



Mixed Migration in West Africa in 2030

Results from the Mixed Migration
Scenario Building Workshop*

October 2019, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

*The workshop was organized as a side event in the margin of a Rabat Process workshop on migrant smuggling.

I. Introduction

Mixed migration refers to cross-border movements of people including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities.

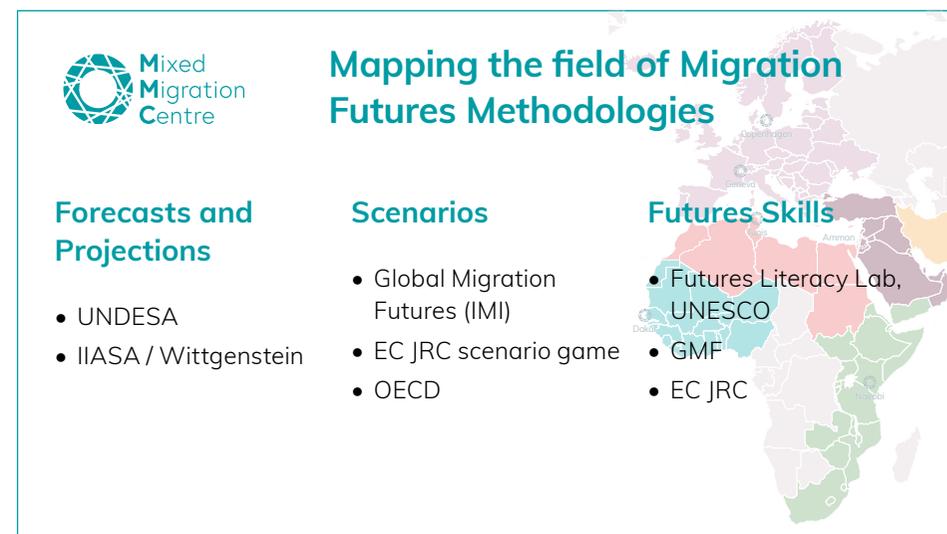
Numerous macro- and micro-level factors influence people's aspirations, capabilities and decisions to migrate, their choices of destination and their modalities of travel. Modeling mixed migration futures using forecasting methods is therefore challenging, as such methods rely on quantitative data on relatively certain migration drivers (such as fertility or life expectancy) and require a number of assumptions, including assuming that current known trends can be extrapolated into the future. In reality, we know that the process of migration comprises a wide variety of highly *uncertain* factors and sometimes unexpected triggers, for instance, related to conflict or labor markets, which are by definition difficult to fully capture through quantitative data and project into the future. For this reason, the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) adopted a "collective intelligence" scenario approach to analyze mixed migration futures in West and North Africa, in line with the approaches used by the University of Oxford and UNESCO's Foresight Unit.

This report briefly outlines the key elements of the scenario approach adopted by the MMC and the exercises it carried out during a scenario-building exercise hosted and supported by the Rabat Process/ ICMPCD in Abidjan in October 2019 as a side event to a Rabat Process workshop on migrant smuggling. It then presents a synthesis of the mixed migration context we see today in West Africa, followed by the results of its trend analysis on relatively certain factors impacting migration in 2030 in West Africa. Next, this report examines the data collected through the scenario-workshop on key 'uncertainties' impacting the future of migration and their consequences for migration, generated by key migration stakeholders from the region. Lastly, it outlines initial mixed migration scenarios for 2030 discussed by workshop participants.

II. About the Scenario-Building Methodology

A collective intelligence approach examines quantitative data on relatively certain mixed migration drivers and goes a step farther by integrating more qualitative, experiential data on relatively uncertain drivers from migration experts and key stakeholders. It collects this data through a systematic set of exercises with experts and stakeholders that prompt the development of future scenarios through the identification of key determinants of future movements and their potential impacts for mixed migration in 2030. The added value of this approach is that while generating data, it is also building "futures literacy"¹ amongst participants. This means that experts and stakeholders are given the tools to think critically about the future so that they can better anticipate change, identify their own blind-spots, and engage in more effective and sustainable planning on mixed migration.

