



**Rabat Process**

Euro-African Dialogue on  
Migration and Development

## **Thematic Meeting:**

# ***Youth, education and innovation: driving the future of migration***

**13-14 May 2025**

**Abuja, Nigeria**

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**Outcome  
document**



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## Introduction

**The Rabat Process Thematic meeting on Youth, education and innovation: driving the future of migration**, co-chaired by Nigeria and Spain, brought together over **120 participants**, from 38 European and African partner countries, including youth and diaspora representatives, academia, civil society and the private sector. Echoing Area 1 of the 2023-2027 Cadiz Action Plan, the meeting explored ways to maximise the potential of African youth enhancing their contributions to both countries of origin and of destination.

Marking the first Thematic Meeting under the Nigerian Chairmanship, this event provided an opportunity for youth representatives to actively engage in migration-related discussions and for Rabat Process partner countries representatives to actively engage with the youth, building on the recommendations from the 2023 thematic meeting in The Hague, The Netherlands.

The meeting underscored the critical importance of positioning young people at the heart of migration discussions, acknowledging their pivotal role as catalysts for innovation and agents of social transformation. With the right investments in education and innovation, youth are powerful agents of change and key contributors to sustainable development.

This document gives an overview of the main discussions and **conclusions of the Thematic Meeting**, as well as **good practices, key takeaways** and **recommendations** highlighted by participants.

### 1) High-level opening ceremony

The **high-level opening ceremony** was attended by H.E. Prof. Nentawe G. Yilwatda, Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction; H.E. Pilar Mendez Jimenez, Ambassador-at-large for Migratory Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; H.E. Ambassador Gautier Mignot, Head of the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Fatou Sow Sarr, Commissioner for Human Development and Social Affairs at the ECOWAS Commission; and Monica Zanette, Head of Pan Africa Region at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

**H.E. Prof. Nentawe G. Yilwatda** reiterated the country's commitment to promoting a migration narrative that is safe, orderly, and empowering. He emphasised that over 80% of migration from Africa to Europe occurs through regular channels, underscoring that well-governed migration contributes positively to development by bridging knowledge, culture, labour, and resilience. Besides, the Minister of Youth Development, attending the meeting, emphasised the vitality of youth participation. He called for the creation of labour environments that are inclusive and responsive to young people's needs, and for stronger engagement between governments and youth to ensure policies reflect their realities and aspirations.

**H.E. Ambassador Pilar Mendez Jimenez** reaffirmed Spain's long-standing commitment to empowering youth through education and innovation, highlighting its leadership in programmes like Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe, and advocating for strengthened EU-Africa collaboration through skills development and shared competitiveness. She highlighted the Spain-Africa Strategy 2025–2028, outlining a vision for an equal partnership focused on regular migration, sustainable development, and shared prosperity. Spain sees migration as a vector of joint socio-economic development, and remains dedicated to listening to, protecting, and empowering African youth, recognising their success as vital to both countries of origin and destination.

**H.E. Ambassador Gautier Mignot** underscored the vulnerability of young migrants and the need for effective and smooth procedures to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills, while promoting mobility for education, research, and innovation. He also highlighted the EU's support for youth-focused job creation and empowerment initiatives, such as those in Nigeria, alongside the European Union Youth Sounding Board (YSB), which fosters meaningful youth engagement in shaping EU policies and partnerships within the country.

**Fatou Sow Sarr** highlighted the key role of African youth in driving innovation and entrepreneurship as vital pillars for sustainable development.

Finally, **Monica Zanette** emphasised that the unique demographic complementarity between Africa and Europe presents a critical opportunity to harness youth as key agents of positive change across Rabat Process partner countries, calling for enhanced cooperation to promote sustainable migration governance that benefits both countries of origin and destination.

## 2) Setting the scene – the importance of youth and their role in shaping the migration and development agenda

*During this **keynote conversation**, distinguished speakers shared their insights on empowering young people as key agents of change and innovation in migration governance and development initiatives.*

### **Harnessing the power of the Diaspora – NiDCOM's vision for national development**

Dr. Abike Dabiri Erewa, Chairman of the [Nigerians in Diaspora Commission \(NiDCOM\)](#) presented a compelling and insightful overview of the critical role played by Nigerians in the Diaspora in national development, underpinned by the strategic framework established by the NiDCOM. At the heart of the discussion was a broad, inclusive definition of the diaspora, recognising them as regular migrants who have legally settled abroad, maintained ties with Nigeria, and contribute significantly to its growth and progress.

A key highlight was the economic impact of the Nigerian diaspora, whose home remittances - approximately \$20 billion annually - account for 5.7% of Nigeria's GDP and far exceed the nation's foreign direct investment inflows. This group, described as educated, resourceful, and globally experienced, influences multiple sectors including healthcare, education, ICT, agriculture, and real estate, thereby acting as a vital economic force.

Beyond remittances, the address emphasised the diaspora's transformative role in **skills, knowledge, and technology transfer**. Diaspora professionals are increasingly involved in direct interventions in Nigeria, not only through capital investments but also through the provision of expertise and technological solutions. Examples such as the Nigerian Association of Young Adults in Canada (NAYA) and the Association of Nigerian Physicians in the Americas ([ANPA](#)) illustrate how organised diaspora groups are delivering impactful support, from donating medical equipment to offering free healthcare services.

