



Thematic Meeting on Diaspora Engagement Strategies: Entrepreneurship and Investment

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NOTE ON THE STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE THE MALIAN DIASPORA

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INTRODUCTION

Since the democratic revolution of March 1991, the Malian diaspora has emerged as an economic, social and even political force by serving on some of the institutions of the Republic. As any diaspora community, Malians residing abroad continue to maintain emotional and material ties with their home country. They first got involved on domestic issues concerning food, health and education for families left behind. But for more than two decades, the Malian diaspora, on its own initiative, has been investing in basic infrastructure development in various areas (village water supply, rural roads, building schools, health centers, development of agricultural projects, etc.). The Government of Mali has taken on the issues by integrating migration matters to the question of development in general and more specifically the diaspora engagement in the home country. The Malian authorities have taken measures to help enhance diaspora contributions to use as a lever for the development of the country.

This document aims to present an overview of the initiatives implemented in Mali by government actors, civil society organizations, bilateral partners, or even private stakeholders on diaspora issues. It is also meant to show Mali's public actions on these issues in terms of approach and/or strategies and national or local policies in this field, as well as to list the various national stakeholders. .

1. Initiatives implemented in Mali by national institutions regarding diaspora issues

1.1 Mali and its diaspora in figures

Area: 1 241 238 km²

Population: 14 528 662 inhabitants (RGPH, 2009)

Number of Malians abroad: 4 million / 27, 5% of the population (administrative sources)

Number of Malians in Africa : 3,5 million / 24% of the population (administrative sources)

Number of Malians in Europe: 200 000/1,3 million / 1,3% of the population (administrative sources)

Number of Malians in France : 120 000/0,8 million / 1,3% of the population (administrative sources)

Number of foreigners in Mali: 110 410 / 0.76% of the population (RGPH, 2009)

Remittance flows from Malians abroad : 432 billion FCFA per year (BCEAO, 2012).

1.2 Consultation frameworks involving the diaspora

The Malian diaspora engagement, with a coordinated approach, manifested through frameworks allowing a dialogue with the Government of Mali. In this respect, there are institutional or forum platforms allowing the diaspora to participate in the institutional and economic life of the country.



Forums involving the diaspora

The ambition of the Malian diaspora, just as the Malian Government, is to enhance the economic capabilities it already embodies so that it may contribute efficiently to the development of the country. With government support or on its own initiative, forums have been organised in order to provide the Malian State with elements allowing it to establish a genuine diaspora policy that would allow to maximise its input to development.

The first Forum of the Malian Economic Operators Abroad (April 1996), the Forum of Malians Abroad (October 2003), the Forum of Diaspora Investors (December 2009), express the government will to organize Malian nationals by involving them in the national development policy. The aim was to present a comprehensive diagnosis of the main constraints blocking investments from Malians abroad in order to find ways and means to leverage them, to assess the impact of the contributions of Malians abroad on the country's economic and social development, to identify potential investors of the Malian diaspora. These forums were also intended to put institutional mechanisms in place to promote the investment from Malians abroad, thus facilitating their socio-economic reintegration and identify the economic circuits that may enhance the migrants' savings.

The forums' summary of recommendations revolves around the following issues, namely, the establishment of a guarantee fund for investments initiated and brought in by the diaspora, through support from the Malian State and technical and financial partners, and also the implementation of a support, training and securing system for the investments. The diaspora should take advantage of both the North-South or South-South spaces through government entities, decentralized cooperation and the sharing of experiences between the different partners involved. The creation of financial institutions adapted to the needs of Malians abroad, with their own participation and the assistance of the generation of immigrants to invest in Mali as part of the strengthening of socio-educational and cultural ties.

Another framework involves the intellectual fringe of the Malian diaspora. The TOKTEN Program (transfer of knowledge by expatriate nationals) was put in place in 1998 with the support of the UNDP and the French government. The focal points of diaspora intellectuals in the various host countries are designated in 2010 and an intellectual, scientific and technical diaspora forum is organized in July of the same year with aims to identify the constraints and propose solutions for a better contribution from the intellectual, scientific and technical diaspora to the development of Mali. The point was to identify areas for partnership between the intellectual, scientific and technical diaspora, the higher education system and research structures, to name a few, and to establish a formalized framework of exchanges and work between the intellectual, scientific and technical diaspora and the Ministry of Malians Abroad.