Figure 1. Mapping the field of migration futures: different methodologies currently in use



As mentioned previously, a scenario approach stands in contrast to forecasting methods, which solely rely on analyzing those factors for which we have quantitative data and are relatively certain about how they shall evolve in the future. Scenario approaches also differ from futures methodologies, which primarily focus on the development of futures literacy, like that of UNESCO’s Futures Literacy Lab, given that the identification of insights about future mixed migration drivers and consequences are as important as capacity building in “futures skills” (Figure 1). Instead, scenario-building methods occupy a place in between, drawing upon the strengths of both methodologies, and prioritizing the analysis of uncertainties. In this way, scenario-building focuses on identifying and analyzing what is possible and not what is likely (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Key Features of Scenario Approaches



Key Features of Scenario Approaches

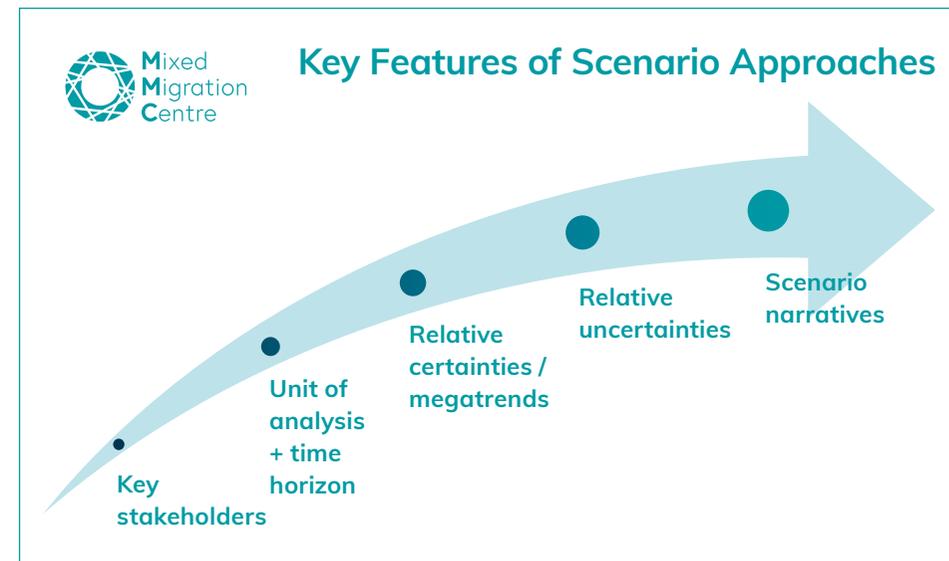
“[A] method to challenge existing perceptions of future developments, create alternative visions of the future, and strategically plan and improve decision-making”*

- **Quantitative data** on relatively certain trends (fertility, mortality)
- **Qualitative data** on highly uncertain future drivers of mixed migration (labor market shifts, political insecurity)
- Focus on **possibility + plausibility** NOT likelihood
- Developed by experts + stakeholders (aka ‘**collective intelligence**’)
- Users develop **narratives** on future contexts and can explore the development of factors of interest within those contexts

*Vezzoli, Bonfiglio, de Haas (2017)

At the “MMC Workshop on Analyzing Future Mixed Migration in 2030: West and North Africa,” organized in Abidjan on October 24th 2019, facilitators led participants through an accelerated version of a scenario-building process (Figure 3). First, rather than brainstorm and agree on a time horizon and unit of analysis, participants were given these parameters at the start of the workshop. Participants had 10-year time horizons and the West African region as their unit of analysis – due to time constraints, the North Africa was not analyzed in the end. Second, participants received a briefing of an analysis conducted by the MMC team on key certainties which have the potential to impact mixed migration in West Africa. Third, in groups and using their collective expertise, participants brainstormed, debated, and identified key uncertainties that had the potential to drive future mixed migration in West Africa. Fourth, and in the same groups, participants explored the possible impact of the certainties and relative uncertainties on future migration. After each exercise, facilitators brought together the groups to debrief the insights that had arisen through their respective discussions as well as the tensions and assumptions they uncovered. The workshop closed with a broader discussion of participants’ blind-spots related to mixed migration and what they perceived as the most uncertain drivers that had the highest potential to impact movement for which they were the least prepared.

