

ICMPD Working Paper

COVID-19 and the Future of Migration and Mobility in Africa

Anna Bara

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About ICMPD

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), established in 1993 by Austria and Switzerland, is an international organisation headquartered in Vienna working in migration-related fields. The organisation was created as a support mechanism to facilitate consultations on migration and to provide expertise and services in the emerging landscape of multilateral cooperation on migration and asylum issues. Today, ICMPD provides its 15 Member States and numerous partners with in-depth knowledge and expertise in the area of migration. Although ICMPD has a European basis, it carries out its activities throughout the world, including in Europe, Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

Over the years, ICMPD has been a key European player in the migration field, working with partners in creating innovative concepts and mechanisms like integrated border management, the interactive map on migration and transnational referral mechanisms for trafficked persons, as well as carrying out in-depth research on important topics. It has also been a leader in promoting migrants' contributions to their home communities and their receiving societies. One of ICMPD's most important contributions to the migration field is its advancement of multilateral migration dialogues.

ICMPD's working philosophy is based upon conviction that the complexities of migration challenges can only be met by working in partnership with governments, research institutes, intergovernmental institutions, international organisations and civil society. The principles of partnership on an equal footing, a forward-looking perspective and a balancing of interests are the foundation of ICMPD.

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Abstract

It is an irony of history that 2020, considered as the year of mobility for the implementation of the continental free trade area and for the process of ratification of the AU Free Movement Protocol, is becoming a symbol of immobility due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Migration and mobility restrictions have been introduced amongst immediate measures to contain the spread of the contagion. Given that mobility plays a crucial role as both a livelihood strategy and a means to stay connected to ethnic groups and kinship, and as a source of growth and prosperity, the African continent has been deeply affected and is adapting to the changed scenario. The uncertainty of the future migration trends and the expected increase in unemployment, poverty, and economic downturn may force persons to move despite the restrictions. Policy responses are being elaborated upon by individual states and the African Union with the aim to strengthen the resilience of the local communities, including via a rapid development of innovative services and regionalisation of production chains. Humanitarian assistance initiatives, including “Team Europe” package to support partner countries in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences, have already been deployed to support the most vulnerable groups. Cross-continental cooperation, through well-consolidated platforms such as the migration and mobility dialogues between Africa and Europe, and via new instruments such as the new European Union’s Strategy with Africa, the EUs new Pact on Migration and Asylum, pave the way for a revisited migration management and cooperation that is resilient, more humane, and effectively based on the legal channels underpinning the free movement.

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Introduction

COVID-19 has engendered a profound effect on the existence of individuals and functioning of governments. The multifaceted consequences of these changes are yet to be assessed. As the focus of attention gradually shifted from China and other countries of East Asia in late 2019-early 2020 and to Southern Europe and North America in spring 2020, other parts of the world remained in the shadow of dramatic events occurring in these regions. With the first case of COVID-19 reported on the 14th of February 2020, approximately two months after the first official cases were announced in the People's Republic of China, the African continent was listed amongst those regions, where the pandemic was relatively contained. Upon transmission onto the African soil, the virus spread to over 30 countries in under a month. With Lesotho reporting a case on the 13th of May 2020, all countries on the continent have been affected by the COVID-19. As of May 2020, the continent has experienced a steep increase in new cases. According to the Africa Centre for the Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), as of 9th of July 2020, over 541,380 persons have been infected, with 12,443 fatalities and 264,721 recoveries. The low numbers of recorded COVID-19 cases compared to other world regions have been attributed to the climate, the low population density, less travel, a young population, previous experiences with epidemics, and a comparably low number of testing.

Consistently, the five countries with the highest cumulative number of cases have been: South Africa (238,339), Egypt (79,254), Nigeria (30,748), Algeria (17,808), and Morocco (15,079), reporting over 60% of all cases. Relative to population, Djibouti (4,955), São Tomé and Príncipe (726), Cabo Verde (1,552), and Mauritius (342) reported the highest number of cases per 100,000 population.

Comparatively lower numbers in other African countries may reflect 1) the relative effectiveness of the efforts to contain the spread of the virus, or 2) a lag in the reporting of cases, which is plausible in those countries that exhibited high-risk factor scores for rapid increases in initial transmission. To this end, African governments increased their testing capacity, with the number of testing centres numbering 43 in June (compared with two at the beginning of February).¹

The pattern of reported cases is correlated with international contact and exposure, the size of the urban population, and the effectiveness of testing and reporting. The latter parameter underscores the reality that the number of reported cases reflect only those cases that are visible and known, while cases may be widespread elsewhere, without being identified and reported. In a majority of African countries, the disease is still localised within large urban centres, while most rural communities remain relatively unaffected, according to the WHO. In this context, the health-related situation in Africa is marked, as elsewhere, by 1) restrictions on the mobility of medical personnel and aid workers, 2) a shortage of preventive, medical, protective, and transmission-blocking equipment, and the unavailability thereof for transportation from other locations; and 3) a shortage of medical and support staff, exacerbated by a stern competition for these specialists.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2020%20COVID-19%20in%20Africa.pdf>

1. Regulatory responses to COVID-19 on the African continent

While facing varying levels of risk, African countries responded analogously, in line with the international guidelines, by rapidly adopting similar response and containment strategies, starting firstly with restrictions aimed at curtailing human mobility.²

1.1 Responses aimed at restrictions of human mobility

Border closures

International exposure that involved travel for tourism, trade or business played a role in the initial stages of the pandemic by bringing the virus to the continent. With the aim of containing the spread of the contagion further, total or partial border closures were implemented in order to halt the human movement on the continent. Measures included the suspension of international and/or national non-cargo passenger flights generally or from particular countries, deferral of maritime travel, complete or partial closure of the airports, indefinite bans on tourism, suspension of visa issuance and limited movement of goods between the countries, resulting in fewer personnel involved into the related activities, to name some.

