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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF MIGRATORY LABOUR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

In 1986, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) requested its operational wing, the Lusaka-based Multinational Programming and Operational Centre (MULPOC) to be the secretariat of the Southern Africa Labour Commission (SALC), and prepare, in co-operation with SALC member States that supply labour to the Republic of South Africa, annual reports on the situation of migrant workers and their families. In compliance with the request, the secretariat has prepared this third report on economic and social aspects of migratory labour in Southern Africa. The report is specifically targetted at member States of SALC and is designed to appraise them of certain salient developments and recent trends on migratory labour in Southern Africa.

The approach of the report focuses on the recent economic and social aspects resulting from certain significant developments brought about by the economic and social crisis of the 1980s and the incipient recession in both South Africa and in labour sending countries. By making correlations between socio-economic conditions in South Africa on the one hand and in the labour sending countries on the other, it has been possible to draw some analogies regarding trends in the flow of migrant labour to South Africa. Finally, the report makes proposals and concludes that there is no indication that migration to South Africa will diminish rapidly in its importance as one of the important variables of the economies of some supplier States. In this respect, concrete proposals and the need for comprehensive economic measures and other social and welfare schemes in contrast to shorter term objectives of a remedial nature should be emphasised.

This type of report writing involving diachronic analysis of macro-social phenomena raises a number of difficulties. The first difficulty is that of organisation of information involving the selection of relevant facts, the arrangement of these facts in some order and therefore their interpretation. The second difficulty is epistemological, that is, the problem of analytical disaggregation of the effects of one trend from the effects of another or other trends. Thirdly, the required data was either non-existent, outdated or simply unreliable particularly data relating to employment, unemployment and under-employment. Finally, data on socio-economic developments in South Africa could only be available through secondary sources and was subject to extreme variations. Under the circumstances, such data has been viewed only from an indicative standpoint. The following section deals with recent trends on the economic and social conditions in South Africa.

RECENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE MIGRANTS RECIPIENT COUNTRY - SOUTH AFRICA

(a) Overview

In the previous report we indicated that the mining industry in South Africa constituted the largest single source of foreign exchange and was by far the largest. We further observed that excessive dependence placed South Africa in a vulnerable dependent situation. In 1988/89, that situation has continued to be remarkably the same.

The South African economy, though in a Third World setting is classified by the International Monetary Fund as a New Industrialising Economy (NIE) with a GNP per capita of 1890 US dollars. (1988). It has a sound industrial base and an adequate transport network via which its industrial products find their way into the markets of its northern neighbouring States. The growth and evolution of the South African economy and the development of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town, etc. have in part been realized through the exploitation of mainly gold, diamends and coal by mainly a cheap labour force of migrant workers from the neighbouring Southern African States. It is estimated that at the end of 1988, there were some 230,000 such foreign black migrant workers employed in the South African mining industry alone, representing 9.0 per cent of all formal employment. At the same time, tens of thousands more of legal and undocumented migrant workers are said to work in the agricultural, manufacturing and service industries. Until 1987, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Swaziland constituted the backbone of this export of cheap labour to South Africa. Since 1988, Malawi officially stopped sending migrant workers to South Africa and has since withdrawn virtually all those whose contracts have expired.

(b) Economic Recession and Sanctions

A salient barometer of the dependence of the South African economy is its excessive reliance on transnational corporations (TNCs). The TNCs have been attracted to South Africa because of the lucrative liberal conditions as well as the quick returns on their investments emanating from the high rate of profitability. During recent years, the pay back period on investments in South Africa has been around three or four years partly due to the cheapness of labour, whereas in Europe or America. This period ranges from nine to twelve years. However, the past three years have witnessed a slowing down in the rate of profitability in the South African economy.

The decline in the rate of profit has been caused by a number of factors: a protracted campaign on economic sanctions and disinvestment by the United States and European TNCs, an increasingly unionised and politicised labour movement, world-wide recession, a high rate of inflation, external payments deficits among others.

The underlying theoretical assumption is that when the productive cycle turns downwards and profits decline, the State and its business community try to extend the boom through the printing of money and the creation of other forms of credit. As a result, in South Africa, as the rate of profit continued to decline in the late 1980s the South African authorities resorted to credit creation and debt accumulation accelerated with increasing intensity. The external deficit grew rapidly and in mid-1989 inflation was estimated at 16 per cent. South Africa's external reserves declined to below those of Botswana. Total gold and other foreign reserves declined from US$4.1 billion dollars at the end of 1987 to US 2.8 billion dollars at the end of 1988 and US 2.7 billion dollars at the end of March 1989 2/. This precarious external position along with an external debt of some US 21 billion dollars by mid 1989 had put South Africa in a tight corner. In 1989, South Africa was therefore fighting relentlessly to convince its creditors to reschedule the debt. At the same time, the effects of economic sanctions were said to be biting.