Figure 3: Key Steps to Scenario-Building



III. Mixed Migration in West Africa in 2019

Mixed Migration in West Africa in 2019	
What we see today in West Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West African migration is historically and culturally an important avenue to socioeconomic improvement and/or a necessary part of life. Some people move as a result of conflict, but most move for social and economic reasons. Migration in West Africa takes place mostly within the region² (approximately 80%). Migration out of the region occurs towards North Africa and elsewhere in Africa and Europe, as well as towards the Gulf countries and the Americas³.
Mobility within the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In many areas across the region, a "culture of migration"⁴ – societal expectations of migration, including as part of a transition to full adulthood – can contribute to migration aspirations. Intra-regional migration is facilitated by the 1979 ECOWAS Protocol⁵ relating to free movement of persons, residence and establishment for citizens of 15 countries. There are longstanding seasonal mobility patterns, including for work in plantations and livestock farming, between Niger and Nigeria, Togo and Benin and between Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali. North-south migration has become increasingly important for pastoralist livelihoods in the Sahel as recurrent drought and desertification have reduced grazing pastures and water sources. There are also mobility patterns towards mining sites particularly in the so-called Gold Belt (Guinea-Senegal-Mali-Niger and Burkina Faso). Intense and interconnected armed conflict and violent extremism in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and the Lake Chad Basin, have resulted in increased displacement within the region. The 21 August Report of the Secretary-General⁶ on Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa reported that over the period of 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019, numbers of internally displaced climbed from 1.9 million to some 2.5 million, and the number of refugees grew from 286,900 to 326,000.
Northbound movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europe's crisis response to migration has made it highly sensitive to the migration of people from West Africa, North Africa and elsewhere to its neighbourhood. The emphasis of EU and individual member state interventions has been on migration management, including policing of borders and tackling irregular migration - as well as on tackling the "root causes" of migration. As of the end of July 2019, migrants from four West African countries accounted for almost half of arrivals to Spain⁷ in 2019, with Malians comprising 14%, Guineans 13%, Ivoirians 11% and Senegalese 8%. Whereas in 2019 West African nations account for four of the top five countries of origin for arrivals in Spain through the Western Mediterranean route, only one West African nation is among the top five nationalities of arrival in Italy⁸ through the Central Mediterranean route (Côte d'Ivoire, which as of the end of August accounted for approximately 10% of arrivals to Italy in 2019).
Southbound movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returns to West Africa continue both spontaneously and with international support. In 2018, a total of 36,508⁹ were returned through IOM's Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration (AVRR) and Voluntary Humanitarian Returns (VHR) programmes. The main origin countries of returnees were Mali (8000), Guinea Conakry (7396), Nigeria (5252), Cote d'Ivoire (3205) and Niger (2660). Since November 2017, 2,913 refugees/asylum seekers¹⁰ were evacuated to Niger through the Emergency Transit Mechanism for vulnerable refugees from detention in Libya. By 31 July 2019, 1,649 evacuated refugees¹¹ departed from Niger to resettlement countries. West Africans also move south within the continent, for instance towards Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Angola. These are reportedly destination countries for migrants from Senegal and western Mali, and recent reports of southward movement have alluded to migrants from Burkina Faso and Togo¹², as well as Nigeria and Cameroon.

IV. Relative Certainties in West Africa in 2030

The following certainties were identified and examined using quantitative data from the United Nations Population Division, World Bank, and UN Development Program, amongst others, as well as secondary research prior to the scenario-building workshop in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 24, 2019. Certainties are those factors for which we have a good deal of reliable data and information about how the factors will develop

and behave in the future. Moreover, for factors to qualify as certainties – also sometimes referred to as ‘megatrends’ – they have to have a direct or indirect impact on the structure and volume of migration. During the workshop, key stakeholders evaluated and validated the certainties through the scenario-building exercises.