Relevant recommendations at the end of the forum requested the involvement of the scientific and technical diaspora to define and create a long-term development program for Mali, the development of conditions for a greater contribution of the diaspora into the transfer of technology and innovation through universities, institutes, prestigious universities and businesses. It is also about facilitating the contribution of the scientific and technical diaspora to the Malian SMEs of the private sector and identifying the training skills needed at diaspora level.



The national consultation framework for migration governance was implemented in March 2010 by the Ministry of Malians Abroad. Its role is to promote actions pertaining to labor migration and to assist and accompany in the development and implementation of the national migration policy. Three thematic groups have been created within this framework. They are: Reception and reintegration of returning migrants in transit; Legal migration, and Diaspora Migration and development. The diaspora has been strongly involved in the development process of the national migration policy through the HCME who was a member of the various thematic committees for the consultation framework. The knowledge-sharing meetings on the policy draft document were held in Europe (France) and in Africa (Abidjan and Libreville) during the month of September 2011.

The National Youth Foundation (July 2009) with a strong involvement of the diaspora youth, and more recently the first forum for women of the Malian diaspora (July 2016), show the Malian State's determination to involve young people and the women of the diaspora in the political process and the country's development

1.3. Specific actions for the diaspora

The Guide for Malians Abroad

A guide for Malians Abroad is prepared in 1998, updated in 2004 and under review to be adapted to the new migration environment and institutional changes. The Malian diaspora needs to receive a reliable guide on migration issues as a whole. In its current state, the guide presents the general conditions of departure from the territory and determines the better conditions of residence for Malians abroad. It contains information on the High Council for Malians Abroad, its dismemberments and the status criteria for Malians Abroad. It lists all the structures involved in the framework of assistance, protection and social security of the migrants, the current conditions for remittance flows as well as investment or employment opportunities in Mali, start-ups formalities and the role of a one-stop-shop for future diaspora investors. Finally, it determines how to register in schools, universities and the conditions to apply for the Malian public service with the understanding that any member of the diaspora is a full Malian citizen.

The reception, information and orientation offices of Malians Abroad

To facilitate the temporary or definitive return of diaspora members, reception, information and orientation offices of Malians Abroad have been installed between 2003 and 2007 in railway (Kayes and Bamako) and road (Gao) stations and at both the airport of Bamako and Kayes. The creation of field offices is planned in every region in Mali.

The improvement of communication with the diaspora

Missions to initiate contact are often undertaken by the Ministry of Malians Abroad in charge of the diaspora to take a true look at the living conditions of the Malians of the diaspora and coordinate actions with embassies and consulates, basic Councils, and host country authorities to better manage the situation. Between 2012 and 2016 countries such as Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Spain, Belgium and France and Côte d'Ivoire were visited.



Honors were awarded Malians abroad who work for the development of their country. The use of ICT is becoming increasingly common in the relationship of the diaspora with the home country (web sites, diaspora intellectuals mailing lists, information and exchange portal for the diaspora Malian youth).

2. An initiative of the Kayes regional Board: the creation of the Migration Development Area for the Kayes region - EMDK :

The Kayes region, Mali's first administrative region, is bordering Guinea, Senegal and Mauritania. It is considered the largest migratory pool of Mali because of the large emigration of its people especially to France, and, to a lesser extent, Central and Southern Africa countries. One of the features of this migration, which has spawned a very abundant literature on the subject, is the strong bond of its nationals to their home country wherever they end up. Maintaining community ties with villages is the basis for creating associations that reflect the traditional village organizational forms and are geared towards the development of immigrant communities from the Kayes region mainly established in France.

Since the end of the 1970s, these associations have become strongly involved in the development of educational, health and worship infrastructures built for people and, more prosaically, in supporting food expenses to counter the food deficit resulting from successive years of harsh drought. For at least three decades at least, the region of Kayes has been heavily subsidized by remittances from nationals mainly based in France for most. Their economic impact has had so much effect that their contribution to local development has become a serious regional issue. It is against that background that several initiatives have been introduced not only on the part of the diaspora communities in the region of Kayes, but also from some NGOs like the RDGR (Research and Development Group for Rural Development) and, at the bilateral level, between the French and Malian governments.