Mobility restrictions

In order to contain intra-continental and intra-national transmission, governments adopted measures geared towards a social and economic moratorium.³ The fear of wide spread of the Coronavirus transmission led - as in other parts of the world - to mobility restrictions in all the African countries. These include restricting the gatherings and individual freedom of movement, stay at home orders, the suspension of economic activities, lockdowns, curfews, school closures, and mandatory quarantine for international and internal migrants for a period of up to two weeks.⁴ In June 2020, 43 out of 55 AU Member States (MS) continued to have their borders fully closed, 7 AU MS have suspended international air traffic, 2 AU MS operated entry/exit restrictions, and 2 AU MS have implemented travel restrictions to and from specific countries (acc. to Africa CDC). In July, despite some easing of the lockdown, 33 AU MS imposed night-time curfews, 19 AU MS operated partial lockdowns, and 19 other MS had nationally imposed lockdowns with restriction upon non-essential movement across the whole country.

Enforcement of mobility restrictions

The specificity of the African context presents a number of considerations in the application of orders limiting or prohibiting human movement, both across the borders and internally. For herders and pastoralists moving across prairie lands with their livestock, upon which they rely for the provision of their basic necessities, stay-at-home orders are difficult, if at all possible, to maintain. Milder measures, such as curfews, similarly powerfully affect the

² <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-risk-factors-spread-covid-19-africa/>

³ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-risk-factors-spread-covid-19-africa/#exposure>

⁴ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_740877.pdf

subsistence activities as they interchangeably hinder the return of the herders and pastoralists to their homes or to their cattle. For the population generally, the implementation of the measures represent a challenge due to a lack of monetary means to stock up on supplies and to stop working or engaging into revenue generating activities in formal or informal sectors of the economy.⁵

As regards migrant workers, cases have been reported across the continent concerning labour migrants stranded without a source of income or resources that would enable them to return to their countries of habitual residence.⁶ Certain categories of migrant workers who paid to the recruiters for the services of securing jobs abroad have lost their jobs and/or incurred recruitment debt.⁷ A common challenge for all types of migrant workers, regardless of their financial situation, is that they may be unable to return due to travel restrictions.

Impact on the migrants on the move

Travel restrictions and lockdowns have already negatively affected a large number of migrants in Africa: tens of thousands of migrants, often abandoned by migrant smugglers, are trapped or stranded in their destination or transit countries, including Niger and Djibouti.⁸ Stranded migrants have limited to no options, as borders have become increasingly harder to cross, and temporary suspension of assisted voluntary return and voluntary humanitarian return assistance does not allow them to return. As a result, they end up under precarious conditions and risk becoming migrants stranded or stuck between different countries.⁹

Other irregular migrants such as reported from Libya or Tunisia lost their daily small subsistence jobs due to confinement.¹⁰ Some do not speak the language of their host country, and as a consequence, they are not well informed about the current situation and the rules imposed by the governments.¹¹ While the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) urged governments to suspend forced returns and to halt arbitrary expulsions during the pandemic in order to protect the health of migrants and communities, the COVID-19 has triggered mass spontaneous as well as forced returns from important migrant hosting countries inside and outside Africa. One prominent example is the expulsion of thousands of Ethiopian labour migrants from Saudi Arabia.¹² These types of responses to the dangers associated with the pandemic render the population concerned vulnerable and carry the potential for inter-state tensions.

1.2 Measures directed at countering trafficking in human beings

While the consequences of the pandemic on various categories of the population are far-reaching, limited concrete evidence is available on the effect of COVID-19 on the persons found in situations of human trafficking. Most accounts concentrate on possible, plausible, and potential scenarios. Some voices suggest that contagion fears and the accompanying closure of informal workplaces led to a temporary disruption of demand for the services of trafficked persons.¹³ Other reports suggest that some forms of trafficking have increased, and COVID-related

⁵ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-risk-factors-spread-covid-19-africa/#density>

⁶ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_748992/lang-en/index.htm

⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_748839.pdf

⁸ <https://www.iom.int/news/thousands-african-migrants-return-yemen-assisted-iom-djibouti>

⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/migrant-smugglers-are-profiting-travel-restrictions>

¹⁰ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=134_134470-w95kmv8khl&title=COVID-19-crisis-in-the-MENA-region-impact-on-gender-equality-and-policy-responses

¹¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2020/04/covid19-makes-gulf-countries-abuse-of-migrant-workers-impossible-to-ignore/>

¹² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-9-2020-0325_EN.html

¹³ <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/GIATOC-Policy-Brief-003-Smuggling-COVID-28Apr0930-proof-4.pdf>

measures have disproportionately affected persons at risk of exploitation.¹⁴ Common threads unite these diverse voices pointing out the following:

- migrants deployed in the garment industry, agriculture, farming, and domestic work represent high-risk groups, due to a combination of both human trafficking and exposure to the new coronavirus. This is linked to the fact that they are less likely to report trafficking or to seek medical services due to fear of deportation, on the one hand, and may lack access to safe housing, professional healthcare, and social services, on the other. This situation potentially increases the recruitment base for the traffickers, as persons find themselves in dire economic straits.
- in some cases, school closures blocked access not only to education, but also to shelter and reliable sources of nutrition and meals provided via the school feeding programmes. Even more children have been forced onto the streets to search for food and money. Additionally, they tend to spend more hours online. These types of activities increase the risk of their exploitation and online grooming. In Senegal, the Government is carrying out a large-scale operation, implemented with the support of an international partner (UNODC), which aims to identify thousands of street children, who have previously studied in religious boarding schools, were at even heightened risk for exploitation, and to return them to their families or find placement in shelters.¹⁵
- the breakdown of the existing systems of exploitation inspires traffickers to profit from the pandemic and introduce new forms of exploitation in their efforts to maintain revenues. To this end, trafficking for sexual exploitation is aggressively exploring the online market for the various services, in a format that would allow retaining both the revenues and the control over the victims, particularly women and girls. According to Europol, a combination of indicators suggest that activities around the distribution of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) online appears to be on the increase, along with the number of offenders trying to contact young people on social media.¹⁶