Indicator	Current status (2019)	Possible future status (2030)	Potential impact on mixed migration
Relative certainties in West Africa			
Demography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current population of sub-Saharan Africa is 1 billion. The continent has the highest fertility rate in the world. Population of West Africa¹³ is 401 million in 2020.¹⁴ Approx. 50% are Nigerians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected population in 2030 of sub-Saharan Africa is 1.4 billion (DESA medium variant). By 2030, the population of West Africa is projected to reach 517 million, which represents a rise of approx. 25% in 10 years. Nigerians continue to be 50% or more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High youth cohort suggests the demand for migration could rise, given that youth comprise the most mobile of age cohorts. However, a rise in migration is not solely determined by a rise in population. Unless accompanied by a significant shift in balanced economic growth, the majority of movement is expected to remain intra-regional and intra-continental.
Economy (GDP / growth rates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to accelerate to 3.3% in 2020, and growth in Nigeria is anticipated to edge up to 2.2% in 2020.¹⁵ In 2018, estimated real GDP growth for West Africa was 3.3%, up from 2.7 % in 2017.¹⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African Economic Outlook from the African Development Bank shows that the continent's general economic performance continues to improve.¹⁷ By 2030 43% of Africans will belong to the middle or upper classes, up from 39.6% in 2013, suggesting a higher demand for goods and services. By 2030, household consumption is expected to reach \$2.5 trillion, up from \$1.1 trillion in 2015.¹⁸ The ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme continues to eliminate trade barriers and improve trade links, facilitate free movement of certain goods, progressively eliminate customs duties and taxes, and gradually eliminate customs duties and nontariff barriers. In 2030, regional trade (and international trade) is expected to continue to increase. Nigeria shall be the first African country with a GDP over \$1 trillion in 2030. Experts estimate that the country's economy will more than double in the next 10 years.¹⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic growth and a rising middle class shall lead to an increase in the capabilities and aspirations of some West Africans, enabling their migration with and beyond the region to North Africa, South Africa, and farther afield. Taken together with rising rates of educational attainment, we might expect more skilled migration flows within and from the region. What migration channels will be used by movers shall depend on the legal pathways available

Indicator	Current status (2019)	Possible future status (2030)	Potential impact on mixed migration
Human development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2019 UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) ranks all West African countries as low development countries except for Cape Verde and Ghana which are ranked as medium development countries.²⁰ Many are in the bottom decile of the global ranking. Nigeria, with half the region's population has an HDI score of 0.532, which is just below the 0.55 level that defines 'low development countries'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) forecasts (on poverty, malnutrition, maternal mortality, net school enrolment, access to electricity, and access to drinking water) show that all African regions except North Africa are unlikely to meet the SDGs by 2030.²¹ The concentration of the world's poorest has shifted from South Asia to sub-Saharan Africa. According to the World Bank, 87% of the world's poorest are expected to live in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2030 if economic growth follows the trajectory over the recent past.²² However, according to a 2013 UNDP projection, in the long term the region is set to bridge this gap. The report estimated that sub-Saharan Africa including all West African countries would attain the fastest growth globally in relation to HDI with a 65% average increase in performance, putting most in a 'medium development' category by 2050.²³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to meet essential human development indicators combined with expected concentration of poverty and inequality in the region will intensify drivers of forced displacement when coupled with the presence of poor governance and civil conflict. Moreover, those able to mobilize sufficient resources may decide to engage in irregular and regular movements in such of better livelihood opportunities. Apart from rural-urban migration internally (already happening), we should expect intra-regional migration (already very active in the ECOWAS region) and migration to other parts of Africa.
Urbanisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 2000 and 2018, African cities have been growing on average higher than any other region globally – in West Africa, cities have been growing at an average of 3.6% per year – some like Abuja have been growing at 7% per annum during the period.²⁴ Of the 63 African cities with a population over 1 million, 22 are in West Africa (and 10 of these in Nigeria). Approximately 48% of all people in West Africa live in urban areas.²⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UN Population Division expects West African cities of over 1 million to grow at a rate of 3.6% on average between 2018-2030.²⁶ Between 2020 and 2030, the percentage of urban dwellers in West Africa is expected to rise from 48% in 2020 to approx. 54% in 2030.²⁷ Together, India, China and Nigeria will account for 35% of the projected growth of the world's urban population between 2018 and 2050. By 2050, it is projected that Nigeria will have added 189 million urban dwellers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An average rise of 3.6% of large city populations in West Africa year on year will strain already congested cities. Megacity Lagos' population, for example, is estimated to increase from 17.5 to 30 million by 2030.²⁸ How to educate, house, provide health, food and sufficient employment will be a major challenge for urban management and government, already considered relatively weak in these capacities. Many of the new arrivals in cities will come from smaller towns and rural areas. It is not clear how many people will move on to attempt international migration seeking work and better opportunities, but a proportion is expected to, along with those born in the cities also seeking opportunities abroad. This is because migration capabilities, aspirations and norms tend to form and increase in cities as key points of departure and sites for immigration.

