

## A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE AFRICA'S CONNECTION WITH THE MIGRATION CRISIS IN EUROPE, 1990-2016

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper critically examines the Africa's connection with the migration crisis in Europe, which presently constitute the greatest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War in 1945. The countries which bear the brunt of the crisis include Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Italy, Hungary, Spain, Calais (France) and Germany etc. In the first quarter of 2016, for instance, about 135, 000 people were reported to have attempted to migrate to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. This had resulted in many fatalities involving hundreds of people from the Middle East and Africa. This study focuses on Africa's connection with the migration crisis in Europe. It has been established that thousands of African people have been embarking on desperate journeys across the hazardous Sahara desert and the perilous Mediterranean Sea since 1990s in order to migrate to Europe. In this context, it was reported, for instance, that by the year 2000 about 17, 000 Nigerians were stranded in Libya while attempting to reach Europe through the hazardous routes especially across the Mediterranean Sea. Many other African people from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana etc were known to have been embarking on similar journeys to Europe over the years. The factors which compel thousands of Africans to embark on desperate journeys to Europe include the pervasive poverty and misery in many African countries; the impact of European colonialism on post-colonial Africa's economic production system, and the problem of massive unemployment among the educated youths. There was also the negative effect of tribalism and xenophobia which hinders inter-state mobility of labour within Africa, and the persistent conflicts and wars in some parts of Africa which compel people to flee their communities to neighbouring countries and attempts to reach Europe. There was also vociferous allegations of human rights violations and repressive acts by some governments in Africa which compel their citizens to flee to Europe as asylum seekers and economic migrants. Many migrants sometimes face certain problems including underemployment, poor housing, socio-psychological trauma as well as threats of xenophobic and racist outbursts and violence from white racist extremists in their host countries. The African governments should diversify their economies to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth for the benefit of the present and future generations.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this paper is to critically examine, in historical context, the Africa's connection with the migration crisis in Europe which has recently given rise to humanitarian crisis, and threaten to result in economic dislocation and social instability in some countries. Admittedly, the global attention with respect to the incidence of migration crisis in Europe has tended to focus on the war-torn countries of the Middle-East Region, especially Syria, Iraq and Yemen. In these countries, millions of refugees seeking to escape from the theater of wars in their homelands have been making strident efforts since 2013 to reach Europe for safety. *The Voice of America (VOA) News* 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 reported that between January and March, 2016 about 135, 000 people consisting of refugees, asylum seekers and economic

migrants had attempted to reach Europe<sup>1</sup>. More specifically, the *Aljazeera* television documentary, March 2016 noted that over 2.7 million Syrian refugees live in Turkey<sup>2</sup>. Many of these refugees have Europe as their destination, thus creating the migration crisis in European countries particularly in Greece, Macedonia, Hungary, Italy and Spain etc. The focus of this paper is on Africa's connection with the migration crisis in Europe. Since 1990s many people of African descent, particularly from the sub-Saharan Africa have been attempting to migrate to Europe. Many of them were economic migrants seeking to improve their economic conditions in European countries. Although reliable statistics about the number of Africans who had migrated to Europe in recent years is not readily available, nevertheless, thousands of Africans especially the young men and women are known to have successfully migrated to European countries and are contributing towards economic and social development of their host countries. The desperation to migrate to Europe by Africans especially the youths became more noticeable as from 1990s. Many of these youths desperate to reach Europe took great risks by embarking on hazardous journeys across the Sahara desert, and finally through the perilous Mediterranean Sea. These illegal routes were said to have often resulted in fatalities.

*The Guardian*, September 24, 2014 reported that 3,072 migrants were "killed crossing Mediterranean Sea in 2014". The International Organization for Migration, IOM, in its report cited in *The Guardian*, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 observed that more than 40, 000 people had perished since 2000 while migrating, and 22, 000 of them while trying to reach Europe.<sup>3</sup> Many of these people killed in the Mediterranean Sea were undoubtedly Africans who had embarked on perilous journeys to reach Europe as economic migrants. In 2015, more than 3,000 people were reported to have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while embarking on perilous journeys by boats to various countries of Europe. According to V.S. Anyagafu, the tragedy and other considerations had prompted almost European countries to agree "to seek ways to curb the flow of illegal migration of thousands of people from Africa into Europe".<sup>4</sup> In the same year, 2015, more than one million people were said to have migrated to Europe. Many Africans, including Nigerians were among the people who embarked on the illegal and risky migration to Europe in 2015.<sup>5</sup> Moreover according to *VOA News*, March 4, 2016 more than 135, 000 people attempted to migrate to Europe in the first quarter of 2016. The influx of people, including Africans to Europe either as refugees, asylum seekers or economic migrants has created humanitarian crisis in some European countries particularly in Greece, Macedonia, Hungary, France, and Germany etc. Moreover, the desperate journeys to Europe sometimes results in serious delays in reaching Europe which might last for months, years or the would-be migrants being stranded in either Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia or any other North African country.