The keynote stressed the need to expand regular migration pathways to harness the full benefits of migration. With increasing numbers of Nigerian youth and students leaving the country to flee poverty, insecurity, and unemployment, addressing this challenge requires a coordinated, multisectoral response through a **whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach**.

The address also made a strong case for the **link between education and effective labour mobility**. With a youth unemployment rate of approximately 33%, investment in digital skills, critical thinking, and vocational training is essential to prepare young Nigerians for global opportunities. Education is not just a pathway to employment but a critical tool for Nigeria's integration into the global knowledge economy. Since its establishment in 2019, the Commission has served as a bridge between the diaspora and national development goals. Notable initiatives such as the [NiDCOM/USAID Youth Empowerment Summit](#) have provided over 300 young Nigerians with information and resources related to legal migration opportunities, mentorship, and training, aiming to deter irregular migration through education and empowerment.

The presentation concluded with concrete **recommendations**, including:

- Strengthening regular migration pathways and enhancing public awareness to promote legal migration opportunities and reduce irregular migration;
- Enhancing policies and legal frameworks against human traffickers and help prevent irregular migration;
- Improving labour laws to protect migrant workers and support effective labour mobility;
- Encouraging diaspora involvement in creating labour mobility opportunities.

### **Building the future with Youth - The Dutch approach**

H.E. Jurriaan Middelhoff, Dutch Ambassador for Youth, Education and Work, emphasised that job creation, particularly through entrepreneurship and private sector partnerships, is central to the Dutch approach to youth empowerment.

With 1.2 billion young people expected to enter the global labour market by 2030 and only 400 million new jobs projected (according to the World Bank), the need is urgent, especially in Africa, where 450 million youth will seek work, but just 100 million jobs will be available. In Nigeria, where 70% of the population is under 30, the Netherlands is supporting sustainable job creation through initiatives like [Orange Corners](#), which has created over 220 startups, 90% of which remain active, and the [Challenge Fund for Youth Employment](#), which

has generated more than 110,000 jobs, 75% of them for young women. Dutch companies have created over 6,000 direct and 20,000 indirect jobs, fostering innovation and economic opportunities for Nigerian youth.

Beyond employment, the Netherlands promotes youth as key policy partners and drivers of development. Meaningful youth participation is central to its approach, with [Youth Advisory Council](#) (YAC) members involved in shaping, implementing, and reviewing embassy policy. Two YAC members from the Netherlands Consulates in Lagos and Abuja shared compelling testimonies, calling on other countries to replicate this inclusive model. They stressed that youth must not only advise on but actively co-create policies in areas such as migration, peacebuilding, climate, and human rights.

Additionally, in conflict-related settings, the Netherlands supports youth and host communities through initiatives like [PROSPECTS](#), a multi-stakeholder partnership active in eight countries across the Horn of Africa, Eastern Africa, and the MENA region. This development-focused approach to displacement equips young refugees with the tools to rebuild their futures, start businesses, and support their communities, underscoring that investing in youth is investing in national stability and long-term development.

### ***Fostering dialogue and connection - the perspective of Spain***

Juan Jaime Martínez, Head of the Department of Culture and Education at [Casa África](#), presented the work of *Casa África*, an initiative dedicated to fostering mutual understanding and strengthening relations with African countries through trust-based cultural diplomacy. Based in the Canary Islands, geographically close to Africa, Casa África promotes dialogue through economic, social, cultural, institutional, and political activities, with education at the core of its mission.

Its key thematic priorities include migration, youth, equality and diversity, sustainable development, and climate change. Through exhibitions, music, dance, sports, and workshops, Casa África engages with African diasporas, associations, and universities, providing young people in Spain with opportunities to learn about and connect with Africa.

Casa África also fosters Spanish-African networks across all levels of society and regularly organises forums and events focused on African issues, ensuring strong participation from African voices. Youth play a central role in its programming, particularly through engagement with African communities in the Canary Islands, across Spain, and among Afro-descendant populations with lived experience of the continent.

Mr. Martínez highlighted two projects in the education and social sectors where young people play a central role:

- **Teaching Africa:** This project has been promoting mutual understanding and inclusion for over 12 years. Primary and secondary schools across the Canary Islands have the option to incorporate eight didactic units into their curricula, aimed at providing a better and positive understanding of Africa. In 2025, approximately 20,000 students benefited from this initiative, with around 900 teachers integrating the materials as a complement to the official syllabus.
- **Africa Vive:** Over a two-week period, Casa África - together with African civil society and various African associations in the Canary Islands - organises a programme of activities in which young people are the protagonists showcasing the richness and diversity of African culture in Spain.

### ***Empowering youth for migration governance – IOM's perspective***

Dimanche Sharon, Chief of Mission for IOM in Nigeria, underscored the vital role of education and innovation in addressing Africa's demographic trends, noting that by 2050, the continent will host 75% of the world's population. With 10-12 million young people entering the labour market annually in Nigeria and only 3 million jobs available, she highlighted the urgent need to expand economic opportunities and address the dominance of the informal sector.