Faced with the challenges posed by the Malian immigration in France, the French authorities initiate a co-development program, or cooperation for development, to support the Kayes immigrants' individual and collective initiatives in France. In this context, many projects were created and implemented in the 2000s under the co-development bilateral convention between Mali and France.

The Migration development area for the Kayes Region (EMDK), created in November 2008, is an initiative of the Kayes regional Council which aims to contribute to a better control of migration issues through really involving local players in the development process of migration public policies in the region of Kayes. As of today, 161 structures (local communities, decentralized services of the State, migrants associations in France and the Ivory Coast, NGO...) are members of this area, which has created a Charter of common values.

The challenge is to open up to economic actors (economic interest groups, banks, microfinance Institutions, traders, cooperatives, mutual groups...) but also to promote and create jobs, the support of the project carried by the migrants, the adoption of a system to help migrant children return, people's involvement in the management of migration flows and the adoption of a entrepreneurship policy in rural areas. The Migration development area for the Kayes region weighed in in the process of formulating a national migration policy by bringing in elements of proposals. EMDK currently focuses on the information and awareness about irregular immigration risks at the Kayes community level, where communities were hit hard by the drowning of their nationals in the Mediterranean.



3. An example of a bilateral partnership: co-development

The objectives of the France-Mali co-development (based on the bilateral agreement of December 2000) are :

- to support community dynamics that were put in place at the end of the 1960s, and which grew in the early 1980s with the formalization of migrants associations in the host country (ex: today there are about 400 associations of Malian nationals in France, who often invest billions of FCFA in village infrastructure).
- to help mobilize financial transfers from migrants to apply them the productive system,
- to strengthen the ties between young people from immigrant background and their parents' home country.

The co-development policy between Mali and the France sparked associative dynamics which are based on local and international NGOs support. Thanks to their double allegiance, diaspora members can steer development projects in their regions of origin, with the support of French partners (local authorities, work councils, etc.).

Since October 2009, the Co-Development Technical Unit has been running the Co-Development Support Project, under the CIGEM project thanks to EU funding with a mission to coordinate and support the administrative and financial management of co-development programs in Mali. The Malian diaspora technical and financial skills are thus accompanied by co-development tools consistent with the national policies in force and in partnership with local actors in the context of decentralization.

Under the CIGEM financing agreement, the Technical Co-development Unit (TCDU) has developed its intended audience, which is no longer limited to the diaspora who settled in France, but open to the Malian diaspora located in Europe or in ECOWAS and CEMAC countries. Similarly, the institutional support offered by the TCDU to the Government of Mali was initially intended to cover all the regions of the Malian territory. Although the security situation in the Northern part of the country did not allow to work on the three (3) Northern regions, partnerships between the TCDU and five (5) regional councils managed to be signed.

4. A institutional platform proper to the diaspora : the High Council of Malians Abroad (HCMA)

The High Council of Malians Abroad (HCMA) was founded in November 1991 following the National Conference of July-August of the same year to carry the voice of the diaspora and its involvement in the nation's life. This ridge of the diaspora, represented in 64 host countries around the world, was meant to intercede with the Government and even take an active part in the country's institutional life. Therefore, the HCMA is an advisory body authorized by the Government of Mali and declared of public utility in November 2009 who aims, among other things, to strengthen the bond with Mali's public authorities on one hand and to create an opening with host country authorities on the other hand ; to encourage and value the contribution of Malians abroad in all aspects of the economic, environmental, social and cultural development, and to ensure the Diaspora's active participation to Mali's public affairs. The HCMA is represented in two national institutions, namely the High Council of Territorial Communities (HCTC) and the Economic, Social and Cultural (ESCC) Council.



5. Mali's public action on diaspora issues

Public action in favor of the Malian diaspora is devoted to the implementation of institutional, legislative and regulatory frameworks. In some cases, these frameworks have preceded diaspora policy, inserted itself in the national migration policy adopted on 3 September 2014.