According to the United Nations report, between January 1984 and April 1989, 277 foreign companies disinvested from South Africa. More than half of those were from the United States. This represented approximately forty per cent of all transnational corporations with foreign direct investments (FDI) in South Africa. Most of the disinvesting companies had either a direct or indirect relationship with the mining houses. The effects of disinvestment and the credit squeeze have been felt on the employment picture which in South Africa has reached almost two million people looking for jobs.

Disinvestment could have had even far reaching consequences on the economy if the mitigating factors were not put into gear by the very TNCs. Disinvestment has not implied a complete break with the apartheid economy. Recent data shows

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1/ Andre Gunder Frank: Crisis in the World Economy, 1985, p.34

2/ Financial Times Survey, June 12, 1989.

that disinvesting companies do retain their collaboration with apartheid South Africa in a variety of ways. In fact the UN report recently released in Geneva on Sanctions Against South Africa points out that "quite frequently disinvestment has been accompanied by an agreement whereby the TNC ensures continued production of its product or continued supply of its inputs to South Africa". Such agreements are in the form of licences, franchises, establishment of a distributorship or contracts for the transfer of technology.

Furthermore, trade sanctions have been weakened by South Africa's mislabelling of products, use of intermediate countries in the shipping of exports, the relocation of enterprises in neighbouring countries such as, Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho. But despite South Africa's circumvention of trade sanctions and disinvestment, some impact has been felt on the economy by imposing costs and exposing its vulnerability to international pressures.

(c) Mining Sector and Migrant Labour

Until 1986 mining and quarrying constituted the second most important sector in the make-up of GDP. As indicated in Table I below, since 1987, this sector slipped into second position. This confirms the argument that the economic downturn in South Africa over the past three years is pervasive and has had a negative impact on the important productive sectors of the economy. Mining and quarrying which in 1978 contributed 17.7 per cent slipped down and was only able to contribute 13.6 per cent in 1988 and may have dropped further by the end of 1989. This is a drop of 23.16 per cent of its share in a period of ten years. Although new mines are being planned, it can be anticipated that with the closure of unprofitable mines and as the ores get exhausted, reduction in the share of mining to GDP will intensify in the decades to come.

However, despite this trend, gold mining remains central to the economy in terms of its contribution to the earning of foreign exchange. It provided almost 40 per cent of 1988s R51 billion in exports. Gold is therefore extremely important and crucial if debt repayments obligations are to be met through the generation of trade surpluses. During the past two to three years, the gold industry has however, been experiencing enormous problems.

The average price of gold on the London Metal Exchange has tumbled from US$447 per ounce in 1987 to around US$380 per ounce in 1989. The tumbling international gold prices plus other factors already alluded to have had adverse effects on the mining industry. In mid 1989, the threatened closure of two big gold mines sent cold waves into the capitals of SALC labour sending countries. A number of mines have cut down on production and there have been some retrenchments at a number of others. The most affected mines are the old ones whose cost of production per unit is very high. The Government's major dilemma is to subsidise loss making mines which increased to twelve by mid 1989. Unfortunately, the paradox is that the unprofitable mines produce 20 per cent of the country's gold but employ 30 per cent of the gold industry's black workforce of some 480,000.

Gencor, the second biggest mining house has started a programme of rationalisation and intends to mine lower - grade ores and prevent operational losses. This firm reckons that most of the mines are overmanned and has already started a process of retrenchment at several mines. According to Lesotho government officials, up to 2,000 Basotho migrant workers were believed to have been retrenched at the beginning of August 1989. The process of rationalisation entails the introduction of new technologies. In effect, mining policy pronouncements indicate that future increases in lower-grade ores are expected to be achieved through productivity improvements and not by increased employment. This is likely to affect the flow of migrant workers though not to a very significant extent as labour intensive techniques are bound to dominate mining activities for a long time to come. The new mines being planned in the Orange Free State will as much as possible utilise new techniques but will also employ large numbers. Their establishment will to a large extent offset the effects of closure of old ones in terms of employment opportunities.