The former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo reportedly stated that in 2000 the Col. Muammar Gaddafi's regime repatriated about 17, 000 Nigerians stranded in Libya. These were among Nigerians who embarked on desperate journeys to Europe but were stranded in Libya, in North Africa.<sup>6</sup> However, O. Oculi has contended that Col. Muammar Gaddafi had encouraged thousands of unemployed youths from Africa and poor Asian countries to migrate to Libya for the purpose of utilizing their labour to build an industrial economy. He further contended that it was in exasperation that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, military alliance "preceded its bombs on Libya's military and other strategic targets by getting foreign workers to flee from Libya".<sup>7</sup> By so doing, according to O. Oculi, NATO allies aborted Col. Gaddafi's vision of building an industrial economy despite Libya's tiny population. He also noted that the fall of Gaddafi in 2011 paved the way for thousands of African youths to migrate to Europe as formidable labour force with which the

European states intended to employ as a counter force needed to neutralize the protests by trade unions as European economies attacked socialist welfare policies won under the fears of communism in former Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted, however, that a more discernible historical perspective and analysis of the Africa's connection with the migration crisis in Europe points to the fact that by 1990s thousands of African people have been venturing to enter Europe as migrant labour. Many of these Africans, as already stated, embarked on hazardous journeys across the Sahara Desert en route to North Africa, from where they hoped to enter Europe after crossing the perilous Mediterranean Sea. This urge to migrate to Europe has remained with many African youths and thus fuelling the problem of human trafficking which has been described as "modern day slavery" in contemporary African society, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

For instance, *The Nation* (September 7, 2015) reported that the influx of asylum-seekers and economic migrants from Africa and the war-torn Syria into Europe was given European nations some nightmares. The paper noted that European governments were divided on how best to manage the crisis<sup>9</sup>. The thousands of African people who successfully entered into European countries through the land routes and across the Mediterranean Sea were more often than not regarded as illegal migrants. This was probably because they did not follow the appropriate migration routes, and perhaps did not possess valid immigration documents. Besides, many of such migrants were dubbed as illegal migrants because they could not fulfill certain immigration conditions. In this circumstance, some of them could be subjected to ill-treatment by European immigration and security officials and may be deported to their respective countries afterwards.<sup>10</sup>

## **FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE AFRICANS' DESPERATION TO MIGRATE TO EUROPE**

Since 1990s, there have been certain historical factors that have been compelling thousands of Africans from the sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigerians, to embark on migration to Europe, despite its hazardous nature across the Sahara Desert and the perilous Mediterranean Sea. These factors include the following:-

### **1. Impact Of European Colonialism On The African Continent**

European colonialism in Africa has contributed immensely to the unfortunate development whereby thousands of African youths embark on perilous journeys to Europe across the Saharan Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. During the colonial era, the Africans were encouraged to produce cash crops such as cocoa, palm oil and kernel, groundnuts, benniseed, rubber etc which served as raw materials for European industries. Throughout the period, there was no serious effort to encourage industrialization in Africa. Worse still, there was no remarkable effort on the part of European colonial masters to introduce modern technology in agricultural production, except in very few plantations managed by European capitalists. Consequently, hoe remained the overwhelming dominant agricultural implement. Thus, capitalism revolutionized agriculture in Europe, but it could not do so for Africa.<sup>11</sup> The consequence has been the declining production of agricultural products especially staple foods and increasing poverty and misery among the African populace. Besides, in post colonial Africa, Western education introduced by the European missionaries began to produce thousands of educated Africans who preferred white or blue collar jobs and despised traditional African agricultural production system characterized by enervating manual labour. Without readily available white or blue collar jobs for the educated youths, particularly as

