

# MIGRATION ACROSS WEST AFRICA: DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ASPECTS

Presentation

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# Introduction

- The impact of migration is felt at different levels of development
- We argue that “no matter the levels of development countries in West Africa could reach, their citizens will still migrate, although, the motives, volumes and impact may differ”
- The institution of the ECOWAS and the adoption of its protocols on Free movement of persons, residence and establishment, have facilitated.



# Introduction

## Key Research Question:

- what are the migration linkages with development in the West African sub-region?

## Data Sources

- IOM, World Bank and United Nations agencies
- In addressing our question, we discuss the following key patterns:
  - Brain drain, brain gain, transnational linkages and return migration
  - Impact of remittances on development
  - Migrant Associations and development
  - Migrant's contribution to development of destination countries



# Brain drain, brain gain, transnational linkages and return migration

- The negative perception of migration which stems from the fear of brain drain has been a gain following contemporary migration within the west African context.
- Due to the transnational nature of west African migration, migrants are able to contribute their acquired skills to the development of the home country either on temporary or permanent return basis.
- Migrants establish transnational businesses in the home country and this creates jobs for the left behind family.

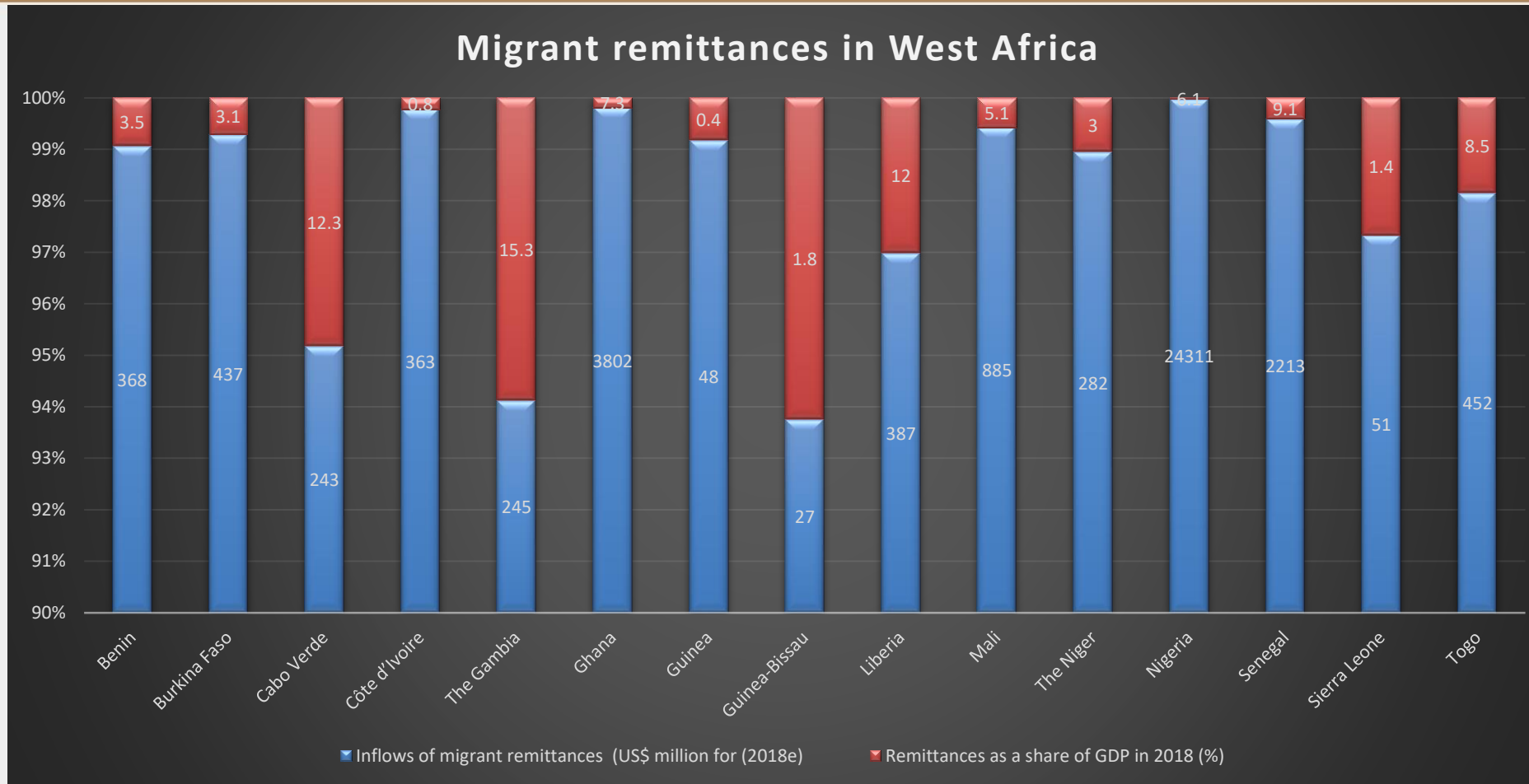


# Impact of remittances on development

- Remittances represent significant contributions to development and a source of foreign exchange, supplementing household income for purchasing basic needs.
- Remittances are estimated to be **three times the size of the overseas development aid** and second to foreign direct investment for many low- and middle-income countries, including West African countries (World Bank, 2016).
- In 2019, the amount of remittance inflows to West Africa was USD 35.6 billion is an increase from USD 31.439 billion. Majority of the top 10 recipient countries of remittances were in West Africa, with Nigeria as the top recipient country, with USD 24.3 billion (World Bank Group and KNOMAD, 2019).
- Remittances are invested in accommodation, health, and education among others.
- In more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of West African countries, remittances represent at least 5% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP)



# Impact of remittances on development



Source: World Bank Data Sheet for remittance inflows April 2019



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# Migrant Associations and development