A positive trend is associated with trafficking for organ removal. Border closures and bans on travel have hindered the transportation of organs and brought organ trafficking and transplant tourism to a temporary halt.¹⁷

As regards the efforts directed at countering trafficking in human beings, the COVID-related measures had impacted these efforts by 1) limiting the access to support structures; 2) gravitating the available resources to address public health concerns, and 3) diverting of law enforcement agents' attention from deterring criminal actors.¹⁸

1.3 Supranational financial responses in the context of high informality

The repercussions of the pandemic have already simultaneously caused layoffs in some sectors and labour shortages in others.¹⁹ Across the continent, the proportion of workers employed in those sectors that are prone to experiencing job losses varies, constituting up to 26% of the total. In certain regions, informal labour accounts for over 70% of all income and subsistence generating activities, carried out in the context of a lack of social protection,

¹⁴ <https://globalinitiative.net/human-trafficking-covid-impact/>; <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Aggravating-circumstances-How-coronavirus-impacts-human-trafficking-GITOC-1.pdf>

¹⁵ https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS_Thematic_Brief_on_COVID-19.pdf

¹⁶ While the amount of online CSEM cannot be measured directly, several indicators are used to assess whether there is an increase in the production and/or distribution of material. Europol monitors these indicators to assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on online child sexual exploitation <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/catching-virus-cybercrime-disinformation-and-covid-19-pandemic>

¹⁷ <https://www.cfr.org/blog/evolution-human-trafficking-during-covid-19-pandemic>

¹⁸ <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/449554>

¹⁹ The sectors most at risk include accommodation and food services, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and business and administrative activities. Informal economy workers are particularly at risk. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743146.pdf

high population density, and weak capacity.²⁰ Already prior to the pandemic, in the Sub-Saharan African region, the vulnerable employment rate was estimated to exceed 76% (ILO 2015).²¹ In North Africa, employment in the informal economy accounted for 52% of total employment, while Sub-Saharan Africa featured 66%.²² The ILO estimates a decline in earnings of informal workers in Africa at 81% already in the first month of the pandemic.²³

The current stage of controlling the spread of the pandemic at the national, subnational, and local levels was marked by being complemented by supra-national financial support. Targeted regional responses to the pandemic have not featured almost anywhere across the globe.

Africa is unique in this regard, however, insofar as the African Development Bank has promptly made a wide range of financial assistance tools and packages available to the African countries. It is clear that Africa pursues the identification of models that will help to share the burden of the economic and social damage resulting from the pandemic.

2. Emerging Trends and Forecasts

2.1 Forecasts for the spread of COVID-19 in Africa

With the uncertainties surrounding the infectiousness, fatality rate, and transmission patterns of COVID-19, and the introduction of a vaccine pending, multiple forecasts are in place. They may be broadly divided into two main streams. One holds that poverty levels, crowded urban areas, and weak healthcare systems will trigger devastating outcomes on the African continent. The other one holds that the hot climate, the youthful population, and the experience of fighting infectious diseases will allow Africa to avoid the worst manifestations of the pandemic.²⁴ While the correlation between the perceived advantages and the spread of the pandemic remains to be tested, the data available prompt a number of observations, namely:

Demographics: International data suggest that the risk of medical complications and death from COVID-19 increases with age.²⁵ Approximately 80% of COVID-19 fatalities worldwide occurred amongst persons over the age of 60. With 70% of Africa's population under the age of 30, and with the median age under 20 years, Africa's demographics may indeed serve as a buffer against the devastating human costs of the pandemic on the continent.²⁶

Climate: While research on the conditions, in which coronavirus thrives, are ongoing, the examples of countries with hot climate and a comparatively high numbers of cases in proportion to population (Bahrain, UAE)²⁷ suggest that hot temperatures neither kill the virus nor inhibit its transmission. In Africa, some countries reporting the highest number of cases have average daily temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius.²⁸

²⁰ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_740893/lang--en/index.htm

²¹ https://www.ilo.org/africa/whats-new/WCMS_377286/lang--en/index.html

²² https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38326-doc-covid-19_impact_on_african_economy.pdf

²³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743146.pdf

²⁴ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-risk-factors-spread-covid-19-africa/>

²⁵ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/managing-health-economic-priorities-covid-19-pandemic-spreads-africa/>

²⁶ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-risk-factors-spread-covid-19-africa/#density>

²⁷ Bahrain: 12,229 cases; proportion to population (of 1,696,922): 0,72. UAE: 35,788 cases; proportion to population (of 9,881,272): 0,36 %.

²⁸ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/five-myths-about-coronavirus/>

Previous experience: While vulnerable to the pandemic similarly to the rest of the world, African countries have a long-standing experience and expertise in confronting infectious diseases, such as ebola, cholera, and yellow fever. However, instructive as these may be, previous outbreaks of highly infectious diseases were local rather than global. They did not entail closed borders, hindered international support, and restricted supply of the necessary medical equipment and expertise. In the case of COVID-19, movement restrictions imply that aid workers and agencies mostly have to work with those resources and in-country personnel that are already available within a given territory.²⁹ The medical and human resources that were previously made available from external sources, may not be brought in on this occasion. Furthermore, in case of escalation of the pandemic in comparatively more developed countries, it may be that the already trained/available medical staff may be redirected to other destinations within or outside of the continent. Last but not least, the limited knowledge of the virus generally, with its varied manifestations and the selectiveness of its victims, represents a limitation to the extrapolation of lessons learned during previous experiences of combating infectious diseases on the continent.