from 1990s (when the African economies manifested increasing decline) many of these youths began to venture into Europe on illegal migration. By the year 2000, thousands of people from sub-Saharan Africa could be spotted in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco in their desperate desire to migrate to Europe. According to the United Nations Office of Drug and Crime, UNODC, report cited in U. Igwe,<sup>12</sup> some 5,500 migrants were said to be smuggled annually from East, North and West Africa into Europe. The report noted that between 1996 and 2011, at least 1,691 people died while attempting to cross the Sahara Desert and in 2008 alone, 1,000 deaths occurred as a result of attempts to cross the perilous Mediterranean Sea. However, C. Umezulike has dismissed the notion that Africa is still underdeveloped mainly because of the elements of colonialism and foreign manipulations. Rather, he pointed out that Africa's failure to develop since independence is a function of leadership crisis. He noted that Africa has the longest set of over stayed leaders and dictators that never did anything with their absolute powers. He further noted that during the Cold War era, Africa saw a lot of dictators emerge. These dictators, according to him, never cared about their nations' development and socio-economic deliverables.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Poverty And Worsening Economic Conditions

In post colonial Africa there has been the problem of poverty in many countries. In many cases the lofty ideal and hope brought by independence have not been ideally realized. This was partly due to the decline in the value of primary products in the international market and consequent decline in Gross Domestic Product of many African countries; the weakening of the purchasing power of national currencies, and the tendency of governments to resort to loans at high interest rates. With particular reference to Nigeria in 2015, Vice President Yomi Osibanjo observed that about 100 million out of about 170 million Nigerians were living in abject poverty. He noted that poverty in Nigeria accounts for the high illiteracy figures and shocking infant and maternal mortality rates in the country.

In a similar report written by *Philipps Consulting* on Nigeria in April, 2015, it was revealed that 130 million people (76.47 percent of the population) did not have access to the essential factors required to enjoy a good quality of life. This is reflected, according to the report, on the current life expectancy of 54 years comparable to Ghana's 62 years and Brazil's 74 years.<sup>14</sup> In many other African countries such as South Sudan, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire etc the populace have been experiencing grinding poverty. Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa compels many African people to embark on desperate journeys to Europe where they hoped to improve their socio-economic conditions. A. Nkemdiche has observed that global material wealth has flowed from the Southern hemisphere to the Northern hemisphere since the recorded history especially since the European colonialism. He contended that we live in a world of consequences for the obvious reason that nature is intolerable of disequilibrium.

He further contended that the dire consequences of the current unidirectional flow of global wealth is the unstoppable avalanche of north-bound refugees and economic migrants which represent a natural counterpoise of the sustained north-bound flows of global material wealth.<sup>15</sup> The thousands of African people migrating to European countries have the intention to benefit from the surplus wealth of the European society. The desperation among many African people to migrate to Europe despite the great risks involved can be seen in the case of two West Africans from Guinea. One of them, according to report, entered the Spanish territory of Ceuta from Morocco curled next to a car engine and another was hidden behind the back seat of the Mercedes Benz 300 car. According to the Spanish police, both of them were given first aid in Ceuta, having suffered from lack of oxygen.<sup>16</sup> This shows the extent to

which some Africans could take risks in order to migrate to Europe in order to escape from poverty and worsening economic conditions at home.

### 3. The Problem Of Unemployment

Unemployment appears to be the major factor that has been compelling many African people, especially the youths, to embark on illegal migration to Europe through the hazardous Sahara desert and the Mediterranean Sea. Unemployment has been defined as the proportion of labour force that was available for work but did not work.<sup>17</sup> With specific reference to Nigeria, the official figures from the Bureau of Statistics puts the figures of the unemployed at 23.90 per cent, about 34 million. However, F.O. Abiodun noted that this figure still does not include about 40 million other Nigerian youths captured in World Bank statistics in 2013. However, the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, put the figure of unemployed people in Nigeria as at fourth quarter of 2015 at 22.45million people.<sup>18</sup> Also, South Africa has high levels of unemployment despite its industrialized economy. The official figure is 24.3 percent, but the more realistic figure was said to be 34.6 per cent when those who had stopped searching for jobs were taken into consideration.<sup>19</sup> The high unemployment rate in the country was the real cause of xenophobic attacks on foreigners in March 2015. A. Amzat observed that the black South African youths resent the presence of foreigners who they believe were taking away their scarce jobs.<sup>20</sup>

Since 1990s there has been increasing number of Nigerians and, indeed, African youths without gainful employment. Thousands of youths graduate from tertiary institutions in different parts of Africa without securing employment. This exposes such youths to untold hardship and sometimes leading some of them to engage in criminal activities such as armed robbery, prostitution, drug trafficking and kidnapping etc. It has also accentuated the problem of xenophobia in some countries of Africa especially in South Africa. Moreover, it has intensified the problem of internal conflicts within some countries e.g. Nigeria, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo etc. Thus, with the state of helplessness over the issue of unemployment, thousands of African youths began to embark on migration to Europe through the risky routes across the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea. It is hoped that as African countries embark on diversification of their economies they would create more job opportunities for their teeming population.