Youth must be given space to lead and shape solutions. She showcased IOM initiatives empowering young people in migration governance, including the [Youth Changemakers Initiative](#), which enables youth to engage on migration issues in their communities; the [Youth Advisory Board on Migration \(YBM\)](#) in Nigeria, offering a platform for youth to contribute to project design and participate in decision-making, and the [IOM Global Youth Ambassadors Initiative](#), which amplifies youth voices and promotes safe migration.

She also highlighted [IOM Nigeria's Youth Strategy](#), focused on empowering Nigerian and migrant youth through co-created, comprehensive programmes, including youth-specific migration pathways, skills training, recognition of qualifications, and exchange programmes. She reaffirmed IOM's strong commitment to promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration through youth-focused initiatives, and urged all stakeholders - governments, the private sector, civil society, and international partners - to:

- Invest in youth-centred migration policies;
- Ensure youth inclusion in the design and implementation of migration governance;
- Support data-driven approaches to inform effective youth engagement.

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**Reflections** from this panel include:

- During the discussions, the panel moderator, Charlotte Griffiths (EU Global Diaspora Facility, ICMPD), shared practical examples such as the [Diaspora Youth Recommendations](#) and EUDiF's youth internship, underscoring the tangible value of youth engagement in migration, diaspora, and development efforts. She emphasised the importance of humility and openness when engaging youth, noting that true co-creation emerges when institutions are willing to be challenged - *nothing about youth, without youth*.
- Education and awareness begin at home. Families and communities must be engaged and informed to avoid misconceptions and support youth-specific pathways.
- Strengthening trust in the value of locally earned qualifications is vital, ensuring that youth believe their education is recognised and respected at home and abroad.
- Investing in education expands individual choices and strengthens community development.
- Education should be approached as a whole-of-life, whole-of-society opportunity - placing critical thinking and creativity at its core.
- Youth participation in policy design, implementation, and monitoring significantly enhances impact, as seen in the Netherlands' "Youth at Heart" approach.
- The African diaspora, particularly youth, is a powerful force for innovation in both policy and entrepreneurship.

### 3) Skills without borders – Empowering youth for legal migration: skills, certification, and opportunities

*This session explored how young people can access regular migration pathways through skills development, educational opportunities, certification recognition, and labour mobility programmes.*

#### **The experience of Nigeria - Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment in Nigeria**

This session highlighted Nigeria's strategic approach to leveraging international labour migration as a catalyst for national development. As a country of origin, transit, and destination, migration is a key socio-economic feature of Nigeria's global engagement. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment has developed a robust framework to promote regular migration pathways, enhance skills development, and ensure labour migration supports national growth.

Nigeria has implemented a comprehensive set of initiatives to foster regular and ethical labour migration. These include:

- **International Labour Migration Division** to coordinate with stakeholders and government agencies on migration at home and abroad to ensure orderly labour migration and successful overseas job placements.
- **National Electronic Labour Exchange (NELEX)** to enable job seekers and employers of labour to meet online for job-matching.
- **Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and Job Centres** to offer potential and returning migrants guidance on employment opportunities, vocational training, reintegration support, and safe migration practices. 24 additional centres have been established in line with ILO conventions to promote fair and ethical services.

Nigeria follows a migration governance framework:

- **The National Migration Policy (NMP) and National Policy on Labour Migration (NPLM)** prioritise skills development to meet national and international needs and facilitate reintegration.
- **Fair and Ethical Recruitment** through registration and licensing of Private Employment Agencies (PEAs) for both domestic and overseas job placements.
- **The Department of Skills, Certifications and Qualifications** addresses skills development for employment by providing globally recognised trade test certifications. It operates vocational training centres across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones.

Nigeria is actively working to **expand legal migration pathways for its youth** by leveraging the growing global demand for skilled labour. This includes bilateral labour agreements, remote digital work, international education programmes, and diaspora engagement. Such efforts not only create employment opportunities but also strengthen data systems for better policymaking and monitoring of Nigerian citizens abroad.

While advancing, several **challenges** remain, including limited bilateral labour agreements, limited recognition of Nigerian qualifications, insufficient awareness about regular migration pathways, brain drain in critical sectors, prevalence of informal, uncertified skills training, inadequate migration data systems and a global tendency to view migration as a security challenge rather than a mutually beneficial opportunity.

### ***Successful partnership with Germany - GIZ - Centres for Migration and Development (ZME)***

Germany, through GIZ and in collaboration with Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, is implementing a long-standing partnership to foster regular and skills-based migration. The current phase of the [Centres for Migration and Development \(ZME\)](#) programme runs from 2023 to 2027 and represents over seven years of fruitful cooperation.

The initiative is progressively moving towards a triple-win approach, where migration benefits all: the country of origin, the country of destination, and, most importantly, the individual migrant. In an era shaped by artificial intelligence and digital transformation, "skills without borders" is becoming a reality. The programme seeks to ensure that migration is not a painful necessity but an empowering journey for young people.