2.2 Economic outlook for Africa

Despite the initially lower numbers of COVID-19 cases and fatalities in Africa compared to other parts of the world, the pandemic is assessed as capable of bringing about conditions associated with economic, health, and social emergencies. Health related responses represent a priority. From the onset, concrete measures geared towards quickly pulling together capacities to test, prevent, and cure the virus came to the fore. In Africa, preventive measures to halt the spread of the virus and provide the necessary medical treatment are estimated to lead to an increase of public spending by at least \$130 billion.³⁰

Against the backdrop of COVID-related health risks, African economies face three major types of consequences in the short-to medium and long term:

- 1) lower trade volumes with, and investment flows from, China;
- 2) a decrease in the demand for products, both within Africa and from Africa; and
- 3) a supply shock affecting the intra-continental and external trade.³¹

According to an initial analysis of COVID-19's economic impact by McKinsey, in the absence of substantial fiscal stimulus, Africa is likely to experience a contraction in GDP growth between 3% and 8% in 2020.³² In the Sub-Saharan region, the economic growth is expected to contract from 2.4% (2019) to between -2.1% and -5.1% in 2020, signaling a slide into a recession.³³ In output losses, the estimated costs of the pandemic range between \$37 and \$79 billion (2020) as a result of reduced agricultural productivity, trade, and employment. Exports and imports of African countries are projected to drop by approximately a third (or more) compared to 2019. In numbers, this entails an estimated loss in value at around \$270 billion. In oil-exporting countries, COVID-related challenges are further compounded by the decline in global oil prices.³⁴

²⁹ <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/learning-past-un-draws-lessons-ebola-other-crises-fight-covid-19>

³⁰ https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38326-doc-covid-19_impact_on_african_economy.pdf

³¹ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=132_132745-u5pt1rdb5x&title=COVID-19-in-Africa-Regional-socio-economic-implications-and-policy-priorities

³² <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/middle-east-and-africa/tackling-covid-19-in-africa#>

³³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview>

³⁴ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/middle-east-and-africa/tackling-covid-19-in-africa#>

With the exception of retail, healthcare, and agriculture, the sectors of tourism, hospitality, construction and manufacturing, which employ most migrants, are likely to decrease their labour force.³⁵ Travel restrictions lead redundant former workers to take hazardous jobs in sectors, in which they have no experience. Informal labour brokerage networks expand the recruitment pool to these workers, increasing the risk of human trafficking. This situation risks creating a contingent of irregular migrants who engage in travel in violation of regulations out of economic necessity, rendering them vulnerable to being denounced to authorities and thus less likely to report abuses.³⁶

2.3 Overcoming the economic damage

In order for the economic and social recovery to be effective, concrete measures are already being taken. To this end, the African Development Bank has made available a number of financial tools to complement ongoing emergency measures, including via its COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility. Amongst these are a € 264 million crisis response budget support package to Morocco; an € 88 million loan to Senegal in support of its national COVID-19 Economic and Social Resilience Program; a € 30 million loan to Cabo Verde to enhance the country's health and social response the COVID-19 outbreak; a sizable emergency assistance grant to Egypt to provide food relief and to contribute to restoring the livelihoods of vulnerable populations severely affected by COVID-19, to name some examples. Other similar financial tools have been made available to Kenya, Mauritius, and Zimbabwe.³⁷ The breakdown in the distribution of funds foresees, in some cases, relief measures to vulnerable rural and urban households, including distributing food kits, exempting from VAT on tariffs, and covering domestic electricity and water bills.³⁸

The potential for innovative approaches in the booming sectors

Aside from complementary financial tools, a potentially positive trend is represented by the emergence of new patterns of consumption, marked by an enhanced focus on domestic produce, activities, and services. In addition to financial tools and packages, means for overcoming economic damage are likely to rely upon developing those sectors of the economy, which already place Africa at the forefront of the global economic agenda. Amongst the most prominent examples, Africa represents by far the leading continent in the sector of mobile money (m-money) services. To date, over 140 m-money systems are operational, with the most well-known one, M-PESA, launched in Kenya, and expanding its operational capacity to other countries.³⁹ Already prior to the pandemic, major telecommunication companies researched the ways and means to develop such services, both in and outside Africa. In 2019 alone, sub-Saharan Africa scored a record of 469 million registered users, with an estimated 181 million active users. With nearly 24 billion transactions for a total amount of over \$456 billion in 2019, the sub-Saharan African region alone outpaced other regions in the sector. These figures exceed the value of transactions registered in South Asia, the second-highest ranked region in terms of provision of m-money services, by a factor of 3.5.⁴⁰ Lockdowns have further accelerated digital adoption. This trend is expected to continue across the continent and beyond.

³⁵ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/02/why-is-coronavirus-a-global-business-risk/>

³⁶ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_740893/lang--en/index.htm

³⁷ <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/loans-grants>

³⁸ <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#M>

³⁹ http://documents.banquemonddiale.org/curated/fr/727791468337814878/585559324_201406191042051/additional/722360PUB0EPI00367926_B9780821389911.pdf

⁴⁰ <https://www.theafricareport.com/25846/africa-over-500-million-mobile-money-users-expected-in-2020/>

The m-money providers continuously entice the customers with innovative digital solutions, such as biometric authentication and electronic signature to complete financial transactions. To this end, a division of the Standard Bank of South Africa (MTN Banking) already tested a biometric voice identification system for m-money. In addition, the innovative offerings are tailored to the widest range of customers possible. For example, South Africa's mobile banking business Wizzit trained hundreds of local retail outlets on verification of customers' identities at their homes and in their communities. Such solutions represent custom-made responses to the context of those African localities, where the existing or potential clients do not have documentary evidence of their identities.⁴¹ Prior to the pandemic, companies were exploring the means to replicate the already existing technology in various localities, to offer a sustainable (and growing) range of services, and to expand the customer base by replicating already successfully functioning systems.⁴² This trend can be expected to continue.