However, it should be noted that as white collar jobs are increasingly disappearing as a result of technological innovations, there is need for African countries to emulate the Asian countries on skills development and utilization. This would ensure that the teeming youths graduating from tertiary institutions on annual basis acquire relevant skills and competencies that would enable them overcome the challenge of unemployment and poverty. It is in realization of the need for skills acquisition for youth empowerment and job creation that the federal government of Nigeria has established National Directorate of Employment, NDE, which is charged with the responsibility of establishing and managing model skills acquisition centres for the training of graduates of tertiary institutions to enable them acquire relevant technological and managerial skills for self empowerment and job creation. C. Illo has noted that skill acquisition is emerging as “a breeding ground for the creation of massive employment”.<sup>21</sup> Besides, modern technology plays a critical role in helping people develop the necessary skills needed in today’s workplace. However, an effective empowerment programme for the youth must be intricately connected with the passion, personality, natural ability and the creative and innovative potentialities of the youth.<sup>22</sup> This would help stem the tide of desperate journeys by African youths to Europe.

#### 4. Impact Of Tribalism And Xenophobia On Internal Migration In Africa

Tribalism and xenophobia constitute serious stumbling block to internal labour migration within African continent. This has been one of the reasons why thousands of African people prefer to embark on perilous journeys to European countries where they believe greener pastures and human rights protection are guaranteed. In many African countries, tribalism endangers labour migration. A political writer based in Zimbabwe, Reason Wafawarora was reported to have observed that:

*Tribalism has nurtured the typical African into a hating animal when it comes to outsiders, and most of us inherently consider outsiders lesser beings, even those that are clearly more successful than ourselves*<sup>23</sup>.

Besides, tribalism leads to series of convulsive riots in some African cities which often targeted foreigners or outsiders. For instance, the bloody xenophobic attacks in South Africa which erupted on March 15, 2015 had its root on tribalism and tribal sentiment allegedly expressed by the Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini. The King was reported to have called foreigners in the country “lice” and asked them to pack their belongings and go back to their countries. This provocative statement was said to have ignited bloody riot in Durban a few hours later. The riot was said to have later spread to the commercial capital, Johannesburg and thus endangered the lives and properties of many foreigners.<sup>24</sup> According to Nigerian Consul General to South Africa, Ambassador Uche Ajulu-Okeke, Nigerians lost R1.2m ( N21 million) in the 2015 xenophobic attacks. She added that losses included looted and burnt shops, and that three Nigerians were wounded and about 50 stranded in Jeppe community which was noted for its notoriety for xenophobic attacks.<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that migration across national borders in Africa is an essential ingredient for rapid development of the continent. Migrants bring in their expertise to bear on the economy and social services of their host countries. They also try to improve their economic well being and that of their families. It is in this perspective that Kofi Anan, a former United Nations Secretary General reportedly stated that:

*We cannot ignore the real policy difficulties posed by migration, but neither should we lose sight of its immense potential to benefit migrants, the countries they leave and those to which they migrate*<sup>26</sup>.

Thus, Africans should eschew bitterness associated with tribalism and xenophobia in order to encourage inter-state labour migration for rapid development. This would help deploy greater African labour within Africa for the over-all development of the continent. The participants at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Africa Development Bank, AfDB, held in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire have stated that the idea of an integrated and prosperous Africa would remain a pipe dream if African countries fail to open their borders to free movement of people, goods and service. Discussants at the meeting argued that simplifying visas to unlock the movement of talent would play a significant role in boosting Africa’s competitiveness and integration. At the moment, the available statistics shows that only 14 African countries offer liberal access to all African citizens.<sup>27</sup> In this regard, C. Ake identified the need to modernize African attitudes and culture so as to come to terms with the development paradigm.<sup>28</sup> Labour is an essential tool for development. In this context, the International Labour Organization, ILO, has stated that labour mobility has become “the chief characteristics of globalization and the global economy”<sup>29</sup>. However, Africa requires a common visa regime reminiscent to Europe’s

Schengen visa system in order to promote labour mobility, tourism and economic integration in Africa.