The Centres aim to strengthen partner structures to support people engaging in regular migration for work and training purposes, regional migration and sustainable reintegration in a target group-specific and sustainable manner. The key target groups include prospective migrants, returnees, and disadvantaged local populations. Operating in 13 countries, the programme is active in Lagos, Abuja, and Benin City in Nigeria. In 2024 alone, over 10,000 individuals received guidance on regular migration through these centres.

The GIZ approach goes beyond vocational training. The Centres support individuals in fully realising their potential by helping them reassess their capacities and improve employability, both in Nigeria and abroad. Working closely with Nigeria's Skills Development Department, the Centres promote nationally recognised trade test certifications, helping to bridge the gap between informal and formal qualifications.

To **further enhance the skills dimension of labour migration policy**, the GIZ highlights the following priorities:

- Enhancing qualification recognition mechanisms.
- Investing in language and skills trainings, especially German language proficiency for access to the German labour market.
- Strengthening data collection and forecasting to strengthen labour market information systems.
- Promoting bilateral and multilateral labour agreements.

### ***A platform for shared growth - the experience of Cameroon***

Launched in 2021 by the Government of Cameroon, the DIALYJ ([Diaspora and Local Youth Joint Venture](#)) initiative serves as a springboard for entrepreneurial youth from the diaspora and an opportunity for local youth to join forces in driving sustainable local development through innovative, high-impact entrepreneurship.

At its core, DIALYJ aims to foster a supportive and inclusive environment where young Cameroonians from the diaspora and their local counterparts can collaborate to become champions of Cameroon's endogenous



industrialisation. By encouraging this synergy, the initiative strengthens national development and promotes economic resilience.

The uniqueness of this initiative lies in its ability to bring together youth from within and outside Cameroon through a digital platform that aligns shared ambitions and goals. Key objectives include:

- **Mobilise young Cameroonians abroad** to realise their entrepreneurial ambitions while deepening their engagement with their country of origin.
- **Facilitate exchanges of ideas, resources, and expertise** between diaspora and local youth - primarily through a digital platform for project “scoring” and “matching.”
- **Promote the economic inclusion** of young diaspora members through gender-sensitive strategies and job creation.
- **Support the emergence of new value chains and industries** led by youth, contributing to sustainable resource management and climate change mitigation.
- **Fund joint venture projects**, pairing diaspora and local entrepreneurs, individually or in groups, focused on high-potential sectors such as renewable energy, healthcare access, automotive services, circular economy, and technological innovation.
- **Rebuild trust** between the Cameroonian diaspora and their homeland by creating an enabling environment for meaningful contribution to the country’s economic development.

In 2023, DIALYJ funded 27 youth-led joint ventures, disbursing 399 million CFA francs in support of the first cohort of projects, following a competitive call launched in March 2022. These projects span across priority sectors and reflect a strong response from the diaspora, who expressed renewed enthusiasm and a deep sense of belonging to their country.

Through DIALYJ, Cameroon has successfully connected local and international youth, bridging the gap between potential and opportunity. This initiative not only promotes economic innovation and sustainable growth but also revives trust and national identity among young Cameroonians worldwide.

### ***Reconnecting diaspora youth with their roots - The experience of Morocco***

The **Summer University** offers to young Moroccans living abroad a 10-day immersive experience in Morocco, aiming to reconnect them with their heritage, identity, and the country’s evolving socio-economic landscape. Far more than a cultural visit, the programme is a bridge between belonging and contribution, helping diaspora youth understand where they come from, and how they can meaningfully contribute to Morocco’s future.

Participants engage in:

- **Cultural immersion**, exploring Moroccan history, traditions, and values;
- **Economic discovery**, gaining insight into Morocco’s industries, innovation ecosystems, and entrepreneurship opportunities;
- **Peer exchange**, connecting with fellow young Moroccans from around the world.

Ismaël Faouri, a Franco-Moroccan and member of the Moroccan Youth Council for Diplomatic and International Cooperation, shared his personal experience with the Summer University. He explained that many young people in the diaspora lack a macro-level understanding of Morocco’s economic and political dynamics. The Summer University helps fill this gap by offering direct access to policymakers, entrepreneurs, and local changemakers. It shows that Morocco is not only a place of origin but also a **place of opportunity**.

For Ismaël Faouri, the Summer University was a turning point. Inspired by what he saw and learned, he launched [Agel Partners](#), a digital transformation consultancy that aligns with Morocco’s national development priorities, particularly in education, vocational training, and technology. His venture now collaborates with European partners to support Morocco’s digital growth, showing how diaspora youth can turn reconnection into real-world impact.

The Summer University is emblematic of Morocco’s strategic approach to **diaspora engagement**, encouraging young Moroccans abroad not only to rediscover their country but to reimagine their role in its future.

### **Legal pathways and circular migration as tools for integration - The experience of Spain**

Demographic trends in Europe and Africa are complimentary. The Spanish government views legal migration pathways as the most effective route to integration. Through structured labour mobility programmes, Spain aims to ensure a mutually beneficial match between employers in need and willing foreign workers.

