Operationalising the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons: Prospects for Sub-Regional Trade and Development

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FMP

- migration historically intra-regional
- pace setting FMP(RE) protocol in 1979
- staggered implementation over 15 years
- protocol recreated fmp
- creating borderless sub-region
- abolition of visas and entry permits;
- introduction of ECOWAS travel certificate;
- introduction of harmonised immigration/emigration forms;
- establishment of national committees to monitor ECOWAS programmes on FMP/V

Challenges

- multiplicity of groupings,
- language divide,
- political instability, boundary disputes
- expulsions
- wavering political commitment
- inconvertible currencies,
- economic downturn,
- rising domestic unemployment

ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration Framework (2008).

- promoting free movement within the ECOWAS zone;
- promoting the management of regular migration;
- policy harmonisation;
- controlling irregular migration and human trafficking, particularly of women and children;
- protecting the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees,
- taking into account gender and migration dynamics.

TLS

- trade liberalisation scheme for free movement of goods: a free trade zone
- expansion of intra-regional trade, presently 11%
- scarping of ubiquitous border barriers; extortion, harassment
- introduction of harmonised customs regime;
- harmonisation of economic and financial policies.
- introduction of the Brown Card motor vehicle insurance scheme;

Country Date of Ratification of 1979 Protocol	Abolition of visa and entry requirements for 90-day stay	Introduction of ECOWAS travel certificate	Harmonised immigration and emigration forms	National committee for monitoring free movement of persons and vehicles	ECOWAS Brown Card scheme
Benin *4 Jan 1981*	●	○	○	●	●
Burkina Faso *6 April 1982*	●	●	○	●	●
Cape Verde *11 June 1984*	●	○	○	○	**N/A (island state)**
Côte d'Ivoire *19 Jan 1981*	●	○	○	○	●
The Gambia *30 Oct 1980*	●	●	○	○	●
Ghana *8 April 1980*	●	●	○	○	●
Guinea *17 Oct 1979*	●	●	○	○	●
Guinea Bissau *20 Aug 1979*	●	○	○	○	●
Liberia *1 April 1980*	●	○	○	○	○
Mali *5 June 1980*	●	○	○	●	●
Niger *11 Jan 1980*	●	●	○	●	●
Nigeria *12 Sept 1979*	●	●	○	●	●
Senegal *24 May 1980*	●	○	○	○	●
Sierra Leone *15 Sept 1982*	●	●	○	○	●
Togo *9 Dec 1979*	●	○	○	●	●

The way forward

- Harmonisation of national employment codes in line with ECOWAS protocols
- Sustained sensitization activities on provisions of FMPs and Goods, ECOWAS common position on migration
- Capacity building of immigration officials
- Effective mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of decisions
- Promotion of peace and security to attract investment, the very foundation of development
- Setting up national and sub-regional boards on migration and development
- Media centres and media as whistle blower