5.1 The institutional framework for diaspora management

Since 1991, the State of Mali has set up an institutional framework to foster communication with the diaspora on one hand and to conduct joint actions promoting the involvement of the diaspora in all aspects of the political, economic, social and cultural life. This institutional framework is characterised by political decision-making levels such as ministry departments and more technical and management levels represented by the central directorates, national agencies according to their area of expertise or by the implementation of specific programs.

The Ministry of Malians Abroad is responsible for the definition and implementation of the national migration policy. In charge of migration issues, his tasks are as follows :

- promoting the interests and the protection of Malians overseas;
- implementing actions relating to the return and reintegration of Malians Abroad ;
- developing and implementing measures to ensure Malians Abroad are fully involved in the national life and in development actions;

As an indication, according to sources from Malians Abroad, the department's main activities during the year 2015 focused on:

- missions to initiate contact with the diaspora Malians ;
- the monitoring of the activities of the High Council for Malians Abroad;
- the supply of Embassies and Consulates in consular documents ;
- assisting Malians abroad ;
- monitoring of the repatriation process of Malians abroad ;
- the reintegration of Malians abroad ;
- information and awareness campaigns activities on the risks of irregular migration.

Two specific programs and a central directorate fall under the watch of the Ministry of Malians Abroad :

The TOKTEN Program (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals) : since 1997, Mali has been working with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for the transfer of knowledge of expatriate skills. The program is designated as TOKTEN (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals). Malian experts who have settled down permanently abroad, may voluntarily, effectively and usefully share with their home country their experiences, their highly developed expertise, in short consultations. These various activities are funded by the Malian Government, the UNDP and the European Union. In 2008, the TOKTEN program was expanded to the health and to the agriculture sectors, as well as SMEs for the private sector, and placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Malians Abroad. In that capacity, the program has helped strengthen the leadership capacities for higher education and for vocational training and the overall improvement of



professional training. It has also promoted cooperation opportunities between higher education and technical and vocational training institutions and companies.

The balance sheet of TOKTEN is encouraging. According to sources from the Ministry of Malians Abroad, from September 1, 2014, to August 17, 2015, in terms of capacity building, TOKTEN has recorded a total of 46 missions in different areas of focus. These missions are as follows: Education sector: 38 support missions have provided training to 585 trainees (bachelor: 430 including 28 women; Master: 138 including 23 women; Doctorate: 17 including 3 women); Health sector: 01 mission to train 9 people; SMEs Sector: 02 missions helped train 32 people, including 14 women; other administrations: 05 helped train 213 people, including 69 women. In total, 46 missions helped strengthen the skills of 839 people, including 137 women.

The **Center for Migration Management and Information (CIGEM)** officially opened on 6 October, 2008, and is a pilot project of the Malian Government and ECOWAS with funding from the European Union and attached to the Ministry of Malians Abroad. The overall objective of the CIGEM is to contribute to the formulation and implementation of a Malian migration policy, adapted to the national, regional and international dynamics with special emphasis on the synergies between migration and development.

The expected outcomes of the CIGEM are to ensure that the local, national or regional migration characteristics are known, refined, followed and broadcast and that the technical and multi-actor political dialogue is implemented in an effective way. It is also expected from CIGEM that appropriate responses/strategies for departing/returning migrants and the diaspora be defined and available and that pilot specific actions be implemented in the areas of departure and host areas in partnership with local authorities and the diaspora.

The CIGEM supported the development and validation of the National Migration Policy. Under the coordination of the supervisory department, it has led intense activities to promote the security and protection of Malian migrants, through activities fighting irregular migration; the information and awareness of migrants on the risks and dangers of irregular migration; the dissemination of insertion opportunities in the country; the access conditions to reinsertion schemes.

The General Delegation of Malians Abroad, technical department attached to the Ministry of Malians Abroad, was created by Order No. 00-046/P - RM of 25 September 2000. Its mission is to develop the elements of national policy in the field of administration, support, protection and promotion of Malians Abroad and to ensure the coordination and control of the Diplomatic and Consular Missions which contribute to the implementation of this policy.