TABLE I

South Africa's Composition of GDP: % of share

	1987	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
BUSINESS ENTERPRISES							
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	6.6	4.7	4.9	5.8	6.2	6.4	6.0
Mining and quarrying	17.5	15.5	15.2	15.3	14.8	13.9	13.6
Manufacturing	23.6	24.3	23.9	22.6	22.7	23.0	23.7
Wholesale/retail trade catering and accommodation	10.7	11.7	12.2	11.8	11.3	11.4	11.5
Transport storage and communication	8.3	8.4	8.7	8.8	8.6	8.5	8.5
Finance, insurance, property and business services	12.3	13.5	13.6	13.9	14.1	14.4	14.1
Other	8.7	9.5	9.4	9.6	9.5	9.3	9.4
Less imputed financial services charges	2.3	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7
SUB TOTAL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES	85.8	85.0	85.1	85.0	84.4	84.2	84.1
General government	11.8	12.6	12.4	12.5	12.9	13.2	13.2
Other producers (non profit institutions and domestic servants)	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.7
GDP (factor cost)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Central Statistical Service: quoted in Financial Times Survey on South Africa, June 12, 1989 P2.

The coal industry has also been having its share of problems. In the previous report, we reviewed the effects of sanctions on coal and the changing patterns of demand for coal. Currently, export volumes of coal have slumped. The drastic cuts are due to a number of factors: current surplus of internationally traded coal, sanctions imposed on South African exports, falling prices, and the strategy followed by some consumers to diversify their sources of supply. The other serious problems in the coal industry include the high rate of inflation and frequent industrial action by trade unions. However, statistical data indicate that a very small segment of migrant labour is engaged in the coal industry and therefore its decline in volume and profitability does not affect the migrant labour system in any significant manner.

The crisis in the mining industry which should be watched closely has occured at a very crucial time when black political awakening appears to have reached a level never seen in the history of South Africa and when the black work force is increasingly getting organised and unwilling to work for less than a living wage. Although the gap between black miners' wages and white miners' wages has narrowed in relative terms, in absolute terms the differences are still very large. Below is a table of the mining rate of pay per month for all categories of black mineworkers in 1988.

TABLE II: MINIMUM RATE OF PAY PER MONTH IN RAND FOR ALL CATEGORIES OF MINE WORKERS, JULY 1988

Category	Surface Employees	Underground Employees
1	279	307
2	319	376
3	374	439
4	433	503
5	496	575
6	578	666
7	671	765
8	839	939

<u>Source</u>: GPC Circular No. 62/88 of the Chamber of Mines, South Africa.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has been struggling to improve the minimum wage for the black labour force. It has persisted that the take home pay for the lowest paid black miners be doubled. On the contrary, the management has stuck to the doctrine of no salary raises beyond the inflation rate.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN LABOUR SUPPLIER STATES

(a) Economic Conditions

In the 1987/88 report it was pointed out that Southern Africa was still engulfed in a period of recession caused by the economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The effects of the crisis have been so pervasive that economic recovery programmes adopted since 1985 have yet to make a significant impact. In the 1988/89 period, the picture is broadly the same although some improvement in economic performance has been noticed in virtually all the countries concerned. The major problems of food deficits, low productivity, fluctuating growth rates, debts, balance of payments problems, declining incomes and therefore sharp declines in the standards of living affecting the most vulnerable groups, namely, women, children and the aged continues to plague the subregion. South Africa's destabilization campaign continues to weigh heavily on the economies of Southern African States, the majority of which are both landlocked and classified as least developed.

According to the World Bank Annual Report of 1989 3/, economic development in 1988/89 has been quite favourable for Southern Africa and positive per capita income growth was realized for the subregion for the first time in a decade. Growth rates in GDP of over 4 per cent were realized in Botswana, Mozambique and Swaziland. Malawi and Lesotho realised positive growth rates of less than 4 per cent but in excess of 3.5 per cent. The Bank report attributes the positive performance to four factors: good weather, reform programmes in Mozambique, Malawi and Lesotho, donor-financed imports and terms of trade improvements.

3/ World Bank: Annual Report 1989.

Botswana

The macro-economic indicators for Botswana show a very impressive economic performance during the period under study. With a population of just over 1.2 million and a population growth rate of 3.4 per cent per annum, Botswana's economic growth rate for 1988/89 was above 8 per cent with a GDP per capita of $1,600 and foreign exchange reserves of over US$ 2.4 billion. Economic performance in Botswana has continued to hinge on the performance of one commodity - diamonds which contribute over 85 per cent to foreign exchange earnings. At the end of 1987, total external debt was at $518 million making it the least indebted country in the subregion. Besides, Botswana is one of the rare countries in Africa which does not make use of IMF credits for development purposes.

However, despite the bouancy in economic performance, Botswana remains an underdeveloped country with a weak productive base backward technology, massive unemployment with an acute shortage of qualified manpower. Unemployment is put at 25 per cent in the formal job sector and 27,000 school leavers annually compete for fewer than 20,000 jobs. 80 per cent of the 1.2 million people remain rural and engaged in cattle rearing.