Spain currently has over 23 Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements, including five with African countries, the most recent being with Egypt. These agreements support circular migration, allowing workers to come to Spain for seasonal or temporary employment and return home with the possibility of repeat participation.

A major reform came in the form of [Royal Decree 1155/2024](#), which regulates the rights and social integration of foreigners in Spain. It introduces a **multi-annual circular migration model** designed to balance flexibility for employers with protection and opportunity for workers.

Key features include:

- **Four-year authorisations**, allowing workers to stay up to 9 months annually for seasonal work.
- **Reduced bureaucracy**, and faster access to the required certifications.
- **Return incentives**: returning workers are prioritised for re-selection the following year.
- After the first 4 years, workers can **extend their seasonal contracts** or **apply for a two-year residence and work permit**.

This new model helps prevent exploitation, improves employer planning, and offers stability and predictability for all parties involved. The Spanish approach emphasises not only job placement but also social inclusion, gender equality, and the protection of workers' rights.

Spain has piloted and scaled several circular migration initiatives, such as:

- [Wafira](#): A pilot project with Morocco that provided training and financial support to 250 women. As a result, more than 180 started their own businesses in Morocco (spanning a variety of business types, including clothing stores, tailoring, food, livestock, catering, crafts, among other.)
- [GECCO Order 2025](#): Led by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security, and Migration, through the State Secretariat for Migration, this order strengthens Spain's approach to circular migration. It introduces greater flexibility by allowing temporary modifications to employment contracts and enabling a shift from fixed calendar-year contracts to contracts with specific start and end dates, tailored to seasonal or temporary labour needs. Like the 2024 season, the 2025 one also supports the collective management of residence and work permits for stable employment opportunities under circular migration schemes. Spain currently has active agreements with The Gambia, Mauritania, Senegal, and Morocco, and has approved the participation of 19,000 workers through GECCO programmes for the 2025 cycle.

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During the exchange, several countries shared their perspectives on the role of migration in national development strategies:

- **Hungary** emphasised that large-scale migration, even when legal and regulated, may reflect deeper structural imbalances and limited opportunities in countries of origin. Hungary expressed concern about the loss of young, educated citizens and advocated for development models where migration is a choice, not a necessity. Highlighting the importance of skills transfer and reintegration, Hungary pointed to its scholarship programmes, which provide fully funded, high-quality education to thousands of students from developing countries. These initiatives aim to equip youth with the knowledge, experience, and confidence needed to return home and strengthen their societies. Hungary advocated for a broader focus on sustainable development.
- **Senegal** welcomed its partnership with Spain on circular migration, highlighting its role in combating irregular migration. It noted a growing trend of young people choosing to stay and invest in their home country, thanks to the experience, skills, and national support they receive. Senegal also spotlighted the Mobility and Diaspora Forum, organised by OFII in partnership with GIZ and ICMPD, which empowers returnee migrant entrepreneurs to launch and grow businesses locally. The country stressed the need to enable migrants to return and contribute meaningfully to national development.



- **Morocco** showcased its efforts to become an educational and innovation hub for Africa, particularly through institutions like [École Centrale de Casablanca](#) and [UM6P](#) (Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique). These institutions offer Executive MBAs and other certifications designed to foster intra-African collaboration, with the aim of certifications in Africa, for Africa, by Africans. Morocco's [Bridge Africa initiative](#), which combines housing, financial support, and mentoring for start-ups, reflects its commitment to building ecosystems that benefit the continent.
- **Germany (GIZ)** highlighted that migration and employment are deeply interconnected, particularly in contexts like Nigeria, a country of origin, transit, and destination. GIZ emphasized that 82% of Nigerian migration occurs within the region, not toward Europe, and that most of it is regular. This underscores the importance of shifting narratives to focus on the human right to migrate and on sustainable, regional development. GIZ's portfolio in Nigeria amounts to over €600 million, with €20 million allocated to migration and employment centres. These investments aim to foster job creation, skills development, and inclusive economic growth.

**Key takeaways** from the discussion include:

- Placing **skills development** at the heart of labour migration policies can turn migration into a powerful lever for economic resilience, shared prosperity, and the protection of human dignity in an increasingly interconnected world.
- Persistent challenges such as limited access to accurate information, particularly for women and youth, and financial constraints can significantly hinder participation in legal migration programmes. This highlights the critical need for **awareness-raising** to ensure young people are equipped with timely, **reliable information and quality training** to make informed decisions about their futures.
- There is a growing interest among European students in pursuing higher education at African universities, highlighting Africa's potential as an emerging hub for global talent and academic mobility.
- The **private sector plays a vital role** in skills mobility. Multinational companies with subsidiaries in Africa can provide opportunities for young professionals to gain experience and enhance their skills on the continent.
- **Digitising access to labour migration opportunities**, including for visa procedures and legal migration processes, is key to improving accessibility and transparency. Training and outreach initiatives can also help raise awareness around legal migration channels.
- **Building partnerships** between universities, vocational training institutions, and mentorship programmes can foster meaningful skills mobility and create smoother transitions between education and employment across borders.
- **Youth mobility** should also be tied to local entrepreneurship opportunities, which can promote national stability and encourage young people to invest in their communities.

