Underlying Drivers of Migration in SADC


By

Prof. Edwin Kaseke, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- Introduction
- Drivers of migration
- Social protection for migrants in SADC
- Portability of benefits in SADC
Introduction

- Migration is “the oldest, most widespread and most important risk management instrument of mankind” (Holzman & Koettl, 2011).
- Migration is based on the “basic assumption that people generally move in the expectation to improve their well-being” (Hein de Haas, 2010:1).
- Thus migration is based on rational decision-making process.
- There are two broad types of migration, namely forced and voluntary migration.
Drivers of migration cont’d

- Drivers of migration are conceptualized as “the factors which get migration going and keep it going once begun” (Van Hear, Bakewell & Long, 2012:7).
- The push–pull theory provides the dominant theoretical explanation of migration.
- The push factors are experienced in the home country whilst the pull factors are associated with destination country.
Drivers of migration cont’d

- The situation in the home country must be bad enough for one to want to leave the country (push factors) and the destination country must be attractive enough (pull factors).
Drivers of migration can be classified into four types, namely predisposing factors, proximate factors, precipitating factors and mediating factors (Hear et al 2012).

Predisposing factors:
- economic disparities (lower standards of living in home country);
- political disparities (conflicts or human rights abuse in home country);
Types of drivers cont’d

- Predisposing factors cont’d:
  - Environmental disparities (depleted resources/lack of resources in home country);
  - Geography (easy to reach destination).

- Proximate factors (economic meltdown and worsening human rights in home country.

- Precipitating factors (financial crisis, company closures, unemployment, deteriorating social services and wars/conflict). These trigger movement.
Types of drivers

- Mediating factors (ability to mobilize resources needed to make the migration possible, culture of migration, migrant networks, favourable immigration policies)
Even though human rights instruments provide for the right to social security to be extended to everyone, the right to social security remains elusive for many migrants.

The nationality principle in social security remains a major obstacle for migrants to access social security.
Social protection for migrants in SADC cont’d

- Social assistance in many countries has traditionally been extended to citizens only; this is still the case in Swaziland and Botswana’s Destitute Programme and Zambia’s Public Welfare Assistance Scheme provide social assistance to non-citizens only on a temporary basis (Mpedi et al, 2011).
Social protection for migrants in SADC cont’d

- In South Africa, social assistance is now extended to refugees and non-citizens who have permanent residence following a constitutional challenge (*Khosa and others v Minister of Social Development*)

- There is provision in many SADC Member States for migrant workers to participate in social insurance schemes.
Social protection for migrants in SADC cont’d

- In South Africa, migrant workers can participate in social insurance schemes under the Compensation for Injuries and Diseases Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act.
- However, migrants on fixed contracts and expected to return to their home countries at the end of the contract are not eligible to participate in the Unemployment Insurance Fund.
- In Swaziland, non-citizens cannot participate in the Swaziland National Provident Fund (Mpedi et al 2011).
Portability of social security benefits in SADC

- There are barriers to the portability of benefits in SADC.
- Migrants not able to maintain acquired social security rights and benefits.
- The principle of territoriality is a major obstacle. For instance, in South Africa a claimant who is out of South Africa for more than 6 months can only receive lump sum payment for benefits under COIDA.
Portability of benefits in SADC cont’d

- Lack of harmonization of social security laws and policies is an obstacle to portability of benefits.
- Absence of bilateral and multi-lateral social security agreements also an obstacle to portability.
- Therefore, it is essential to harmonize social security laws and policies and to establish bilateral and multi-lateral agreements.
Reducing the flow of migration

- Need to appreciate that in this era of globalization, migration will remain a global phenomenon.
- Reducing the flow of migration depends on addressing the major drivers of migration in SADC, namely economic and political factors.
- First, SADC needs to deepen economic integration with a view to reducing disparities in economic development and living standards.
Reducing the flow of migration cont’d

- Second, there is need for all SADC countries to develop comprehensive social protection systems in order to prevent and reduce poverty.
- Third, there is need to improve governance in SADC with a view to reducing conflicts and improving the rule of law.
END

- Thank you