As such, it is responsible for:

- ensuring the protection of the interests of temporarily or permanently established Malian nationals abroad;
- mobilising, coordinating and tracking the different aid operations upon the return of Malians Abroad ;
- ensuring the creation of conditions allowing Malians Abroad to take part into the country's economic and social development process ;

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- propelling and coordinating Mali's consular action ;
- ensuring the implementation of the agreements and treaties on the establishment and the circulation of people and goods.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance is responsible, through **(CLC) the Co-development Technical Unit** of implementing the co-development program defined by Mali and France. This was established in 2002, to ensure the implementation of the Franco-Malian Convention on Co-development, signed in 2000.

The National Employment Agency (ANPE) was created by Order No. 01-016/PRM of 27 February 2001, ratified by law No. 01-019 of 30 May 2001. It is implemented by Decree No. 01-054/PRM of 23 March 2001, by consultation no. 01/CA-ANPE deliberation and decision no. 044/ANPE. It is a Public Administrative Body (EPA) with financial autonomy and legal personality. The mission of the ANPE is to contribute to the implementation of the National Employment Policy of the Government of Mali. The ANPE is currently positioned on issues related to the Malian labor employability internationally.

The Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (APEJ) aims to contribute to the economic and social development of Mali by offering young people from 15 to 40 years old a maximum of employment opportunities, both in the field of paid employment and self-employment. The mission of the APEJ is to contribute to the creation of jobs for youth, men and women, in rural and urban environments, including those in the diaspora, including by facilitating their access to the labor market and to financing.

5.2 The legislative and regulatory framework for the promotion of the Malian diaspora

The citizenship of the Malian resident abroad

To promote the diaspora, the State of Mali passed a battery of legislations and regulations. By request of the diaspora and on its insistence, the nationality code has been revised to grant full citizenship to Malians residing abroad and who took the nationality of their host country. The law No. 95-70 of 25 August 1995 on the amendment of the code of Malian nationality, replaced by the law No. 2011-087 of December 30, 2011 whereby the code of individuals and family is enacted, provides in its title V and article 249 that any person of Malian nationality, normally resident abroad, who voluntarily acquires a foreign nationality, loses the Malian nationality only if he/she in fact declares it.

The recognition of this nationality allows members of the diaspora to be eligible voters, to benefit from the same rights and obligations, to carry on economic activities for their country's development, just like Malians who stayed in country.

Legislative and regulatory incentive framework for diaspora investment

Law No. 2012 - 016 of 27 February 2012, on the Investments Code stipulates that any person, natural or legal, of Malian or foreign nationality, carrying on within the conditions defined in this Code, investment operations on the territory of the Republic of Mali. Natural or legal persons, whatever their nationality, legally established in Mali who have or wish to exercise an activity fall



under the General guarantees and benefits set out in this Code. There is therefore no discrimination against Malians living abroad.

The Code federal and private land from March 2000, amended by law 02-08 of February 2012 and 01 January 2012, establishes the access routes and land ownership for individuals and companies and has created a land registry for municipalities in Mali. Land titles are issued, in Mali, to Malian individuals and companies. The lease is available to international and domestic investors on a renewable term of 50 years. The property is bought or rented from the private sector and by allowance from the Government.

Law No. 06-067 / of December 29, 2006, establishing a General Tax Code is attractive for investors. Diaspora investors may have more information on the opportunities offered to them from the General Tax Code, depending on whether it is a subsidiary, a branch, the takeover of a firm in difficulty, etc. by inquiring with the representatives of the General Tax Directorate. The main taxes in force in Mali are applicable to all companies.

The Investment promotion Agency (IPA) created in 2005 aims to encourage and support the development of direct investment, foreign and domestic, to contribute to improving the business climate, to advise on investment opportunities, to facilitate the administrative practices and procedures. There is a one-stop shop that includes all the services involved in starting a business within that agency. It takes 72 hours to create a company. Which is a big advantage for diaspora investors who can thus avoid the paper burden.