#### 4) Inclusive governance: mainstreaming youth perspectives into migration management

##### *Beyond Remittances: Engaging young Diaspora for development*

This session explored how young members of the African diaspora can move beyond the traditional role of remittance senders to become strategic partners in sustainable development. Panellists emphasised that with their energy, global exposure, and ability to bridge home and host countries, diaspora youth are uniquely positioned to drive impactful change across sectors.

Youth represent a significant share of the 280 million people in the global diaspora and offer tremendous potential to:

- **Address labour shortages** in host countries by filling key gaps with innovative solutions.
- **Facilitate capacity-building and skills transfer**: by promoting peer learning and contributing technical expertise in their countries of origin.
- **Build global partnerships** by leveraging networks to attract investment and support development initiatives.

The discussion called for a shift in narrative - diaspora youth must be seen not just as contributors of remittances but as development actors, already making meaningful impacts in governance, education, climate action, and technology.

Key areas of engagement for diaspora youth include:

- Social and cultural: Strengthen community bonds and preserve cultural heritage.
- Economic and technological: Foster entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology transfer.
- Political and academic: Support governance reforms and share academic expertise.

As Africa faces rapid demographic growth and Europe grapples with an aging population, there is a unique window for cross-continental collaboration grounded in mutual benefit. Panellists highlighted the [AU Agenda 2063](#) - especially Aspiration 6, which envisions *"An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children."*

**Key takeaways** from the discussion included:

- The need to move **from inclusion to co-creation**, ensuring that diaspora youth shape policy and programmes, not just participate in them.
- The importance of **enabling environments and institutional frameworks** that facilitate diaspora engagement in countries of origin and destination.
- A call to **strengthen education systems and local institutions** in Africa, to empower young people and reduce brain drain.
- A showcase of innovative models such as a [pilot project in Spain](#), where partners *Africa 2.0 Spain* and *Ashoka*, with support from EUDiF, connect diaspora leaders with African social entrepreneurs to drive impact.
- The need for **migration policies that create jobs and opportunity within Africa**, allowing youth to thrive locally while contributing globally.
- The importance of **structured pathways for diaspora youth** to engage with home communities, including mentorship, investment, and knowledge-sharing platforms.
- Recognition that **long-term continuity and strategic planning for the involvement of new generations** are essential to sustain effective diaspora contributions.

### **Recommendations** *elaborated during the group discussions*

- Establish **migration desks** at local and national levels to provide verified, up-to-date information on migration, skills development, and reintegration.
- Develop **digital campaigns** using **youth influencers, diaspora ambassadors, and content creators** to raise awareness and promote diaspora engagement projects.
- Create **sustainable reintegration centres** to support returnees with job placement, mental health support, and entrepreneurship coaching.
- Conduct a **comprehensive youth needs assessment** to identify skill gaps and migration motivations.
- Design and deliver **tailored skill-building programmes**, including exchange schemes, remote internship platforms, and mentorship opportunities between diaspora and local youth.
- Simplify **bureaucratic processes** for diaspora youth to invest, start businesses, or access government programmes, using digital platforms for ease and accountability.
- Launch a **Diaspora Youth Innovation Challenge**, spotlighting youth across the Rabat Process region abroad contributing to development through business, education, and tech.
- Establish a **Diaspora Youth Advisory Council** to provide structured input into migration and development policy processes.
- Promote **synergy and coordination** between government agencies (e.g., Ministry of Youth, Foreign Affairs, NIDCOM) and youth-led diaspora organisations.

- Address the **root causes of the Japa Syndrome** by investing in homegrown opportunities, building trust in governance, and strengthening the quality of education and employment.
- Acknowledge and leverage the **expertise of young people**.
- Facilitate access to **flexible funding opportunities**.
- Strengthen **youth participation in decision-making** and governance structures.
- Foster leadership development and create **pathways for opportunities**.
- Encourage **active community engagement**.
- Advocate for embassies to establish **youth advisory boards** with meaningful youth participation.
- Designate a **National Diaspora Day** to celebrate and raise awareness of diaspora contributions in the home country and host country.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive **diaspora engagement policy**.
- Ensure **inclusive participation of all young people** across the country, irrespective of their age, gender, denomination – young people at the heart of the conversation.

### **Youth and governance: mainstreaming youth perspectives into decision-making processes**

This session examined the vital role of integrating youth voices into both formal and informal governance structures to ensure policies reflect their perspectives. Speakers from Liberia and Nigeria showcased successful national initiatives that demonstrate effective frameworks for youth participation.

In **Liberia**, the establishment of a **National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC)** in 2024 marked a significant step forward. With 7 young people aged 18 to 35, the NYAC serves as a national platform to bring youth perspectives into local, regional, and continental policy dialogues. The NYAC gathers critical and independent thinkers who give constructive feedback on central issues and policies to key stakeholders. It focuses on making Liberia aspirational for all and promoting “the Liberian dream”, drawing inspiration from other success stories in Africa, such as Rwanda. The co-chair of the NYAC emphasised the need for youth involvement at all stages of decision-making, including budgeting and policy implementation. In this respect, the NYAC is regularly meeting with key stakeholders in Liberia, including local organisations and communities or ministries. It played a key role in developing the Ministry of Youth and Sports’ budget, ensuring that youth are not only heard but given the means to contribute meaningfully and be empowered.

