NIGERIA CASE STUDY

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OUTLINE

• Background
• Migration/refugees situation
• Trade unions/CSOs actions
• Challenges and opportunities
• Conclusion
BACKGROUND

• Basic demographics/social-economic facts
  ⇒ Population of 174m (a fifth of the African population), with a median age of 18.2yrs & population growth rate of 2.47%. Approximately half of the population live in urban centres, especially in the southern parts.
  ⇒ Between 250 & 370 ethnic/linguistic groups across six geo-political zones, 36 states & 774 local governments.
  ⇒ Near even gender proportion i.e. 49.09% female and 50.91% male. But women are disadvantaged in virtually every social-economic or political indices.
  ⇒ Infant mortality rate of 61 per 1,000 births (2012 est.) & a life expectancy of 52.8years.
  ⇒ Largest economy in Africa & impressive GDP growth rates (ave. 7.4%) till 2015 (2.1%). But ranks 160th out of 187 countries (down from 152 in 2014).
  ⇒ Official unemployment rate stands at 7.5% unemployed (up from 6.4% in 2014) and under-employed at 16.6% with sexed up govt. figures. Youth unemployment is x2.

• Politics:
  ⇒ Long history of military governance.
  ⇒ Central role in regional integration in (West) Africa.
  ⇒ The bane of corruption.

MIGRATION/REFUGEES SITUATION I

• The paucity of data (until recently) has been lamented in the literature.
• Nigeria occupies “a significant position in international migration as a sending, transit and receiving country”
• Net migration has been stable in the 21st century: 0.2 per 1,000 in 2000, 0.3 in 2005 & 0.22 in 2013.
• 87%-90% of immigrant works are from ECOWAS member-countries.
  ⇒ History of expulsion.
  ⇒ Recent demonization of (especially) Nigerian immigrants – Boko Haram, electoral irregularities.
• The menace of human trafficking:
  ⇒ 3rd most common crime in Nigeria (UNESCO).
  ⇒ Over 60% of girls trafficked to Europe for the sex trade (NAPTIP).
• The closest to a refugee crisis in Nigeria was during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. But even then, refugees constituted less than 1% of total immigration.
  ⇒ The problem now of Internally Displaced Persons as a problematic dimension of internal migration forced by the Boko Haram insurgency.
Economic migration is the major form of emigration, with push & pull factors

Push factors include:
- High poverty rate (at 71.5% in 2012) and rising inequality
- The place of the Structural Adjustment Programme and subsequent NEEDS, etc
- Infrastructure collapse and poor emasculated public services delivery systems
- Insecurity in different parts of the country (particularly North East & Niger delta)

Pull factors include:
- Better wages
- Better working conditions
- Opportunities for career progression
- Opportunities for providing a better life for offspring

The volume of remittances has made the Federal Government to pay more attention:
- From $10m in 1990, by 2010 it was $20.6bn
- This has led to policy formulation, albeit with questionable depth so far
- These have built on earlier moments of attention to migration (with 1963 and 1989 as milestones)

Central elements of this, include:
- Establishment of a Migration Desk at the Ministry of Labour in 2010 & the enactment of a Labour Migration Policy in 2014 (with collaboration with ILO & IOM)
- The enactment of a National Migration Policy on May 15, 2015
- The establishment of an inclusive (i.e. formally) architecture for coordinating migration issues
TRADE UNIONS/CSO ACTIONS

• Thus far TUs & CSOs intervention is at an early stage:
  ⇒ Inspired to a great extent by the EU-supported Beyond Irregularity project, in 2013
  ⇒ This led to the formation of the Civil Society Coalition on Migration & Development, which is led by the Nigeria Labour Congress, last year…after some contention on contents
  ⇒ While more concerned with emigration, came up with a pamphlet in defence of immigrants (with IOM)
  • The PSI Nigeria National Migration Project was the first concrete effort at popularising concern and action within the labour movement, on migration
  • Internationally, the establishment of the Nigeria in the Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) at the turn of the century provides room for collaboration with a representative body

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES I

• Challenges:
  ⇒ Paucity of institutional repertoire
  ⇒ A “business as usual” approach of the Fed. Ministry of Labour (Migration Desk)
  ⇒ Fully overcoming an “NGOist” mentality of proposal-driven activism within the civil society Coalition
  ⇒ An inadequate level of concern for migration issues by the NLC & trade unions, in practice
  ⇒ Near absent collaboration with the broader international labour movement (except in the case of PSI)
  ⇒ The problem of database (though much better now than a decade and a half ago)
  ⇒ Unethical recruitment and the desperation of many eager to migrate
  ⇒ Apparent dis-link of the labour movement with challenges faced by Nigerian migrants (eg Luqman Onikosi)
CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES II

• **Opportunities:**
  - The PSI Nigeria National Migration Working Group is a window of opportunity
  - Enjoining more GUFs/ITUC to inspire their affiliates’ taking up the issue of migration
  - Despite its limitation the FMLP’s Migration Desk could be leveraged on by TUs
  - Influence within the formal migration intervention architecture could be deepened with evidence-based research & practical work, in the unfolding period
  - The Civil Society Coalition on Migration & Development has been influenced by the work of the PSI MWG. This could be built upon
  - Relations with sister trade unions across the world and possibilities of members thus associating
  - The current global concern, opportunities to think together and fight as one against the bosses’ borders!

CONCLUSION

• Dire social-economic conditions in Nigeria & violent conflict has made migration to Europe or North America the dream of an average youth and many older persons as well
• The story could be different, with the provision of decent work and qualitative public services delivery by a system that works, for millions more of Nigerians (& other residents)
• Trade unions (and CSOs) have a crucial role to play in making such possibilities real
• Whilst we fight for this, we do also have to ensure that migration is just, and based on informed choices of the worker
• This struggle has to be at the national, regional and international levels
• United we will win. *“the workers united can never be defeated”*
THANK YOU ALL FOR LISTENING!