There are other laws and regulations favorable to diaspora investments, and they are :

- **the Act No. 92-020 of 23 September 1992 on the Labor Code**
- the Law No. 01-075 of 18 July 2001 on the Customs Code
- the Law No. 2012-015 February 27, 2012 Mining Code in the Republic of Mali,
- the Law No. 04-037 August 02, 2004 on the organization of research, exploitation, transportation and refining of oil and gas in lieu of the Petroleum Code,
- the Decree No. 2015-0604/P-RM of 25 September 2015 on the code of public procurement and public service delegations

5.3 The diaspora in the national migration policy

Axis 4 of the National Migration Policy is dedicated to the objectives of enhancement of the diaspora capabilities for the country's development. Therefore, this policy is meant to :

- to develop the intellectual, scientific and technical diaspora skills,
- to enhance the diaspora contribution in the implementation of local development projects,
- to encourage investments and the mobilization of financial resources
- to promote the artistic, cultural, athletic and touristic diaspora entrepreneurship
- to strengthen diaspora involvement in national politics.

6. Diaspora actions towards Mali and constraints to entrepreneurship

Diaspora actions towards Mali can be summarized as such :

- funds transfers,
- creation of SMEs,
- creation of local development projects with communities,



- country assistance in the event of a major crisis,
- diaspora involvement in the resolution of the current crisis in Mali.

However, constraints remain regarding the diaspora productive entrepreneurship.

6.1 Endogenous constraints

- the isolation of the country (Bamako is more than 1,000 km away from seaports).
- the high cost of production factors (energy, water, telecommunications, etc.).
- the legal, regulatory, institutional and administrative framework regarding the scope, heaviness and complexity of the procedures and formalities,
- an inadequate guidance and supervision of the diaspora,
- the lack of complete and reliable information on investment opportunities, incentives, guarantees offered, as well as the rights of the diaspora investors,
- the lack of entrepreneurship education for migrants,
- the many demands of the migrant's domestic group, inter alia.

6.2 Exogenous constraints

- How is it possible to evolve on a dual area (here and there) for Malians who are unwilling to return permanently?
- the issue of dual citizenship (Mali adopted the law of dual citizenship at the request of the diaspora).
- the lack of support in the host country,
- the high cost of diaspora remittances,
- securing the goods in the host country,
- the potential xenophobia against migrants in the host country,
- forced repatriations as a result of armed conflicts.

7. Current strategies for the enhancement of the human and financial capital of the Malian diaspora

- Existence of a legislative and regulatory incentive framework,
- Existence of the one-stop-shop (it takes 72 hours to create a company).
- Customs exemption on diaspora Malians' tangible investment
- Implementation of the recommendations from the Forum of Investors of the Malian diaspora (FIDIMA, December 2009) and the Forum of the intellectual, scientific and technical Diaspora (DIASPO-ISTM, July 2010).

As far as supporting local development

- Development of a training plan for the authorities, local elected representatives and NGOs about the techniques and approaches favoring the integration of migration in the local development plans and projects ;
- Promotion of the decentralized cooperation and inclusion of migration in the local development and decentralization ;
- Information on funding opportunities and incentives for diaspora members and their families to invest in the productive sectors ;
- Mobilization of the diaspora new generations for the country's development,
- Multiplication of exchanges and trading areas.

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As far as supporting the investment of the diaspora Malians

- Implementation of incentives promoting investment in hydro-agricultural developments, SMEs, the cultural and tourist industry, and other promising sectors ;
- Creation of a relief fund for diaspora investment (study underway);
- Setting up appropriate mechanisms to reduce transfer costs, absorbing informal flows, and building the capacity of local development partners,
- Removal of exclusivity clauses on remittances ;
- Strengthening and expanding the co-development Program with additional funding ;
- Establishing an institutional framework for better mobilization of the diaspora's financial contributions.

CONCLUSION

The Malian diaspora seems to register some progress in the social dialogue with the authorities to overcome the disputes that are crippling its cohesion. The political dialogue with the authorities has allowed the diaspora to participate in the institutional life of the country, but also have connections with the authorities of the host country. On the economic front, there are success stories in the field of SMEs with the support of the State and technical and financial partners. In addition, there is investment in local development around community infrastructure (schools, health centers, village water, rural roads, etc.).

The shared vision in Mali is to ensure that the diaspora can be a real 'asset for the development of the country', a factor of economic growth and social advancement for sustainable poverty reduction. This widely-shared vision constitutes the meaning, the scope and the purpose of Mali's National Migration Policy.

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