Indicator	Current status (2019)	Possible future status (2030)	Potential impact on mixed migration
<p>Level of automation / use of AI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the lowest levels of use of AI, automation and robotics are found in West Africa. One study shows that in 2016 the whole of Africa imported just 1% of the volume of industrial robotics imported by the US and Europe, and 0.25% compared to what Asia/Australia imported.²⁹ However, interest among investors is growing. Venture investors put a record-breaking \$725 million into African tech start-ups in 2018, up from \$277 million in 2015.³⁰ In April 2019, Google opened its first African AI research centre in Ghana. There are pockets of AI emerging in countries such as Nigeria. From a start-up perspective, Google has established a Launchpad Africa accelerator in Lagos, Nigeria where there are more than 60 start-ups taking part, as well as similar hubs in Ghana.³¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Going forward, experts agree that if West Africa, as with the rest of the continent, intends to catch up with the global north on issues of automation and AI—and possibly leapfrogging it—depends on four factors: a vibrant ecosystem of entrepreneurs, expert knowledge in Africa, data, and policy. Education systems will need to adapt quickly, and new frameworks need to be created for workers and citizens to develop the skills they need to thrive. Broad-band coverage will need to expand rapidly—specifically in rural areas—in order for all citizens and businesses to reap the benefits. There remain structural challenges that can hamper the development of a healthy AI ecosystem in Africa.³² Before Africa can reap the benefits of artificial intelligence, African governments, investors, and NGOs must train workers for complex tasks, and reform laws and education to meet the demands of tomorrow's economy.³³ Work activities susceptible to automation in Nigeria are estimated to be an alarming 46% by 2030.³⁴ Polarisation in the workforce, a 'hollowing out' of middle level jobs and increased wage inequalities are expected both between countries and within countries.³⁵ Across the continent, this technology has the potential to bring myriad positive changes in sectors such as health care and finance, bridging the gap between physical infrastructure inadequacies and consumer demands, while freeing up more time for skilled labour and increased labour productivity.³⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machines can empower low-skilled workers and equip them to take on more-complex responsibilities. This, in turn, can help meet an urgent need for countries lacking widespread access to education and skills training therefore potentially reducing migration aspirations.³⁷ However, a more pessimistic take suggests that the expansion of automation technology will strongly affect Sub-Saharan Africa's growing middle class who are employed in the formal economy.³⁸ This would cause job losses across a group who may have resources and contacts to consider migration. If this is a leapfrog opportunity for the West African region, automation could be increasingly used in manufacturing and also cause unemployment and frustration, leading to potential migration.³⁹ If AI and automation also takes over increasing amounts of work in destination countries the need for migrants in some sectors may decrease but will increase in others, especially due to demographic changes (aging). However, if labour demand in origin countries falls due to comparative cost advantage of robotics there will be increased unemployment that could prompt some to migrate and, at the same time, constrain the ability of those from more vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds to migrate.

