III. Africa

An African Marshall Plan Is Necessary To Solve the Migration Crisis

by Amb. Youssouf Abassalah

The following are the prepared remarks by His Excellency Youssouf Abassalah, ambassador of the Republic of Chad to Germany, to the July 31, 2026 EIR Emergency Roundtable, titled "Solve the Immigration Crisis with Development—What You Need To Know About the Strategic Significance of Pope Leo's Encyclical." The remarks were translated from the original French and have been slightly edited by EIR. The video is available here.

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Ambassador Youssouf Abassalah

Ladies and Gentlemen, African immigration has emerged as one of the major geopolitical challenges of our time. It lies at the intersection of development, security, governance, demography, climate change, and international cooperation. Images of thousands of young Africans braving the Sahara Desert and the waters of the Mediterranean bear witness to a deeply troubling reality. Migration, whether pendular (limited in time and space) or linear, constitutes both a problem and a solution for the country of origin and the country of destination.

There are two causes: Human—development deficit, governance deficiency; and Natural—climate change. Currently, 80% of African migration is intra-African.

For some aging countries, migration provides a boost, particularly in countries where the population replacement rate is below 2.1%. However, migration is depleting Africa of its able-bodied workforce, especially in rural areas. Indeed, 60% of Africans live in urban and semi-urban areas. Only women, young children, and the elderly remain in the African bush.

African emigration is not a demographic accident; it is the rational product of structural imbalances, including an income gap of 1 to 20 between the North and certain regions of the South, demographic pressure—Africa will grow from 1.4 to 2.5 billion inhabitants by 2050—state fragility, conflicts, and climate change in the Sahel.

A realistic approach rejects two symmetrical illusions: The first views migration as a mere "security problem" to be addressed with walls, and the second presents it as a costless and limitless act of solidarity. Migration flows are driven by interests—those of individuals, countries of origin, and countries of destination—and any lasting solution must take these interests into account rather than ignore them.

I. The Roots of the Problem

The economic differential remains the primary driver; as long as it persists at this scale, no border control policy will permanently eliminate it. Armed conflicts and insecurity are powerful drivers of displacement. The Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, the Horn of Africa, and parts of the Great Lakes region are experiencing protracted crises marked by terrorism, intercommunal conflicts, and weak public institutions.

Yet, it is weapons manufactured elsewhere that

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fuel these conflicts. The revenue of the 100 arms manufacturers is $679 billion. It is increasing every year. Failing governance in some states is driving educated elites and skilled young people into exile; a brain drain that deprives the continent of its own development resources. Migration routes have become a criminal economy in their own right (smugglers, traffickers), which increases the human cost without solving the cause and sometimes is a tool for diplomatic blackmail—for example, during the fall of Gadhafi.

Paradoxically, an aging Europe needs labor, resulting in restrictive rhetoric on the one hand and discreet recruitment on the other. The globalization of information sometimes fosters an idealized perception of living conditions abroad; a perception often far removed from reality.

II. The Consequences of Emigration

Immigration produces contrasting effects. For African countries, this leads to a loss of skills, particularly in the health, higher education, engineering, and new technology sectors. This brain drain slows development efforts. However, African diasporas also constitute a strategic resource. Their financial remittances, investments, and skills represent a key driver of economic and social development. Host countries also benefit from the contributions of migrants, who boost their economic dynamism, compensate for certain labor shortages, and enrich cultural diversity.

On the other hand, when migratory flows are insufficiently organized, they can exert pressure on public policies, fuel extremist rhetoric, and complicate social cohesion. The first victim, however, remains the migrant himself, often confronted with criminal human trafficking networks, violence, discrimination, and great precarity.

III. What Solutions Exist, from a Realistic Perspective?

1. Productive investment in Africa, targeted at emigration basins—infrastructure, light industrialization, agriculture—rather than humanitarian aid alone, which treats the symptoms.

2. Legal migration organized through bilateral labor agreements (as already done by Germany or some Gulf countries), which reduces the profits of smugglers and allows control of flows.

3. Strengthening states rather than bypassing them—political stability and the fight against corruption often carry more weight than raw financial aid.

4. Reform of continental migration governance, via the African Union, to transform intra-African mobility (which is numerically greater than migration to Europe) into a regional economic asset.

5. Diplomatic realism: accepting that host countries define absorption capacities, without giving in to either total closure or naivety—because both fuel extremism, in the North as in the South.

IV. The Special Case of the Sahel

The Sahel perfectly illustrates the interdependence between security, development and migration. This region is simultaneously facing terrorism, rapid population growth, the effects of climate change, food insecurity, and weak infrastructure. Chad, my country in particular, bears a major regional responsibility. While continuing the fight against terrorist groups, it is hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring countries, despite limited resources. This commitment demonstrates its solidarity but also underscores the need for increased international support. Strengthening the resilience of the Sahel must remain a priority for the international community.

Conclusion

African immigration is neither a threat nor an inevitability. It reveals the deep inequalities in development that persist between regions of the world. The sustainable solution lies in a new pact of shared responsibility between African states, destination countries, international organizations, the private sector, and diasporas. In short, an African Marshall Plan.