

African Development Consortium (ADC) Position on Migration as a Developmental Issue

By Mr. Brian Gezani Ndhlovu (ADC CEO)

Let me give context to this matter of migrants (abantu bokuhamba). The African Development Consortium was initially started to organize migrants and give them a voice. This organization was to join COSATU as a union. There are difficulties to get this community together well organized because many were illegal.

A decision was taken to launch it as an African Development Consortium to look at developmental issues on the continent. I hope many know that we have African Union Agenda 2063 giving a framework on how Africa should be developed with a measurable goal. This plan is anchored by Regional development plans - in SADC it's called SADC Agenda 2030 talking about regional integration.

In supporting SADC Regional Development Agenda 2030, South Africa has a National Development Plan 2030 (NDP 2030). The plan is aimed at the elimination of poverty and inequality by 2030. The SADC agenda can be achieved through the economic transformation of the countries with SADC, which also have huge migration issues. Each country within SADC should have its plan. No doubt that countries within SADC are highly dependent on the South African economic infrastructure like Europe depends on Russian energy infrastructure for their economy. The was modelled by Apartheid but also that some of these countries are landlocked.

If one follows the Russian-Ukraine war that has exposed the danger of economic dependency on one country. In this case, Europe relied on Russia for energy supply. If this war continues the world will see a huge migration of Europeans to other countries. Africa could see more such people in various sectors because of their expertise. They will be called expatriates but they remain migrants. Even those without skills will come to our countries to sell blankets. We have seen many Chinese setting up shops to sell imported goods from their own country.

Failure by South Africa to grow its economy will affect SADC countries and migration of people won't stop. Eskom is one example that when power fails SADC countries receiving electricity from SA will be badly affected. We should appreciate the mentality of the South African economy to the economic development of the SADC region. Many times, migration of people can be indices by bad leadership.

For us to better understand migration by asking who is not a product of migration in this group. Some here belonged to Bantustans (homelands) after 1994 and migrated to Gauteng and other urban settlements. Are we aware that we have internal migrants in South Africa? Due to the lack of development in the rural areas small-scale farmers and other people have left their lands to come and look for better opportunities in the cities. Because they speak the same language as us, we don't hear a lot of noise from them. They are mentioned when it comes to an illegal land occupation that rural people come and take our land.

Even during Apartheid, we had internal refugees, people who were running away from policed victimization by police and ended up leaving away from home shelters by others.

We have people from Swaziland, Lesotho, Eswatini, and possibly Mozambique, Namibia, and Lesotho who cross the borders to earn SASSA grants and return. It happens because South Africa offers these opportunities including jobs. migration is political and economic. Where there is poor

political leadership the economy is not spread enough to cater to all. ANC government is a good example of poor leadership ending up with the economy circulating in the hands of family, friends, girlfriends, looters, hooligans, etc. This has caused poverty and migration from rural to urban centres. The rural areas are neglected.

ADC understands this migration matter and has put various support programmes to assist people who want to return to their various countries. This approach of voluntary repatriation will restore their dignity. Voluntarily means you run a program that makes them aware of the need to return home and expose the kind of support you are providing. The best is that their governments are compelled to engage and assist.

Whilst we work on voluntary repatriation, we are engaging other stakeholders who specialize in such services to bring in their resources and that includes money to achieve the repatriation.

Above all, we have launched Zimbabwe South Africa Business Facilitation Forum (Zim-SA Business Facilitation Forum) on the 10th of October 2022. This organization is to mobilize investment into South Africa and Zimbabwe to assist reduce migration by creating economic opportunities. As I said earlier no one will end migration because it is a by-product of any growing economy that attracts skills from outside the country. We have Zimbabweans who are professional, and highly qualified but work as domestic workers. The reason is that a domestic worker will earn more than a professional will earn in Zim.

It does not list qualifications but earning an income to feed your children. We saw a clip of a Kenyan lady who was used to feeding puppies in another country. She went there looking for better opportunities but ended up in that situation. She might have a degree but the Kenyan economy might not be a word here. In South Africa, we have a lot of South Africans who complete our university studies and can't find a job. Where do they end up these people? Many of them drink alcohol every and some take drugs because the economy is not friendly to them. Thanks to SASSA grants the situation could have been worst.

We have South African professionals who leave South Africa for various countries. Some qualified South African are domestic servants in Europe and other continents because salaries are better.

As said earlier that all SADC countries have economic opportunities and ADC wants to work with various embassies to source opportunities and bring investors to those countries.

Our focus is economic emancipation (Economic Freedom) of our continent, not just SADC.

I hope I have outlined the task facing SADC and Zim- SA Business facilitation Forum. It is an organization set up and run by South Africans and Zimbabweans. The organization will later form partnerships with similar organizations in the SADC countries.

Hope this broadens our discussion on the migration (migrants) problems not foreign nationals.