Mozambique

Mozambique with nearly 15 million people has a GNP per capita of $170.00. Mozambique's economic performance has been determined by the war against the National Resistance Movement (MNR). More than a third of GDP is spent either directly or indirectly on the war efforts. However, to stimulate the ailing economy with massive structural rigidities, in 1987, the Government embarked on the Economic Rehabilitation Programme (ERP) which entailed the adoption of bold reform measures.

The national currency, the metical, which at the beginning of 1987 exchanged at MT40 per dollar has been devalued several times and is now (fourth quarter 1989) exchanged at MT809.02 per dollar having undergone a devaluation of 2022.55 per cent. This has entailed a number of steep prices for virtually all goods and services. Although new wage scales have been

introduced, they in no way compensate for the steep price rises and a decline in earnings and therefore in standard of living. Cost of medicines, school books, and food had risen so fast that the low income groups in the urban areas needed subsidies in order to survive. But the new economic policy initiatives have raised GDP by between 4.0 and 4.6 per cent during the past year as more investments arrive to boost the economy.

Malawi

In Malawi, GDP at constant factor cost grew by 3.6 per cent in 1988 compared to a growth rate of 1.4 per cent in 1987. This was only 0.1 percentage point below the estimated population growth rate of 3.7 per cent. The agricultural sector, particularly estate agriculture was the main sector contributing to this growth rate due to good climatic conditions. Malawi with a population of nearly 8 million the highest densely population country in the subregion continued to have a per capita income of only US$160.00.

Landlocked and with her economic routes to the sea shattered by the war in Mozambique, Malawi continued to spend over 33 per cent of her foreign exchange on routing 90 per cent of imports and exports through the longer and therefore expensive routes via South Africa. By 1987, Malawi's external debt was at $1.36 4/ billion. Increased capital inflows mainly from the Structural Adjustment Loan Supplement, the Industrial and Trade Policy Adjustment Credit and related co-financing through the World Bank propped up the debt burden. Prices of clothing, food, housing and transportation rose by 35.2 per cent, 32.9 per cent, 34.6 per cent and 30.3 per cent respectively. Inflation was at 31.5 per cent. However, inflationary pressures had started abating by 1989 and is expected to stabilize at below 20 per cent by the end of 1989 5/.

Lesotho

Lesotho, with a population of 1.66 million growing at 2.6 per cent per annum has a GNP per capita of $370. It is a country with limited options with severe constraints as it is completely surrounded by South Africa and more than half of its labour force is in South Africa. Remittances from these migrant workers provide the economy with vital source of foreign exchange.

4/ World Development Report: 1989 p. 204.

5/ Malawi Government Economic R[illegible]

In 1988, such remittances accounted for M714 million or US$260.5 million representing a sizeable difference between GNP and GDP and therefore plugged an enormous current account deficit estimated at $4,348.2 million.

This country and Botswana and Swaziland are members of the Common Monetary Area within the Customs Union with South Africa. The currencies of Lesotho and Swaziland are pegged to the South African Rand and more than 95 per cent of Basotho imports come from South Africa. These countries are therefore extremely sensitive to the fluctuations and upheavals of the South African economy as it faces international pressures of trade sanctions and disinvestment and the depreciation of the rand with its concomittant consequences on external debt repayments.

The Lesotho economy has had good prospects in the past year. The Highlands Water Project has attracted considerable investment, a number of South African industries have relocated in Lesotho and the country has experienced a boom in the textile and manufacturing industry. This has assisted in the creation of hundreds of new jobs. But the over 165,000 official migrant workers in South Africa and tens of thousands illegal migrants in South Africa require that Lesotho trades a cautious approach in its relations with South Africa.

Swaziland

Swaziland with a population of 712,000 (1987) and with a GNP per capita of $700 has economic features which are similar to Lesotho. But Swaziland has a more bouyant and diversified economy than that of Lesotho. In addition, the degree of Swazi dependence on South Africa is to some extent less than that of Lesotho. In 1988 GDP expanded by almost 8.0 per cent. In general, since 1987/88, economic activity has been on the upswing with a big surge in the manufacturing industry. However, it was reported in the third quarter of 1989 that a number of companies which had flocked to Swaziland to flee trade sanctions in South Africa were disinvesting in Swaziland to return to South Africa. This has harmed the employment opportunities. Swaziland has a migrant population in South Africa of around 17,000.

The economies of labour supplier States have shown some improvements but could have done even better if it were not for the destabilization programme of South Africa which in 1988 alone cost Mozambique US$3,000 million, Malawi

US$550 million, Botswana US$125 million, Lesotho US$50 million and Swaziland US$30 million in lost revenue. (c.f. South African Destabilization: The Cost of Frontline Resistance to Apartheid, 14 October, 1989).