Another sector of the economy that is likely to witness a mindful development is pharmaceuticals. A purposeful drift away from the global chains of production, and an increasing expansion of and reliance upon regional chains is envisaged to take place. This trend was already been observable prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with Ethiopia, to name one prominent example, launching a national strategy and plan of action to develop local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacities.⁴³ An objective to increase access to locally manufactured medicines is likely to trigger further local investment into the pharmaceutical industry and the associated local growth thereof.

3. The Future of Migration and Mobility in Africa after the COVID-19 Pandemic

The declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the WHO at the end of January 2020 stems from a projection of existing trends into the future, where the virus was identified as spreading most quickly within countries that have strong international economic ties and weak health systems. Based on volume of travel, the WHO identified 13 African states (Algeria, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) as priority countries for support in order to facilitate global containment.⁴⁴ These countries indeed exhibit high numbers of cases in relation to population.

3.1 Border controls

Border closures geared towards halting the spread of the virus across the continent bring the preparedness of the border agencies for a health emergency and the features of border management in a post-pandemic world to the fore of any contemporary discussion on mobility and migration in Africa.⁴⁵ Thus far, it may be observed that operational realities highlighted the need for increased health-related capacities and technical assistance. The fact that infected persons may be asymptomatic adds to the complexity of the task. The immediate possible responses

⁴¹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301090262_Analysis_of_the_Mobile_Money_Transaction_Flow

⁴² <https://www.gsma.com/sotir/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GSMA-State-of-the-Industry-Report-on-Mobile-Money-2019-Full-Report.pdf>

⁴³ <https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/94/1/15-163782/en/>

⁴⁴ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/what-the-coronavirus-means-for-africa/>

⁴⁵ https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/expert-voice-series/news-detail/?L=0&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=679&cHash=17638552972deef82ffdc39afea22114

to this need concern further modernisation of service provision, training of staff, and capacity building. A combination of traditional teaching and training approaches with remote ones (e.g. e-learning, training sessions, webinars) may be expected to increase. At the cross-country levels, information sharing across borders, including threat perception and risk assessment, cooperation on early warning, and the adoption of coordinated safeguard measures to contain the spread between countries and regions, are likely to be most effective if and when accompanied by the modernisation of infrastructure.

Border technology after the coronavirus pandemic may further build upon already existing practices. To this end, it may be recalled that travel to a number of African countries has since long been preconditioned on the submission of an international vaccination certification (against yellow fever and / or malaria, for instance). In the future, a medical certification and medical card containing information about the health status and history is likely to be required.

The immediate future of border controls in Africa is currently considered in the context of the joint efforts of various countries to implement measures pertaining to the spread of the virus by means of placing restrictions on human mobility. Airports in Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, to name but a few, measure body temperature via contactless thermometers as part of the entry processes. This practice may spread further and beyond. The process of reverting to regular mobility across international borders will depend upon the assessment of the extent, to which the new coronavirus is contained.

3.2 Mobility and free movement

According to the African Development Bank's *Africa Visa Openness Report 2018*, 75% of African countries require an entry visa for fellow Africans (with 24% of countries providing a visa upon arrival). This means that African citizens need a visa to travel to 51% of other African countries. Prior to the pandemic crisis, the continent was on the road toward the establishment of a free movement regime. Concrete steps in this direction were taken with the adoption of the AU Free Movement Protocol (FMP) in January 2018.⁴⁶ To date, four countries (Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe) have signed up to the latter, with the ratification by the other countries to follow. A positive and inspiring example to pursue is demonstrated by the rapid entry into effect of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The latter was adopted over the course of a few months after its ratification (July 2019) in 27 African countries, including a range of countries with sizable populations (such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Ghana). Given that free movement facilitates investment, trade, transport, communications, and employment, paring the two Protocols on terms of adoption and ratification represents a major step in creating a new reality on the continent. In this light, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ratification of the FMP may be felt further. The Member States have already expressed their concerns related to security considerations, and currently sanitary considerations are being added up to this.

3.3 Labour migration

In Africa, the proportion of workers employed in the sectors identified as being at high risk of “drastic and devastating” layoffs and reductions in wages and working hours, many in low-paid, low-skilled jobs, is estimated at 26%. Some regions, additionally, feature higher levels of informality, a lack of social protection, high population

⁴⁶ <https://blogs.eui.eu/migrationpolicycentre/barriers-free-movement-africa-remove/>

density, and weak capacity.⁴⁷ Gravitation centres of labour migration such as Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa, and Angola, are likely to feel the consequences of these developments first-hand, raising question regarding how the decline of their economies will affect labour migration.

The African Union Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC) lists a number of primary concerns pertaining to the welfare of African migrant workers stranded in different employment-related locations outside of their country of origin at the moment of lockdown. Predictions are being made about the possibility of labour migrants experiencing three broadly defined types of hardship, namely

- 1) wage losses as a result of a closure or downscaling of business operations and economic activities;
- 2) exploitation and extortion; and
- 3) various health hazards (infection), also while trying to return to the country of origin.

Amongst the various categories of labour migrants, a) domestic workers; b) migrant workers employed in the informal economy or self-employed and offering jobs to nationals in the country of destination, and c) seasonal agricultural workers represent the most at-risk groups for unemployment and declining wages, while facing, additionally, exposure to COVID-19 contagion. Given that national social security systems normally do not cover workers in these sectors, labour migrants are left to face the consequences of COVID-19 on their own.⁴⁸

In these circumstances, the African Union encourages its Member States to put in place unemployment insurance plans and to extend social security to workers in the informal economy and rural sectors. Post-pandemic, the AU calls upon its Members to revisit and renegotiate the various Labour Migration Agreements with a view to provide adequate health and safety, social protection and portability, and other human and labour rights protections to the labour migrants.⁴⁹ ECOWAS, through the West African Health Organization (WAHO), is providing technical and financial support to Member States, to complement the assistance received from international partners.