V. Key Uncertainties in West Africa in 2030

The following uncertainties were identified and examined by key migration stakeholders through the scenario-building exercises at the workshop. The notes from the meeting have been completed with further research of existing secondary sources.

Uncertainties are those factors that have a **high potential to impact mixed migration** but are **highly uncertain in terms of how they will develop** in 2030. For this reason, there is typically a dearth of data and information related to uncertainties. Uncertainties are one of the most important components of the scenario-building process because they often reveal those factors for which we are the least prepared, from a migration

perspective. It should be noted that in examining the uncertainties listed below, key stakeholders did NOT make predictions about how they thought such drivers would evolve. Rather, they explored possible (not probable) directions these factors could take and their associated consequences for migration. Hence, the table below should be read as a synthesize of the brainstorming that took place - completed by additional secondary sources research - and not as firm predictions from stakeholders about the future. Further, the table below does not necessarily reflect the position of all stakeholders or of MMC or the Rabat Process / ICMPD.

Indicator	Possible future status (2030)	Potential impact on mixed migration
Relative uncertainties		
Political landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The region will make progress in achieving a more stable political landscape and in strengthening democratic governance and rule of law. Having said that, not all the countries will proceed at the same speed and some countries may lag behind while others move ahead at a faster pace. On the other hand, Elections in Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso in October 2020 will present significant risks for the region and may lead to violence and instability. In Cote d'Ivoire, long-standing political divisions, fragmentation within the army and growing civil discontent suggest that elections will not be peaceful, which would have significant consequences for the political landscape in the next 10 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differences between countries in term of political stability may prompt an increase in both migration and forced displacement within ECOWAS, as people seek out countries and communities that are less unpredictable and volatile. In Cote d'Ivoire, displacement may include returns of Burkinabe in Cote d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso, as well as onward displacement in coastal countries such as Guinea and Liberia. Those with greater capabilities and aspirations may decide to move out of the region, toward Europe or emerging economies. However, these more advantaged movers will remain a very small part of the total number of migrants and refugees.
Security /conflict and violent extremism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The security/conflict situation will remain unstable and unpredictable. In the future we may see an increase in attacks by violent extremist groups, with a greater number of groups and coalitions, an intensification of attacks and diffusion of geographic incidence. Threats of violent extremism are also highly intertwined with threats of local conflicts and illicit economies. Alternatively, efforts to counter violent extremism may take root and in 2030 we could see a reduction in the strength and geographic range of groups like Boko Haram. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict and insecurity will prompt internal as well as international forced displacement. Greater insecurity may also constrain the free movement of people within the continent. Improved security and greater peace, on the other hand, may lead to an increase in mobility and circulation migration within the region, as people are freer to engage in trade and labor migration without being constrained by conflict. Combined with factors like economic growth and stronger labor markets that may accompany a future marked by peace and stability, we would expect greater intra-regional flows, immigration, as well as emigration. We would also expect a sharp decline in forced displacement and involuntary immobility.