The population Dimension in Labour supplier States

In our previous report we showed a very disturbing population trend among SALC States. While population was growing at almost 3.0 per cent per annum, GNP per capita was declining for virtually all the countries except Botswana. This trend has been overcome in the past year as economic growth picked up. However, when inflation is taken into account a negative picture re-emerges for virtually all SALC States as savings are eroded and standards of living decline.

In January 1989, SALC member States adopted a resolution calling on all to adopt population policies and to integrate population variables into their development plans. It is clear that this resolution is interpreted differently by different countries. It is however, important to note that the effects of population changes on socio-economic variables must be clearly followed and discerned because population does affect socio-economic variables in a number of ways. Increases in the size of population will have a direct bearing on per capita income and inversely a reduction of population from high to low or moderate levels will entail a fater growth per capita income. This would lead to higher savings for various categories of the population as well as engineer additional assets. Asset formation and capital formation, a process by which additions to the nations stock of physical capital are made is only possible under regulated population. The significance of the demographic dimension for the current recession and future development of the subregion lies in the rate of growth and patterns of distribution of population relative to the present levels of development resources, technological know-how and productivity.

According to "World Population Trends and Policies: 1987 Monitoring Report", the Subregion's child population, that is children aged 0 - 14 years constitutes 45 per cent of total population and the elderly, those aged over 55 years and over constitute 4.8 per cent. This trend implies a very high age dependency ratio of nearly 90 per cent. The consequences of this syndrome are serious

in terms of provision of social anemities such as educational and health. This profile has negative implications on employment for the labour force expands faster than the provision of employment thereby causing unemployment and underemployment. Labour displacement or migration from rural areas results into over-crowded cities and towns with over-burdened social amenities and depressed labour markets. Rural areas have been left with the young, aged and over worked women to maintain the food production system.

Employment and Unemployment

As pointed out in the introductory section, data on employment and unemployment are fragmentary and subject to variations. And what data are available are not sufficiently disaggregated to unmask the qualitative dimensions and scope of the variables as they affect the various socio-economic groups. ILO/SATEP (1988) provides some ample information on employment in Southern Africa.

There is no doubt that all SALC countries recognize employment creation as the central theme in their deliberations. Even discussions on migrant workers are a function the fact that SALC supplier States are left with very limited options in terms of employment creation. During 1988/89, labour market trends were characterised by a mixture of positive and negative features. On the positive side, in Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho, the recovery of employment gained momentum 6/. Manufacturing and construction were the two biggest contributing sectors to the generation of employment. Unfortunately in Malawi, the number of paid employees decreased by 4.78 per cent from 427,834 to 407,393. The situation was even more critical for civil service manpower. Manpower shortages in professional and technical fields are abound in all countries, but particularly in Botswana where semi-technicians often come from neighbouring countries 7/. In those countries with Structural Adjustment Programmes, particularly in Mozambique, currency devaluations have entailed a sharp drop in real wages. The real value of the monthly salary of a medical doctor, a university professor or an engineer has been equivalent to between US 60 dollars and US 90 dollars in certain cases. Naturally this has eroded the morale, motivation and efficiency with the consequence of intensifying migration.

6/ Official National Labour Statistics and government officials

In the 1960s and 1970s governments were the biggest employers. The growth rates of public sector employment which were so high did not correspond with the expansion in the demand for government services. The 1980s have therefore witnessed a rise in the labour force while governments have been exercising strict control on recruitment coupled with retrenchments, thereby leaving thousands unemployed.

Programmes to create massive employment have not succeeded. Since changes in the population of working age are significant factors in the growth of the labour supply, a decline in labour force growth resulting say, from small increases in the population of working age could reduce the scale of unemployment. Unfortunately as already pointed out, the growth of population of working age has been accelerating strongly thereby worsening the employment problem. It is recommended therefore that while governments might genuinely seek ways of creating employment, programmes and measures which delay the labour market entry of young workers or hasten the exit of older ones are useful. For instance, increases in the statutory school leaving age and expansion of higher education facilities as well as labour market training could alleviate the unemployment problem. During the recent years, a number of countries have introduced early retirement measures as a means of relieving pressures on the labour market. Unfortunately since the average life expectancy in Southern Africa is 53 years, this measure would only yield some results if retirement age was between 40 and 45 years. But again that is the prime age for making a professional contribution. This would also burden the State with prolonged retirement benefits which could have been expended on employment creation.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the economic and social conditions in Southern Africa are adverse for the meaningful absorption of a large army of the unemployed. This situation therefore encourages thousands of men to seek employment in South Africa. The economic and social conditions are exarcerbated by the destabilization campaign by South Africa. The cost of destabilisation to Southern Africa has recently been ably analysed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1988). The ECA report released on 14 October 1989, states that South Africas destabilisation of its neighbours cost the region US$10 billion in 1988 alone and over US$60 billion and 1.5 million lives in the first nine years of this decade.