In **Nigeria**, the **Youth Sounding Board (YSB) of the Delegation to the European Union and ECOWAS (EUD)** supports the integration of youth into formal decision-making processes. The YSB particularly ensures that EU projects are youth-focused and address the problems and needs of the youth in Nigeria and the region. Its structure mirrors that of the EUD and is divided into different committees and subcommittees, with focal points on specific issues, including peace, security, health, governance, migration, among others.

In the health sector for instance, the YSB has shed light on the root causes behind the emigration of Nigerian doctors - commonly referred to as the “japa” phenomenon - highlighting the lack of adequate facilities. Based on these insights, the EU has begun supporting the development of improved medical infrastructure to address these systemic issues and help retain healthcare professionals within the country. Beyond policy advice, the YSB also works to raise awareness about available EU opportunities for youth, particularly for those in rural and remote areas. The YSB ensures that EU funding is allocated to young civil society organisations, including those committed to advancing the migration and development agenda. It also promotes youth employment and skills matching, through the Explorer I and Explorer II projects.

Countries such as **Benin** and **the Netherlands** shared their experience with similar initiatives in their countries and raised the issue of awareness as a key driver of meaningful youth involvement.

The audience echoed their concerns and stressed that adequate information and education, along with sustainable funding options and economic stability, were fundamental preconditions to the participation of young people in policymaking. All participants insisted on the importance of changing the narrative around youth and promoting their unique expertise and insights, as architects of forward-looking solutions.

### **Recommendations** *elaborated during the group discussions*

- Set up National Youth Councils which will lead the **elaboration of National Youth Strategies** that prioritise the needs and perspectives of young people.
- Create **youth boards and councils** to facilitate the participation of young people to local, national, regional and international fora.
- **Include migration in school curricula**, specifically information on regular migration pathways and on the dangers of irregular migration.
- **Enhance awareness-raising** on existing projects and programmes that young people can benefit from
- **Set up mentorship programmes** to equip youth with leadership skills to allow them to contribute meaningfully to migration conversations and lead projects in their communities.
- **Engage youth at the local level** and **enhance community-based engagement**, particularly through community leaders that leverage the power of storytelling and act as examples for youth.
- Enhance accessibility to **youth-specific funding pathways**.
- Create **spaces for dialogue** between governmental and political leaders and young representatives.
- Involve young people at **all phases of policy design**, from ideation and inception to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Facilitate the political and civic participation of youth through the identification, recommendation and selection of young people.
- Create **digital platforms** for youth consultation to facilitate wide-ranging engagement.
- Promote narratives that showcase the unique expertise of youth and their meaningful contributions to policy debates, **enhancing trust** between young people and key governmental and non-governmental actors.
- Explore ways to **systematically involve youth** in the activities of the Rabat Process.

## **5) Youth at the heart of the Rabat Process**

African partner countries are increasingly prioritising youth perspectives in migration policies and dialogues. During this session, several countries showcased key initiatives that reflect this commitment:

- **Cabo Verde** held its 5<sup>th</sup> National Youth Forum in 2024, a platform aimed at integrating youth voices into national migration policymaking. Key discussions included youth access to the labour market, the impacts of immigration on young people, and the inclusion of youth in policy formulation.
- **Mali** has long recognised the importance of youth in migration governance. Since the adoption of its National Migration Policy in 2014, youth have been at the centre of its implementation. In July 2023, the country organised the General Assembly on Migration and the Consultative Framework with Malians Abroad, where young members of the diaspora were strongly involved in the development of actionable recommendations.
- In **The Gambia**, the National Youth Council plays a strategic role, holding a permanent seat on the National Coordination Mechanism for Migration, the only body that sits across all thematic working groups on migration, ensuring consistent youth representation. Gambian youth also actively participate in high-level bilateral dialogues such as the Gambia-EU and Gambia-Switzerland migration discussions.
- **The Central African Republic** involves youth and young migrants - including asylum seekers, refugees, and diaspora representatives - in migration dialogues to better understand the full migration journey and its challenges. The country is encouraging states to develop national migration policies centred on youth and to include young people in regional development programmes.
- **Niger** created three youth promotion centres, focusing on employment access. Projects are underway to build platforms that support young people in their job search and entrepreneurship efforts.
- **Togo** is working through its Ministry of National Education and Research to encourage youth return and national contribution. Plans include setting up civil service entrance exam centres to help skilled

youth reintegrate into the national workforce, as well as engaging the private sector diaspora to invest in local development.