Indicator	Possible future status (2030)	Potential impact on mixed migration
Labour markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High unemployment may present an important socioeconomic and policy challenge in West Africa in 2030. While the official unemployment rates may be low across West Africa (e.g. as they were in 2018 at 6.1% in Burkina Faso, 2.5% in Cote d'Ivoire, 6.5% in Senegal)⁴⁰, these figures do not accurately measure labour market participation, as many workers may be employed in the informal sector or be underemployed in the next 10 years. In 2030, the sum of unemployment rate and the underemployment rate may amount to well above 50% in most West African countries as they did in 2018.⁴¹ In 2030, West Africa shall experience a 'youth bulge' which may in turn lead to high youth unemployment relative to those over the age of 25, if there is an insufficient demand for labour. While automation is a fairly certain trend, what is highly uncertain is the impact this will have on West Africa's labour markets. Will certain sectors reduce their need for lower-skilled labour, will demand increase in other sectors for 'mid skills', and/or will entirely new sectors of the economy arise that create new opportunities for employment? At a global level, countries outside of ECOWAS are more aware of the fact that stronger West African labour markets are important for global stability. Hence, in the future, we may see more foreign investment aimed at bolstering vocational and technical training and fostering innovation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differences and disparities in the labour markets between countries will lead to more intra-regional mobility within ECOWAS. The size and strength of sectors in various West African countries will also structure the labour and international student migration flows we see in the future, by skill level and type as well as gender. Migration research tells us that labour markets, much more than migration policies, directly impact migration flows. West African countries with stronger labour markets could also become destination countries for migrants and refugees in search of better economic and livelihood opportunities from elsewhere in Africa (South and Central Africa for instance). High youth unemployment may prompt social discontent, which, when combined with other factors, could ultimately lead to political instability and conflict and prompt displacement. Unemployed young people are also vulnerable to being drafted into radical militant groups.
Impact of environment stressors and change and natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several stakeholder groups felt that factors like rapid onset environmental changes, including natural disasters, will be increasingly felt by West African countries in the next 10 years, and result in the reduction of arable land and water sources (for herders). The management systems put in place by governments between now and 2030 will not be sufficient to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Yet, they will help communities become more resilient. The future of environmental management systems is highly uncertain because they are issues of governance and rely on political will, international cooperation, and strong institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While rapid onset environment change does not typically result in international displacement, research shows that it is often linked to temporary internal displacement. Hence, in the future, environmental change may continue to prompt internal forced displacement. At the same time, those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change will have more limited resources and migration may not be a choice available to them (rendering them involuntarily immobile). If environmental change impacts food security and the availability of water for herders, this could change seasonal migration patterns and prompt longer-distance, cross-border movements. Migration may serve as a key coping strategy for the challenges caused by the changing environment.

Indicator	Possible future status (2030)	Potential impact on mixed migration
Attitudes to migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the one hand, free mobility will continue to be a reality of the region and will be further consolidated with an overall positive attitude toward human mobility in 2030. On the other hand, continued conflict/insecurity in some parts of the region may lead to an association between mobility and security threats in the future. This could negatively affect attitudes toward migrants and refugees in some countries, particularly those receiving displaced population coming from conflict areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While attitudes towards migrants and refugees do not impact the volume or structure of migration flows, it nevertheless has a strong impact on migration in terms of the experiences of migrants and refugees in hosting communities. If in the future migrants and refugees are perceived as security threats, they might experience greater marginalization and violence in West Africa destination countries. If attitudes towards foreign born populations are more positive and they are welcome into communities, migrants and refugees may have greater opportunities to contribute to and invest in their hosting societies.
Migration policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While groups discussed different directions relating to free movement within the African continent, there was some consensus that barriers to free movement will be reduced, including through the ratification of instruments relating to free movement. EU policies aimed at criminalising smuggling will increasingly lead smugglers to take more dangerous routes, professionalise and collaborate with organised criminal groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the implementation of free movement measures within ECOWAS and the AU will facilitate mobility within the region. EU policies on smuggling will continue to push smugglers to avoid detection with an impact on the safety and agency of refugees and migrants. This could also lead to an increase number of refugees and migrants stranded in “transit” countries -i.e. not their intended destination - becoming more vulnerable due to lack to economic opportunities and exposed to the risk of trafficking and exploitation.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2030, a health epidemic could arise and could spread in a country in West Africa. Should this occur, there is a risk the situation might deteriorate and spread further in the region to other countries due to poor sanitary conditions and population movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the short term, a health epidemic could impede intra and inter-regional migration. In the medium-long term, more people may choose to stay in their place of origin. Those undertaking irregular migration, and hence not abiding by public health protocols, would be especially vulnerable to contracting a disease and/or spreading it should a communicable disease outbreak occur.