Flow of Migrant Workers to South Africa

(a) Official Migration

The migration of workers from labour supplier States of Southern Africa to South Africa has been going on for the past century and has become a central characteristic feature of the economies of Southern Africa. The exact number of migrants is not quite known for there are official or legal migrant workers and undocumented or illegal migrant workers. Table III below gives a territorial analysis of the average number of mine employees on gold mines, members of the Chamber of Mines of South Africa from 1978 up to 1987 and 1989 for some.

The number of migrant workers in 1987 had remained basically at the 1978 levels. But during the same period, the total number of miners increased from 388794 to 476127 and the share of South Africa miners increased from 52.48 per cent to 57.42 per cent reflecting the growing need to engage the many unemployed South Africans. This trend is likely to continue unabated and in view of the current economic and socio-political conditions and factors in South Africa which we analysed in the second section of this paper, the demand for foreign migrant workers might decelerate somewhat.

Lesotho which has over 165,000 migrant workers on the mines will continue to be hard pressed to maintain and even increase her share of workers in South Africa because of her limited options to diversity its economy. Mozambique with a large portion of the unemployed and with around 50,000 migrant workers at the mines is another country that has been seeking an increase in the share of migrant workers. She too has limited options in increasing employment because of the war. In fact, the Ministry of Labour in Mozambique confirms that over 18,000 Mozambicans are already working in the German Democratic Republic. As reported by government officials in January 1989, Malawi took a bold step and decided to phase out its migrant workers in South Africa. All migrant workers whose contracts have expired have been returning to Malawi. Accordingly, the number of migrant workers in the mines has been reduced from 19,621 in 1985 to 2,439 in June 1989 and was expected to phase out before the end of 1989. The flow of Botswana migrants has been steady and stand at about 18,000 while Swaziland has been increasing its share which had moved from 8,000 in 1978 to 16,000 in 1987.

TABLE III: GOLD MINES: Territorial Analysis of the Average Number of Mine Employees on Gold Mines, Members of the Chamber of Mines

Country of Origin	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	198
South Africa (All Provinces)	204048	215577	233088	240086	239065	245718	253548	256222	266150	273402	–	–
Lesotho	91278	94379	96309	98228	95731	96409	95675	97639	103742	105506	–	–
Botswana	17647	17645	17763	17539	16659	17225	17257	18079	19106	17939	–	–
Swaziland	8269	7976	8090	8872	9294	10624	10833	12365	14239	15743	– (May)	174
Mozambique	35234	38995	39539	40094	42544	42473	44195	50126	56237	45917	45511*(May)	480
Malawi	17910	15033	13569	12937	13565	14287	15120	16849	17923	17620	8005*(June)	24
Zimbabwe	11984	7643	5770	2968	112	1	2	–	–	–	–	–
Other Areas	2154	1875	1409	1337	1217	1266	219	5	1	–	–	–
TOTAL	388794	399128	415537	422057	418187	428003	436849	451285	477398	476127		
South Africans as percentage												
Total	52.48%	54.01%	56.09%	56.88%	57.17%	57.41%	58.04%	56.78%	55.75%	57.42%		

Source: Chamber of Mines of South Africa, 1987 Annual Report.

* Statistics provided by National Government Supplying Migrants.

(b) Undocumented migrants

There are thousands of illegal migrant workers in South Africa. This type of migrant workers mainly come from Lesotho and Mozambique and work mainly in the agricultural sector. Mozambican officials estimate the number of illegal migrants to be between 30,000 and 100,000 which is almost double the official number. This type of workers often suffer from a number of handicaps. They generally receive lower wages than workers in a legal situation. They have no social security coverage and cannot be protected by legal recourse or even trade unions in the event of claims relating to their work because they are working in South Africa in breach of the law. Generally this category of migrant workers are engaged in unhealthy and dangerous occupations. In view of the illegal insecurity and the inherent danger ascribed to it, SALC labour supplier States might wish to address this question and adopt a common posture.

The second category of undocumented migrant workers are those who have entered South Africa legally in search of employment. These are made up of high level technical, scientific and managerial staff. They may have been pushed out of their countries because of social, economic or political reasons. This type of migration is often referred to as the brain drain and has affected virtually all SALC States to varying degrees. In terms of opportunity costs, SALC member States are loosing millions of dollars because SALC countries had invested vast financial resources to educate and train such experts. SALC States are in turn required to hire expatriates from Europe at even higher costs to replace their own nationals. The actual numbers in the brain drain is unclear but Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana government officials contend that this development is on the increase in these countries and is causing concern. In the circumstances, SALC member States might wish to address the issue in a co-ordinated manner to stem the outflow of scarce human resources of the subregion. If one were to have the approximate number of such experts who have gone to South Africa, it would have been possible to determine the cost of destabilisation for 1988 and add on to the US$10 billion loss estimated by the UNECA. Unfortunately, while this category of migrant workers often migrate with their families, the others category do not. Women and children are left behind.