## 5. Effect Of Conflicts And Wars On Africans' Desperate Journeys To Europe

The persistence of conflicts and wars in some parts of Africa has been a major factor compelling many African people to migrate to other African countries or embark on perilous journeys to Europe across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. There have been series of political, ethnic and religious conflicts and wars in some parts of Africa, thus leading to greater social insecurity and economic dislocation to a large number of African people. For instance, the fall of Col. Muammer Gaddafi's regime in 2011 has resulted in Libya descending to a state of anarchy. Several rival groups emerged in Tripoli, Benghazi and Sirte claiming political authority and legitimacy. This situation has made the country ungovernable. Besides, it has complicated the problem of human trafficking from the sub-Saharan Africa across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe, as many profiteering and criminal gangs emerged from the unstable state of the country to serve as organizers of the business of trafficking people to Europe. V.S Anyagafu stated that there were about 30,000 human traffickers who were benefiting from the misery of the victims of human trafficking across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.<sup>30</sup>

There were also wars in Northern Mali, Republic of Sudan in Darfur region, South Sudan and deadly Boko Haram insurgency in the North-east Nigeria. In the case of South Sudan, about 1 million people were reported to have fled the country in the first ten months of the civil war which erupted in December 2013.<sup>31</sup> In Nigeria, the International Organization for Migration, IOM, has reported that Boko Haram insurgents had stepped up their attacks in 2015 and that over 2.1 million people had been displaced from their communities in North-East Nigeria.<sup>32</sup> These wars have compelled a lot of refugees to cross borders to other neighbouring countries and, in some cases, attempts were made to migrate to Europe for safety and economic survival. V.S Anyagafu reported that apart from poverty, religious and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria put in more pressure on Nigerian youths to consider migrating abroad as the only available option of survival<sup>33</sup>.

Moreover, there was an outbreak of political violence in Burundi in April 2015 following the insistence of the country's President, Pierre Nkurunziza to run for a third term. By November 2015, it was reported that 212 people have been killed and 200,000 people fled to neighbouring states.<sup>34</sup> By December 18, 2015, it was further reported that at least 400 people have been killed as the political violence continued unabated. S. Campbell, a United Nation's human right officer has stated that Burundi's political violence threatened to spiral into an ethnic or regional conflict, but that the United Nations was less equipped to deal with it<sup>35</sup>. It should be noted that Burundi ended a 12-year civil war in 2005 when the Hutu rebels fought the army led by the Tutsis. The adoption of a new constitution which prescribed for a two term in office for a president was one of the reconciliatory measures that ended the war. Thus, political conflicts and wars have contributed significantly in compelling thousands of African people to embark on hazardous migrations to Europe.

## 6. Impacts Of Human Rights Abuses

The vociferous allegations of human right abuses and acts of impunity sometimes leveled against some governments in African countries, contributes to the migration of African people to other parts of the world, especially Europe. Such countries as Ethiopia, Eritrea,

South Sudan, Sudan, Gambia and Burundi have been accused of human rights violation by human rights groups. For instance, President Barack Obama of the United States of America, USA, in his first visit to Ethiopia, had called on the Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Mr. Hailemariam Desaego "to improve his country's record on human rights and good governance". Earlier before President Obama's visit, some human rights groups were reported to have accused Ethiopian government of jailing journalists and critics.<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that Ethiopians are among the largest group of Africans making desperate journeys to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, Eritrea situated in the horn of Africa had been under intense diplomatic isolation from the world community as a result of United Nations sanctions over alleged human rights violations. The country was specifically accused of holding political prisoners, which the country's political leadership was said to have denied.<sup>37</sup> However, Eritrea is presently re-engaging the global community diplomatically, especially the European Union and the Gulf States. A country with very fragile economy, Eritrean citizens were among thousands of African people that have been embarking on hazardous journeys to Europe for a better living condition. The European Union was reported to have signed a 200 million euro package of financial support for Eritrea in January 2016 to encourage her to boost her economy so as to create more job opportunities to discourage her citizens from massive migration to Europe.<sup>38</sup>

In South Sudan, the outbreak of civil war in the country on December 15, 2013 appeared to have given rise to wanton violation of human rights of some citizens. In view of this development, the African Union was reported to have accused the government and rebel forces engaging in the war of extreme violence. A commission of inquiry was reported to have found evidence of killings, torture, mutilations and rape, mostly against civilians, as well as episodes of forced cannibalism. The report further revealed that tens of thousands of people have died in the war and about two million people have been forced to flee their communities.<sup>39</sup> Many South Sudanese refugees are known to have fled to neighbouring countries of Sudan, Kenya, and Tanzania as refugees. It is also possible that some South Sudanese refugees especially the educated elite might have attempted to migrate to Europe for safety and economic survival.

