

## NEWSLETTER FROM THE NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE

Comment by Carin Norberg and Fantu Cheru

### Migration and development



Migration and development have become interlinked issues which would certainly play a crucial role in

development cooperation in the coming decades. Attitudes towards the topic of migration within the development debate have shifted considerably. While the earlier focus of the discussion about migration was largely put on potential and actual brain drain, the more recent discourse identifies large development potentials from migration through economic and social remittances from the countries of residence.

More recently, much of the focus has shifted to the impact of remittances returned to home countries by all emigrants. Worldwide, these flows are second only to private investment flows. They far exceed aid flows and constitute a major share of GDP and resource of foreign exchange for many developing countries. Nonetheless, recent research presents a more complex picture of the impact of emigration and diasporas on home countries' development, especially in the area of 'social remittances', such as skills, knowledge, and technology exchange between home and host countries and cultural and civic awareness.

We believe here in the Nordic region and many parts of the EU, the potential contribution of Diasporas to the development of their 'homeland' as well as the 'host' country are largely under-utilized. If constructively and creatively harnessed, migrants can contribute to a better social, political and economic transformation both to their adopted and native countries. Today, the objectives of migration policies within a development context are to foster the potential of migration and to reduce the risks associated with migration, both for the individual migrant as well as for entire countries.

In mid-March the Nordic Africa Institute and the George Washington University convened a workshop in Stockholm and Uppsala titled "*Migration, Diasporas and Development: Transatlantic Perspectives*". The

### Migration, Diasporas and Development

A joint inception workshop of The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden and the George Washington University Diaspora Research Program, Washington DC, USA was held in Stockholm and Uppsala 16-17 March 2009.

Read a presentation of the workshop [here](#)  
View video from the workshop [here](#)

### Africa in search of alternatives



The wide range of Africa research in the Nordic region is reflected in the NAI Annual Report for 2008. Titled *Africa in search of alternatives*, the Annual Report is a collective effort by management, staff, researchers and guests of the NAI during 2008 and

covers numerous issues, from the Chinese scramble for Africa to evictions in Zimbabwe and the dreamy poetry of Nigerian writer Tolu Ogunlesi.

Download or order a free hard copy of the NAI Annual Report [here](#)

### Shailja Patel NAI Guest Writer



The Nordic Africa Institute is honored to host the Kenyan poet, playwright, spoken word artist and activist Shailja Patel from April to June 2009. Shailja Patel is the 2009 NAI Guest Writer. During her stay in Sweden she will take part in several events in the Nordic region.

On 23 April 2009 at 6 p.m. Shailja Patel will discuss *Poetry, Performance and Resistance* at a public event in the NAI library.

Read more about Shailja Patel [here](#)

workshop had several goals: first, to facilitate an open policy dialogue among stakeholders in the migration and development field such as diasporas organizations, researchers, development practitioners, policy makers in the government institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector.

Up to now, the policy dialogue on the migration and development field in the Nordic region has largely been dominated by the mainstream institutions. Yet, one key strategic stakeholder in this field whose voices, views and perspectives have not yet sufficiently been heard is the migrant constituency. The Diasporas constituency's wealth of knowledge and expertise have not been sufficiently harnessed, or even documented. There is therefore a need to stimulate the active participation of the Diasporas in the generation of ideas and policy insights so as to ensure that their voices are better represented in policy deliberations in migration and development related matters.

But migration and development cannot be looked at in a compartmentalized manner — they are inter-related processes. The OECD has called for increased policy coherence in migration policies to promote development. What does this mean in practice? Policy coherence need clear objectives and transparent priorities. But it is here where the discussion is convoluted, imprecise and vague. Coherence between different ministries is key in this regard as there is not one single policy solution to all different aspects of migration issues. The various approaches — i.e. from asylum policy, to integration policy, and development policy — need to converge to one policy framework. In this respect, it is important to officially formalize the consultation and policy dialogue between host governments and their diasporic communities. This could be facilitated through the establishment of a 'migration and development policy dialogue platform' that meets regularly, bringing together different stakeholders at the table. The Remittance Task Force in Germany is one such good example.

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#### **Seminar on 'Social protection, cash transfer and social benefits in Africa'**

The seminar on 2 February 2009 was coorganised with the Institute for Futures Studies, Save the Children and Sida.

Read a report from the seminar [here](#)

#### **Lecture by Derick W. Brinkerhoff**

Professor Derick W. Brinkerhoff of George Washington University's Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration made a lecture at NAI on 13 March on *Promoting development in fragile states: What have we learned?*

View a video of the lecture [here](#)

#### **'What's Culture Got to Do With it?'**

Conference in Uppsala 15-18 June 2009. The main aim of the conference is to discuss what role the study of culture – here creative cultural expressions – plays and could play in understanding change in contemporary Africa.

Read more about the conference [here](#)

#### **Recent publications**

The ANC Underground in South Africa (with Jacana Media), by Raymond Suttner.

Presentation [here](#)

The Bush Is Sweet: Globalization, Identity and Power Among Wodaabe Fulani in Niger, by Kristín Loftsdóttir.

Presentation [here](#)

Policy Note: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeeping Operations in Contemporary Africa, by Fanny Rudén and Mats Utas.

Download [here](#)

Policy Note: Causes and Cures of Oil-related Niger Delta Conflicts, by Ukoha Ukiwo.

Download [here](#)

Policy Note: The African Union and the Challenges of Implementing the "Responsibility to Protect", by Dan Kuwali.

Download [here](#)

Policy Note: Les migrations de travail: une question qui concerne aussi les enfants et les jeunes, by Dorte Thorsen.

Download [here](#)



#### **Africa 2010 at Gothenburg Book Fair**

Africa will be the focus theme for 2010 of the yearly Bok & Bibliotek book and library fair in Gothenburg, Sweden. The venture is organised by the Nordic Africa Institute in cooperation with Bok & Bibliotek and the Swedish development cooperation agency Sida.

Read more about the book fair [here](#)



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