Women and Children left behind in the countries of origin

During the past century, thousands of migrant workers have gone to work in South Africa leaving their families behind. Reasons for women and children to be left in the countries of origin may be looked at from two perspectives. First, they are not allowed to join the men in South Africa. But even if the women were allowed to join their husbands, they would not be allowed to work there. Furthermore, the contractual agreements signed between the South African government and the supplier States (during the colonial period and after) do not make the economic and social position of the migrant in a comfortable position to bring in the family. The situation would now have been changed by the adoption of the Model Migration Agreement by SALC States if it were negotiated and agreed upon by the South Africans and the labour supplier States. Worse still, for the labour supplier countries, contracts range between six and eighteen months. Besides, the simple dormitory accommodation would not permit family livelihood. Women and children are therefore forced by circumstances to remain in the countries of origin.

No empirical study has been done for the subregion to determine how the departure of male members of the family for South Africa has affected the social family organisation. But it is clear that long separation would affect the traditional patterns of organisation including division of labour as well as the parental roles and the economic position of women left behind. In Lesotho where a large proportion of working age men has migrated, the women who remain behind find themselves in deteriorating economic circumstances and become increasingly dependent on the income being remitted from the migrant workers. Because the economic base of the economies of the supplier States has been eroded due to recession, for women to maintain children, they need constant replenishments of financial remittances from South Africa. Yves Cherbitt (1977) has done studies on other subregions of children of migrant workers left in the countries of origin.

It is contended that children left behind suffer from such disorders as poor school performance, backwardness, unruliness, absenteeism, lack of attention and difficult relationships with teachers and other pupils. Some children also suffer from poor social adjustment, weakness of character and a feeling of isolation and emotional solitude. The education of children has suffered in households of migrant workers because of lack of paternal supervision.

Worse still, the divorce of parents owing to emigration of the man will have even more drastic consequences on children. There can be no question about the fact that the absence of a man puts strains on marriages. Marital dissolution and infidelity are often talked about but there is no hard evidence to substantiate the fact that the marriage system in Southern Africa has suffered as a result of migration. The extended family system seems to have played a mitigating role. On the reverse, could we allude that migration may have consolidated the extended family institution? These questions require emperical studies. However, what cannot be denied is the fact that since emigration mainly affects young man of between the ages of eighteen and thirty five, their separation from their spouses has negative emotional and psychological impact on the wives. These wives and children, often in rural areas are over worked and live in poverty. They must depend on remittances.

(c) <u>Remittances and deferred payments</u>

Remittances by migrant workers constitute an important inflow of resources and a significant source of foreign exchange. Most of the remittances are channelled through official avenues but small amounts are remitted unofficially and are therefore not recorded. The table IV below demonstrates the value of remittances and deferred payments for Lesotho with the highest number of migrant workers. But Mozambique which has some 50,000 migrant workers in South Africa and some 18,000 migrant workers in the German Democratic Republic receives more remittances from GDR than from South Africa because of better pay in Europe.

TABLE IV: Lesotho Mine Migrant Workers Deferred Payments and Remittance Payments January to December, 1988

MONTH	DEFERRED PAYMENTS (MALUTI)	REMITTANCE PAYMENTS (MALUTI)
January	15,428,682.30	10,800,820.80
February	17,063,368.70	10,477,263.40
March	16,709,931.29	11,951,253.20
April	14,700,721.67	11,340,686.75
May	14,710,703.37	13,025,864.18
June	15,585,873.68	13,443,916.21
July	15,407,972.58	12,303,717.46
August	17,424,993.83	12,525,398.12
September	20,734,211.03	13,013,476.17
October	24,033,846.58	17,213,339.79
November	20,265,814.49	18,290,187.85
December	18,571,745.50	22,004,804.07
TOTAL	210,571,745.85	166,390,727.70

Note: 1 Luti = 1 Rand

Source: Labour Department 1989, Lesotho.

For Mozambique, the average monthly remittances amount to over R8 million.

Very little if any of the remittances are spent on productive investments in physical assets. In virtually all the SALC States with migrant workers, remittances have not gone into viable projects. Most officials attribute this to the dearth of viable investment opportunities in rural areas. Supplier States could establish programmes to channel remittances to productive uses such as industrial projects, housing schemes, co-operative ventures, wage earners development bonds and many others rather than spend it on consumption.