- West African migrants form associations along the lines of profession, religion and ethnicity among others.
- Another prominent association is the Council of Ewe Associations of North America, which aims to promote the socioeconomic and cultural development of countries of origin, namely Benin, Togo and Ghana (Kothior, 2013).

In the educational sector, scholars based in the Global North transfer their knowledge to the home country on a more short-term basis.

These associations contribute to infrastructural development such as schools, hospitals, in the home country.

- They also support newly arrived migrants to integrate into the host country.



# Migrant's contribution to development of destination countries



- Migrants establish businesses, creating employment at destination. Eg. restaurants, African shops.
- African migrants connect with their home countries in various ways.
- Social remittances including “democratic remittances” are major means of ensuring their continuous and constant link with the home countries.
- For instance, migrants often support the strengthening of democracy in the countries of origin through the formation of external party branches of the home country political parties, campaigning, resource mobilization and sometimes returning to occupy certain political positions once their parties are in power (Setrana and Kyei, 2015).





# Transnational linkages, return migration and development

- Businesses created and operated by migrants in their host communities provide job opportunities for the unemployed, and also allow them to maintain a cultural connection with their home countries.
- These businesses include restaurants that provide employment and also cater to the migrant communities' identification with their home countries in the form of special native cuisines, among others (Sassen-Koob, 1985).
- These businesses have related activities that necessitate the connection to both the host and origin communities, such as the import–export business, shipping, air cargo, travel and tourism companies, and money transfer businesses.
- Migrants get to be “cultural brokers” and contribute to the cultural diversity of their host nations (Glick Schiller et al., 1995).



# Conclusions and Recommendation

## **We conclude that;**

- Migration within and outside W/A sub-region brings enormous benefit to both the home and host countries.

## **we recommend that ;**

- Governments in the sub-region should harmonise migration policies across the region to maximise the benefits while reducing the cost of migration (be it regular or irregular)
- We encourage governments as they work to achieve the SDG indicators 17 and 10 respectively, to increase the volume of remittances by reducing the cost of remittances.





**Akpe!  
Yedaase!  
Thank you!**



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