- **Tunisia** encourages institutional capacity through the National Migration Observatory and the National Youth Observatory, both aiming at preventing unsafe migration and promoting informed youth participation.
- **Senegal** sees youth as agents of change and ambassadors for safe and legal migration. The government promotes peer-to-peer engagement and demonstrates pathways to success within the country. Through a partnership with IOM, Senegal funds youth returnees in sectors such as agriculture, green economy, market gardening, and domestic waste management.
- In **Benin**, an educational charter has been adopted to encourage parental support for youth empowerment and informed migration choices.
- **Burkina Faso** stressed the importance of implementing recommendations developed in the meetings of the Rabat Process and ensuring greater visibility and inclusion of youth in the Dialogue to make their participation meaningful and impactful.

### Voices Without Borders: Regional Youth Exchange on Migration Governance.

Held virtually on 30 April 2025, the *Voices Without Borders* Regional Youth Exchange was organised by [Migration Moments with May](#) Global Empowerment Initiative, in collaboration with [CSOnetMADE](#) and the [African Non-State Actors Platform on Migration and Development](#), with technical support from IOM Nigeria. The event brought together over 50 young changemakers from across Africa - including Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Morocco, Gambia, Benin Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Ethiopia, South Africa - and the African diaspora.

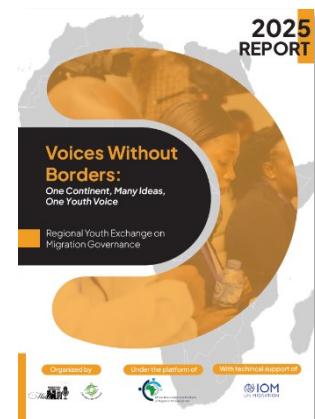
Through compelling storytelling, cross-border collaboration, and bold policy thinking, participants reimagined migration governance. Their contributions went beyond reflection, generating concrete, actionable solutions that embody the energy, creativity, and leadership of a generation committed to inclusive and responsive migration governance future.

The report highlights that youth innovation is flourishing across the continent. With continued support, recognition, and collaborative partnerships, youth-led migration initiatives can be scaled to promote safe, orderly, and regular migration that benefits both origin and destination communities.



*We are here to do more than participate. We are here to lead. When we are meaningfully engaged, migration in Africa becomes more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable. We are not the problem to be solved - we are already part of the solution, driving change. **What we need is the power, trust, and resources to lead fully**.*

--- Read the entire report annexed to this outcome document.



### Advancing migration research and capacity-building through innovation and partnerships

Established jointly by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) and Nasarawa State University, the International Centre of Excellence for Migration and Humanitarian Development Studies is designed to transform migration governance and position migration as a driver of sustainable development, particularly for Africa's youth.

The Centre serves as a dynamic hub for research, policy development, and capacity-building, offering actionable solutions to migration challenges that benefit both local and global communities.



Its work is structured around three core pillars:

- **Research** to inform evidence-based policymaking.
- **Capacity-building** initiatives to empower stakeholders and institutions.
- **Policy advocacy** to drive reforms and inclusive migration strategies.

## 6) Conclusions

The concluding remarks reaffirmed migration as a key driver of mutual and sustainable development, highlighting the critical need for collective efforts to address the root causes of irregular migration, and promote safe and inclusive pathways.

Spain, the co-chair of the meeting, emphasised the crucial role of **education and innovation**, noting that Africa holds immense, untapped talent. Creating opportunities to nurture this potential requires **meaningful platforms for exchange** - such as the **Rabat Process**, which Spain described as more dynamic and essential than ever, thanks to the active engagement of youth. Looking ahead, Spain called for a shift **from inclusion to true collaboration** - where youth are not only invited to the table but **co-create** the policies and partnerships shaping migration.

As the host of the meeting, Nigeria described the gathering as a vibrant convergence of ideas, commitment, and a shared vision for a future where migration between Africa and Europe is safe, regular, dignified, and voluntary. It reaffirmed its commitment to **youth-centred policies** that prioritise skills development, mobility, dignity, and diaspora engagement. These pillars are essential to advancing innovation in migration governance, especially around skills recognition.

Looking forward, Nigeria called for **stronger partnerships** to invest in job innovation hubs and mobility programmes that empower youth - particularly in fragile or climate-affected areas; greater private sector involvement in supporting education and skills-based initiatives; and a collective belief in the potential of youth as *partners*, not beneficiaries. Finally, Nigeria encouraged the Rabat Process partner countries to move **from conversation to coordination, and from policy to practice**. Migration, at its best, is not about the barriers we fear - it is about the bridges we can build across borders, together.

### Participation and outreach

#### Participation

- The meeting attracted 121 participants from 38 European and African partner countries, along with representatives from international and regional organisations, academia and civil society organisations.
- Respondents to the online feedback survey expressed overall high satisfaction with the meeting. Aspects such as relevance of the thematic focus on youth and quality of the presentations received high praise, with over 98% of respondents declaring they were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied”.
- Participants highlighted the importance of involving youth and listening to their perspectives in the Dialogue. They also noted that the meeting was highly engaging and facilitated meaningful exchanges, interactive conversations and the sharing of good practices.

#### Outreach

- The event was covered on the Rabat Process social media channels, with 3 LinkedIn posts and 4 posts on X (former Twitter) in English and French, resulting in 3,431 impressions on LinkedIn and 4,919 impressions on X. The Rabat Process social media profiles gained 88 followers in the context of the meeting.