, coupled with generational shifts within existing African communities, will be reflected in the maturing of a more assertive generation of explicitly *British* Africans. Notwithstanding the rapid rise of interest both in remittance flows and in diasporas as agencies of development, many such transnational Africans are likely to remain wary of any attempts by mainstream development agencies to coopt migrant groups to their vision of an apolitical overseas development process which ignores domestic questions of both race and migrants' rights.