Conclusions

It is clear that the prevailing economic and social conditions in South Africa militate against the expansion of the recruitment of migrant labour from its neighbours. The scenario for the next five years is that this trend will persist and thereafter the devolution of political developments in that country will determine whether a drastic curtailment of migrant labour will ensue or some semblance of an uneasy stability of the migration system will persist.

In either case the need for policies and programmes for the return and re-integration of migrants has been recognized by SALC sending States. Unfortunately currently the very SALC States are hamstrung with massive unemployment in their own countries and because of deflationary budgets, cannot expand employment through new productive investments. It is therefore cardinal that while migrant workers continue to perform their roles in South Africa, their working conditions should continue to improve. The Model Labour Migration Agreement designed by the Commission is an important instrument in enhancing the improvement of the working conditions of migrant workers. It is therefore important that all SALC supplier countries should finalize negotiations with South Africa for the benefit of their nationals in particular and the working class at the mines in general. The elaboration by the UN General Assembly of an International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families pursuant to General Assembly resolution 34/172 is a positive development (see annex I). The placement of safety and health by trade unions as a collective bargaining issue should be intensified with a view to reducing accidents at the mines.

From the standpoint of sending countries, if measures designed to absorb returning migrant workers economically and socially are to be fruitful, they should be conceived as broader local or subregional development programmes and should include provision for the promotion of employment for both returnees as well as for the general job seeker. Such programmes should also envisage the productive use of migrants' remittances and savings. In other words economic and social reintegration of migrants should be viewed as an integral part of the migratory policy of supplier State aimed at accelerating the

development of the underdeveloped rural areas and thus eliminating one the main causes for the migration of the population. However, since the State has performed poorly as a generator of employment, increasing and serious consideration should now be geared towards encouraging the entrepreneur as the engine of employment generation in Southern Africa.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Forty-third Session

Resolution

43/146 Measures to improve the situation and ensure the human rights and dignity of all migrant workers

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming once more the permanent validity of the principles and standards set forth in the basic instruments regarding the international protection of human rights, in particular in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1/ the International Convenants on Human Rights, 2/the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 3/ and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 4/

Bearing in mind the principles and standards established within the framework of the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the importance of the task carried out in connection with migrant workers and their familes in other specialized agencies and in various organs of the United Nations,

Reiterating that, in spite of the existence of an already established body of principles and standards, there is a need to make further efforts to improve the situation and ensure the human rights and dignity of all migrant workers and their families,

Recalling its resolution 34/172 of 17 December 1979, in which it decided to establish a working group open to all member States to elaborate an international convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and their families,

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1/ Resolution 217 A(III)

2/ See Resolution 2200 A(XXI), annex

3/ Resolution 2106 A(XX), annex

4/ Resolution 34/180, annex

Resolution 43/146

Recalling also its resolution 35/198 of 15 December 1980, 36/160 of 16 December 1981, 37/170 of 17 December 1982, 38/86 of 16 December 1983, 39/102 of 14 December 1984, 40/130 of 13 December 1985, 41.151 of 4 December 1986 and 42/140 of 7 December 1987, in which it renewed the mandate of the Working Group on the Drafting of an International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families and requested it to continue its work,

Having examined the progress made by the Working Group at its Seventh inter-sessional meeting, held from 1 to 10 June, 1988, and at the current session of the General Assembly, from 27 September to 7 October 1988, during which the Group continued with the second reading of the draft convention,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the two most recent reports of the Working Group on the Drafting of an International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families 5/ and, in particular, of the progress made by the Working Group on the drafting, in second reading, of the draft convention;

2. Decides that, in order to enable it to complete its task as soon as possible, the Working Group shall again hold an inter-sessional meeting of two weeks' durations in New York, immediately after the first regular session of 1989 of the Economic and Social Council;

3. Invites the Secretary-General to transmit to Governments the two most recent reports of the Working Group so as to enable the members of the Group to continue the drafting, in second reading, of the draft convention during the inter-sessional meeting to be held in the spring of 1989, as well as to transmit the results obtained at that meeting to the General Assembly for consideration during its forty-fourth session;

5/ A/C.3/43/1 and A/C.3/43/7

Resolution 43/146

4. Also invites the Secretary-General to transmit the above-mentioned documents to the competent organs of the United Nations and to the international organisations concerned, for their information, so as to enable them to continue their co-operation with the Working Group;

5. Decides that the Working Group shall meet during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, preferably at the beginning of the session, to conclude, if possible, the second reading of the draft international convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and their families;

6. Request the Secretary-General to do everything possible to ensure adequate Secretariat services for the Working Group for the timely fulfilment of its mandate, both at its inter-sessional meeting to be held after the first regular session of 1989 of the Economic and Social Council and during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.