VI. Possible Scenario on Mixed Migration in West Africa in 2030

The following scenario on mixed migration in West Africa in 2030 was drafted based on the 1) the certainties presented in the first section of this report; 2) uncertainties identified by key stakeholders as future migration drivers as well as the 3) consequences for mixed migration they explored. Once again, it should be noted that stakeholders did NOT make predictions about how they thought such drivers would evolve. Rather, they explored possible (not probable) directions these factors could take and their associated

consequences for migration. In this way, building the scenario was a process through which stakeholders could better understand and test how certain drivers led to certain outcomes, and explore the implications of these outcomes for their work. The scenario outlined below should be read as a synthesis of the brainstorming that took place and as one possible direction for the future of mixed migration. The scenario does not necessarily reflect the position of all stakeholders or of MMC or ICMPD.

Mixed Migration in West Africa in 2030

Future migration scenario (including forced displacement/ refugees and IDPs)

- In West Africa, the combined effect of rising demographic, developing economic and labour markets, rapid pace of urbanisation, and environmental, security, political context and attitudes, point to future conditions that are very likely to **increase rather than decrease mixed migration in the region**.
- Today a large proportion of the 8.4 million West Africans mostly travel within the region. Going forward, much of the future movement from this region **will continue to be mostly inter-regional and intra-regional**. With restrictions expected to increase in the global north and OECD countries, and consequent further reduction of regular / legal pathways, migration towards Europe is likely to become ever more precarious.
- With a potential increase of rural-to-urban migration and the attraction that emerging economic poles will increasingly have for intra-regional migration **cities will play a crucial role in future human mobility** in the region. How to regulate movements and labour markets as well as how to provide housing and services to new arrivals will be a major challenges for urban management and government and key to reap the benefit of migration.
- **Differences between West African countries** in terms of political stability but also in terms of economic growth and labour market opportunities will lead to an increase in population movement within ECOWAS. An economic boom in some West African countries may make these attractive for migration from outside West Africa, including South and Central Africa.
- A deterioration of the **security situation** linked to armed groups, inter-communal tensions or violence arising from elections will cause displacement locally and to neighbouring countries and for those most vulnerable, increased insecurity will prompt involuntary immobility. This may lead to neighbouring states imposing tighter border controls, affecting movement for socioeconomic reasons, including trade.
- The West Africa region is particularly vulnerable to different kinds of **disease outbreaks** and faced a major Ebola outbreak in 2014. A disease outbreak may spread fast in the region due to poor sanitary conditions and frequent population movement, with the potential to constrain mobility in the region.
- The **impacts of climate change** are already being felt in the region and causing internal and cross-border displacement. The Sahel is experiencing extreme temperatures, fluctuating rainfall, and droughts, all of which can degrade land, change grazing patterns, and reduce water supply for both animals and people. North-south migration has become increasingly important for pastoralist livelihoods in the Sahel as recurrent drought and desertification have reduced grazing pastures and water sources. As management measures in place are largely inadequate to mitigate these impacts, internal and cross-border displacement may increase. However the scale of displacement should not be overstated, as those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change will have less choice to move as they have fewer resources to do so.
- While **free movement policies** within the African continent may promote mobility within the region, international policies in the Sahel - including anti-smuggling legislation - continue to push migration underground. This also leads to increase in organised crime and trafficking, with repercussions on the human rights of refugees and migrants.
- The combination of factors listed above suggest that despite some constraining factors, **the future will give rise to increasing levels of migration, both using regular channels where possible but also mixed migration using irregular channels**. The flows are likely to continue to consist of people looking for work opportunities as well as those fleeing conflict who are most likely to be internally displaced or moving to neighbouring countries.

- 1 According to [UNESCO](#), Futures Literacy is the skill that allows people to better understand the role that the future plays in what they see and do. People can become more 'futures literate', because of two facts. One is that the future does not yet exist, it can only be imagined. Two is that humans have the ability to imagine. As a result, humans are able to learn to imagine the future for different reasons and in different ways. Being 'futures literate' enables people, together, to appreciate the world more fully, to use the future to innovate the present.
- 2 OECD (2018) [Identifying the factors driving West African migration](#)
- 3 McDonnell, P. (2019) [African migrants stuck in southern Mexico, their American dream on hold](#) LA Times
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