## **7. Effect Of Infrastructural Deficits On Africa's Development**

It has been noted that most African countries in the post-independence era have been grappling with the problem of infrastructural deficits. This is most especially in the areas of critical infrastructures such as good roads, functional health facilities, high quality educational, technological and research institutions. There is also the dearth of viable economic institutions such as processing and manufacturing industries, regular power supply and reliable transport system etc. As a result of deficits in these critical areas of infrastructures and institutions, the rapid development of many African countries as envisaged on the eve of independence have been hindered. The Vice President, African Development Bank, AfDB, Kayizzi-Muger was reported to have listed bad governance and corruption as the major impediments to Africa's development. He also reportedly stated that some African governments failed to translate their development agenda into action because the public sector tended to become captive and serve individuals and not the population.<sup>40</sup> In a similar view, A. J. Yelwa has contended that "no major milestone has been achieved by African countries since independence due to high level of corruption". He lamented that, "it was unfortunate to note that conditions of most African countries were not any better than they were at the threshold of independence". He attributed this situation to the fact that some African leaders had squandered the wealth and riches of their countries through unmitigated



corruption.<sup>41</sup> In Nigeria, corruption was said to be so pervasive in the public system that the present administration has initiated a fight against the menace. It is committed towards stemming the tide of corruption in the public life, and as well to recover large sums of money allegedly looted by former public office holders in the country. Moreover, lack of political will has been identified as a major challenge that hinders rapid development which could have occurred as a result of implementation of laudable programmes and reforms. T. Olaopa has stated that what Africa lacked was not laudable ideas, but the political will to carry through necessary reforms has been lacking on the part of many African leaders.<sup>42</sup> This is perhaps the reason why many laudable policies initiated were not implemented and some vital development projects not executed. It is this state of stagnation and underdevelopment that results in increase in poverty and misery among the African populace. The situation compels thousands of African youths to dare to embark on perilous journeys to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has critically examined the Africa's connection with the current migration crisis in Europe, which has been described as the greatest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War. It has established that apart from the citizens of Middle-East countries (Iraq, Syria and Yemen) who were fleeing from the fratricidal wars in their countries, thousands of Africans were among the large number of people embarking on perilous journeys to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. Hundreds of these migrants have been reported dead while attempting to reach Europe through illegal and hazardous routes. Moreover, it has been established in this study that certain prevailing factors within most African countries had compelled many African people, especially the youths to embark on desperate journeys to Europe with a view to improving their socio-economic conditions. These factors include pervasive poverty among the populace; massive unemployment among the youths, and negative effect of tribalism and xenophobia which frustrate inter-state labour migration within African continent. There was also the problem of conflicts and wars in some parts of Africa which compel people to flee their communities for safety in other countries, including Europe, and the vociferous allegations of human rights violations in some African countries. Besides, there has been the problem of infrastructural deficits in most African countries which has hindered rapid and sustainable socio-economic and technological development.

Consequent upon these prevailing factors, thousands of Africans embark on desperate journeys to Europe on annual basis in search of greener pastures. Those who succeed in reaching European countries sometimes were confronted with the problem of underemployment, poor housing, socio-psychological trauma, xenophobic or racist outbursts and violence by some white extremists.<sup>43</sup> Thus, as S. Castles and M.J. Miller have stated, non-European immigrants in France were relegated to the bottom of the labour market, often working in highly exploitative conditions, and live mainly in shanty towns.<sup>44</sup> Besides, the recent controversial deal between European Union and Turkey whereby migrants who entered Greece would be shipped back to Turkey would have far-reaching consequences on the human rights and welfare of the migrants. But some European nations view the plan as the only way to curb the continent's migration crisis.<sup>45</sup> It is therefore necessary that African governments should embark on economic diversification to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth for the over-all benefit of the present and future generations.

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