3.4 Irregular migration, trafficking in human beings, and return

In the early stages, the analysis concerning the effects of the pandemic on irregular migration is focused upon possible and plausible scenarios, rather than data, due to the limited or partial availability of the latter. According to the UNODC, border control restrictions may fuel demand for smuggling services, further rendering those migrants who rely on such services vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation. In parallel, COVID-19 may mean an abrupt end of trafficking for some persons, due to the loss of the human trafficking-related jobs.⁵⁰ While a positive development on its own, it may potentially lead to a range of side-effects (such as homelessness, destitution, and an acute risk of contracting COVID-19, while also en route from the confinement associated with the trafficking).

Examples of cooperation and support may be found in Cote d'Ivoire, where, at the request of the national transnational crime unit, UNODC supported a coordinated response by international and national agencies to procure sanitation materials, protective equipment, and medical kits and COVID-19 testing units for first

⁴⁷ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_740893/lang--en/index.htm

⁴⁸ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/multimedia/migrants-africa-covid-19-emergency-measures-inclusive-social-protection-systems>

⁴⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/statement-african-union-au-labour-migration-advisory-committee-lmac-novel-coronavirus>

⁵⁰ ASEAN-ACT

responders. Additionally, UNODC assists shelters for victims of trafficking to procure protective equipment and medical kits for shelter residents and NGO workers.⁵¹

The suspension of “non-essential activities” across the continent has had a direct impact upon returnees, including the beneficiaries of a reintegration assistance, provided under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration. In West and Central Africa, approximately 34,000 returning migrants are reportedly affected.⁵² According to the results of a needs assessment survey carried out in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, and Senegal, nearly 90% of beneficiaries reported a worsening of their economic and financial situation since the COVID-19 outbreak. With the support of the EU, additional funding was made available under the Joint Initiative to assist with the voluntary return of migrants, when humanitarian corridors were granted by countries of origin. As part of their reintegration assistance, returning migrants are involved in the production of protective equipment items for distribution amongst immigration officials and border guards.

3.5 Refugees and internally displaced persons

According to the UNHCR, no sustained transmission in high-density refugee and internally displaced areas, camps and settlements has been reported.⁵³ While this is a positive trend, it must be viewed against the fact that Africa hosts 25 million forcibly displaced persons, approximately 85% of whom are concentrated in 8 countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Nigeria, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Cameroon.⁵⁴ The spread of COVID-19 as well as related restrictions negatively impact humanitarian assistance and are particularly threatening also to those refugees and IDPs living in camps in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia, who already struggle with a myriad of vulnerabilities. The prospect of the coronavirus’ spread is aggravated by conditions such as remote locations, travel restrictions and shortages of medical supplies, which hinder both containment and treatment. Aid workers across the countries warn that there are limited, if any, measures, available, beyond – again, limited – possibilities for isolation, to treat persons if the virus begins to spread in the crowded camps. The sheer number of persons of concern and congested living conditions in large camps with a varying degree of access to water, soap, sanitation, and health services, prompted health and other aid officials to launch preparedness measures, including with the support of UNHCR. As a preventive measure, the government of Cote d’Ivoire, for example, provided a budget allocation of \$37,000 to include refugees and asylum seekers in the national plan on prevention and response to the pandemic.⁵⁵

The urge for these measures is confirmed by the fact that, in early May 2020, for the first time, cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in a civilian protection camp in Juba, South Sudan, which shelters nearly 30,000 persons.⁵⁶ The first coronavirus cases in Kenya’s Dadaab refugee complex, which hosts approximately 218,000 persons, were confirmed in mid-May. With the aim of limiting the spread of COVID-19, the Kenyan government banned refugee movements in and out of the country’s two main camps, Dadaab and Kakuma, which together host nearly 500,000 persons.

⁵¹ http://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS_Thematic_Brief_on_COVID-19.pdf

⁵² <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-eu-bolster-response-economic-impact-covid-19-returning-migrants-across-west-and-central>

⁵³ https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/covid-19#_ga=2.20921272.1690519343.1589461019-752702141.1589461019

⁵⁴ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-risk-factors-spread-covid-19-africa/#density>

⁵⁵ https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/covid-19#_ga=2.20921272.1690519343.1589461019-752702141.1589461019

⁵⁶

https://apnews.com/1829c873753213232d0d40bd5f81cabd?utm_source=Media+Review+for+May+13%2C+2020+&utm_campaign=Media+Review+for+May+13%2C+2020&utm_medium=email

The World Food Programme has reduced food or cash transfers by up to 30% for over 2.7 million refugees in Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Djibouti due to the lack of funds. In Uganda, which hosts Africa's largest number of refugees (1.4 million), the World Food Programme cut food rations for refugees and asylum seekers by 30% due to a shutdown of farms and businesses during the COVID-19 lockdown.⁵⁷ Those refugees, who were running their own small businesses, faced a halt in their subsistence generating activities due to the lockdown.

In the spirit of cooperation, the EU promptly reacted to the call of the UN for a global response using all of the tools at its disposal. The largest global donor supporting refugees and displaced persons, the EU, launched a "Team Europe" package in response to the crisis as early as April 2020. The package combines resources from the EU, its Member States, and financial institutions⁵⁸ aimed at supporting the most vulnerable African countries, amongst others, in the fight against the pandemic and its consequences. Amongst other categories of populations, the EU supports persons most at risk, including migrants, refugees, IDPs, and their host communities, by providing increased access to health systems, water, sanitation, and hygiene. To name some examples, the EU supports Ethiopia in increasing coronavirus testing and preparing treatment centres with aid value at €10 million. Nigeria has been provided with €50 million through the UN Coronavirus Response Plan to contain the spread of the virus. Sudan has received through a humanitarian project worth €10 million aiming to assist vulnerable persons to access clean water and hygiene and raise awareness about the virus.⁵⁹

As of early May 2020, the EU provides humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable populations, where the pandemic imposes constraints on transport and logistics, through the Humanitarian Air Bridge. The Central African Republic, Somalia and Sudan were amongst the first countries to benefit from this integrated set of services, which enabled the repatriation of persons in need and the delivery of humanitarian aid, medical equipment, and humanitarian staff.⁶⁰ These measures have been complimented by a €6,5 million financial package to help the water, sanitation, and health sector in the Central African Republic, with an enhanced distribution of medical equipment and local production of masks amongst the vulnerable groups of populations, amongst other groups.

3.6 Remittances

Following restrictions on human mobility and lockdown measures implemented in host countries, certain categories of migrants lost their jobs and consequently reduced the flows and volume of remittances. The World Bank estimates a decline of 20% (approximately US\$110 billion) in global remittances in 2020. Comparable or higher declines (up to 23%) are projected for the African continent.⁶¹ This scenario is currently materialising with an effect on the local population. For example, in The Gambia, the reduction in remittances is estimated to affect over 60% of households dependent upon the flows.⁶²

The decline in the volume of remittances is linked to a forecast that approximately one third of all migrants will be remitting less than 5% of their previous amounts as a direct consequence of the pandemic.⁶³ The depreciation of

⁵⁷ <https://www.wfp.org/news/food-rations-cut-refugees-eastern-africa-coronavirus-stretches-resources>

⁵⁸ European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

⁵⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_20_607

⁶⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/humanitarian-air-bridge_en

⁶¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history>

⁶² <https://ecdpm.org/publications/impact-covid-19-remittances-development-africa/>

⁶³ <https://www.thedialogue.org/analysis/migrants-and-impacts-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-remittances/>

local currencies has been observed in South Africa. In case similar economic downsides occur elsewhere on the continent, they will further diminish the value of remittances.⁶⁴

In countries with a share of remittance to GDP ratio exceeding 10%, such as Lesotho, Liberia, The Gambia, Comoros, Cabo Verde, Senegal, the reduction in volume of remittances will result in a contraction of their economies, directly affecting domestic production, real estate sector, construction, and small business.

When it comes to the intra-African remittances flow, prior to the pandemic South Africa represented a growing, remittance generating economy, with recorded 0.2% growth in 2019. During the COVID-19 crisis, the country introduced some of the world's most restrictive lockdowns. As a result, a sizable share of labour migrants from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), i.e. Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, mainly employed in the informal sector, lost their jobs and returned to their countries of habitual residence. This has a two-fold effect on these countries' economies, namely 1) lower volumes of remittances to be invested, and 2) increased competition within the internal labour market, paralleled by an increase in the number of household members subsisting from the reduced resources.

In this context, other forms of support from the diaspora may be summoned. Amongst them are the provision of medicines and non-financial contributions.

Globally, a positive trend is observed in the decline of the average cost of remittances in 2020 Q1, to 6.8% as compared to 6.9% in 2019 Q1.⁶⁵ This may be interpreted as an additional step towards achieving the 3% target set by the Sustainable Development Goals. In Africa, this nascent trend was already visible prior to the pandemic, with the costs of certain, mainly *inter-continental*, corridors varying between 3% (or less) and 5%. This said, while the majority of *intra-continental* remittance costs vary considerably, a stable average of 9% features in the Sub-Saharan region, and higher costs are recorder for certain corridors, particularly those originating from Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa.

3. Possible Impact upon Africa-EU mobility and cooperation

With regard to mobility, current developments assist in estimating the future of intracontinental mobility and, particularly, of migration towards the EU. On the one hand, increases in unemployment, poverty, and economic downturn may force persons to move, while fuelling the activities of criminal groups that prey on migrants' aspirations to travel long distances and traverse borders. On the other hand, new forms of solidarity have surfaced, with persons opening their hearts to help each other across locations. For the reasons of health security, irregular migration has seen a temporary halt in all types of countries that are interchangeably involved into the migration cycle (countries of origin, destination, and transit), with a gradual increase in the number of departures along the central and western Mediterranean routes. This trend may be expected to continue. In parallel, legal channels may see wider opening for specific types of professionals, such as health care workers, nurses, support personnel, and medical technics, as well as trainers. The professionalization of educational and training activities with a specific

⁶⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/04/02/the-world-bank-group-moves-quickly-to-help-countries-respond-to-covid-19>

⁶⁵ <https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Migration%20and%20Development%20Brief%2032.pdf>

focus on those professions that have proven high in demand during the pandemic may be boosted. This will engender tailored visa-policy and labour mobility provisions. The policy towards those labour migrants, who have a relevant professional training and who are currently underemployed or employed in a different sector of the economy due to the hassle and costs associated with the recognition of their skills and diplomas, may shift. The same policy may apply to the IDPs and asylum seekers, who have the relevant training but have been to date unable to work according to their training due to the specificity of their migratory status.

These are signs forewarning how the COVID-19 and its subsequent effects, including the resulting economic downturn and decrease in remittances, may lead to the aggravation of vulnerabilities of not only migrants and refugees, but also their family members and host communities. Without proper policy responses, future migration and refugee crises are almost pre-programmed. The latter will badly hurt the continent, where mobility plays a crucial role as both a livelihood strategy and a means to stay connected to ethnic groups and kinship, and as a source of growth and prosperity. It is actually an irony of history that 2020, considered as the year of mobility for the implementation of the continental free trade area and for the process of ratification of the AU Free Movement Protocol, is becoming a symbol of immobility.

Across the continent, governmental officials and community leaders are taking decisive action geared towards saving lives and protecting households, businesses, and national economies from the fallout of the pandemic. In addition to addressing the health risks, a clearer picture of the potential economic impact of the crisis is being elaborated upon. Many African countries are still in the stages of organising their responses into focused, prioritised efforts that make the most of the limited time and resources available.⁶⁶ Effective implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the African Union's productive transformation agenda can strengthen regional value chains, reduce vulnerability to external shocks, advance the digital transition, and build economic resilience against future crises.⁶⁷

The fact that European and African partners continue with the scheduled activities and policy dialogue, albeit in a virtual format, represents a proof of commitment and political will. While concrete forward-looking new measures are being discussed and agreed upon amongst all partners, a general consensus is in place regarding the need to continue supporting and strengthening the already existing mechanisms and frameworks, such as the Khartoum Process, the Rabat Process, the Continental Dialogue, and the Joint Valletta Action Plan. The operationalisation of the Migration Research Centre in Mali, the Migration Observatory in Morocco, and the Continental Operational Centre in Khartoum, Sudan, remain a priority, along with the ongoing work to strengthen migration statistics in Africa. The AU-EU-UN Tripartite Taskforce on the Situation of Stranded Migrant and Refugees in Libya remains a valuable example of consolidated cooperation to save and protect the lives of migrants and refugees along the migratory routes, and in particular inside Libya, upon which partnership between the EU and the EU may be further built.

New formats of the bilateral and multilateral relations between the EU and the AU are already in place and have been tested. The unveiling of the new European Union's Strategy with Africa in March 2020 has occurred when the pandemic crisis on the continent seemed contained. Its rapid expansion highlights the timeliness of the proposed partnership areas, particularly those pertaining to rapidly enhance knowledge and skills, research and innovation capacities on the continent. The current context underscores the timeliness of efforts directed at developing value-

⁶⁶ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/middle-east-and-africa/tackling-covid-19-in-africa#>

⁶⁷ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=132_132745-u5pt1rdb5x&title=COVID-19-in-Africa-Regional-socio-economic-implications-and-policy-priorities

adding, knowledge-intensive sectors of the African economies, paired with a competitive and efficient service-providing sector, in the immediate and long-term.

Specific features of these policies will also depend on the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum. While there is general agreement that migration represents a feature of human mobility, there is also a call for a better migration management system than the one currently in place. The overall objective is a more resilient, more humane, and more effective migration and asylum system, which bolsters confidence in the legal channels underpinning the free movement. To this end, a special policy attention will continue to be paid to building strong partnerships with external national and supranational partners outside of the EU.⁶⁸

Summarising Conclusions

- Compared to other regions globally, Africa has weathered the pandemic relatively well in 2020. The low numbers of recorded COVID-19 cases with respect to other regions have been subject to various explanations, which attribute low rates to the hot climate, the young population, previous experiences with epidemics, and low numbers of tests per 100.000 inhabitants. At the same time, Africa's baseline vulnerability is high, given the relatively fragile health systems, scarce infrastructure – particularly in relation to water supply, sanitation, and hygiene – and population mobility. These are signs forewarning how the COVID-19 and its subsequent effects, including the resulting economic downturn and decrease in remittances, may lead to the aggravation of vulnerabilities of migrants, their family members, and host communities. Without proper policy responses, future migration and refugee crises are almost pre-programmed.
- While facing varying levels of risk, African countries responded analogously in line with the international guidelines. The rapid regulatory responses to COVID-19 implemented across the African continent, as elsewhere, involved restrictions of human mobility as a means to ensure health security and containment of the contagion. As a result, migration and mobility across the African continent and beyond have been deeply affected and are adapting to the changed scenario. Border management is increasingly reliant on information sharing, cooperation on early warning systems, and the adoption of coordinated safeguard measures to contain the spread between countries and across regions, highlighting the timeliness of the modernisation of the relevant infrastructure. In these circumstances, while labour migration may experience a decrease, new agreements aiming at providing adequate health and safety, social protection and portability, and other human and labour rights protections to labour migrants, including those in the informal sector, are currently being discussed and promoted with the support of the African Union.
- In the context of diverse livelihood strategies in the African context, the economic repercussions of the pandemic are predicted to result in a contraction of the GDP growth by between 3% and 8% in 2020. In this light, rapid development of innovative services in the financial sector, namely the mobile-money services, and the regionalisation of pharmaceutical production chains carry a great potential for advancing the continental economy. Given that concrete steps have already been undertaken in developing these prior

⁶⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/migration-and-asylum-package-new-pact-migration-and-asylum-documents-adopted-23-september-2020_en.

to the pandemic, further targeted efforts are being contemplated at the national and continental levels. A number of financial tools complementing the ongoing emergency measures have been made available by the African Development Bank to ensure effective socio-economic recovery. The difficult conditions experienced by migrant workers, with many losing their jobs, will engender a negative impact on both the flows and volume of remittances. To mitigate such drawbacks, steps to reduce the average cost of remittances are likely to be undertaken.

- It is an irony of history that 2020, considered as the year of mobility for the implementation of the continental free trade area and for the process of ratification of the AU Free Movement Protocol, is becoming a symbol of immobility. The uncertainty of the future migration trends and the expected increase in unemployment, poverty, and economic downturn may force persons to move and to break the mobility restrictions, by relying on the support of individual facilitators or criminal groups in order to cross borders. Humanitarian assistance initiatives, such as “Team Europe” package to support partner countries in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences by combining resources from the EU, its Member States, and financial institutions, in particular the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development,⁶⁹ have already been deployed to support the most vulnerable groups. Appropriate policy responses, which take into account the crucial role that mobility plays on the continent as both a livelihood strategy and as a means to ensure socio-economic growth, have the potential to limit and mitigate the shortcomings brought about by the present crisis. To this extent, cross-continental cooperation, through well-consolidated platforms such as the migration and mobility dialogues between Africa and Europe, and via new instruments such as the new European Union’s Strategy with Africa, the EUs new Pact on Migration and Asylum pave the way for a revisited migration management and cooperation that is resilient, more humane, and effectively based on the legal channels underpinning the free movement.

⁶⁹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/77326/coronavirus-european-union-launches-%E2%80%9Cteam-europe%E2%80%9D-package-support-partner-countries-more-%E2%82%AC20_en