

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: CRUCIAL CHALLENGES**

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**Abstract.** In current research, we consider socio-economic development of Africa. In particular, we focused on current demographic development in Africa, the consequences of demographic changes on the continent, urbanization problems and the effects of migration on population dynamics. Our research has identified the following problems of socio-economic development of Africa. Currently, Africa is facing the highest urbanization rates in the world, however it remains the least urbanized continent. In the long term, an aging population in Africa is projected to deal with chronic physical and mental disabilities that will put pressure on health care and pension funds in the future. Fertility levels are gradually declining in many African countries, the rapid growth of the cities and the faster emigration from rural areas will be one of the most important issues of development over the next decades. Among current problems of socio-economic development of Africa is also international migration. The main drivers of international migration on the continent are unstable political situation and climate change. Integrated and interconnected environmental changes, such as droughts and floods, and over-exploitation of resources, are factors contributing to internal and international migration in the region. Changes in the age structure and entry into a new stage of the demographic transition indicate an increase in the number of labor force and an improvement in per capita income. Given the right combination of investment and development programs, the influence of a changing age structure with a falling demographic burden will contribute to the economic growth and development of African countries.

**Keywords:** socio-economic development, fertility rate, urbanization, migration, economic growth

**JEL:** J11, J13, J16, O1

### **1. Introduction**

In 2018, the world's population reached about 7.6 billion people. According to the United Nations report, the world's population is expected to reach around 8.6 billion in 2030 and 9.8 billion in 2050 (United Nations. Economic & Social Affairs, 2017). With an annual addition of approximately 83 million people to the world population, the population growth trend will

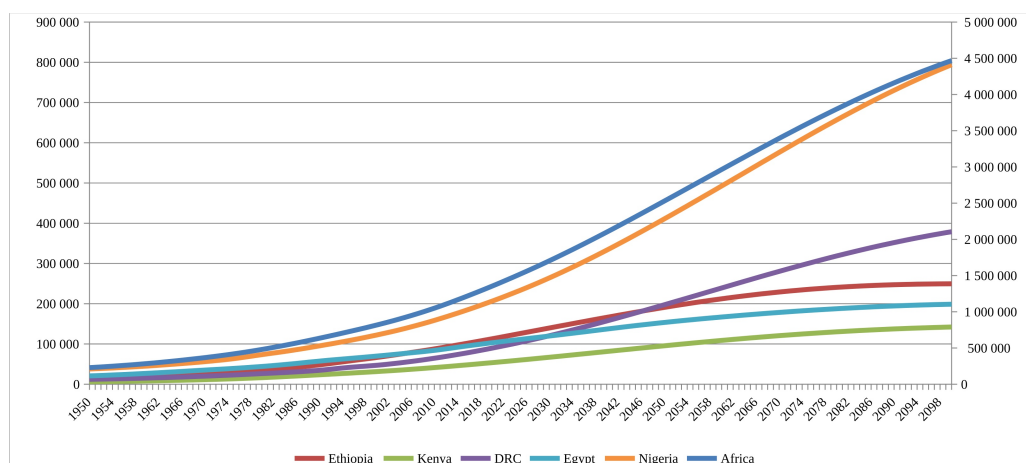
continue despite the declining fertility rate. The main portion of the growing population is located in developing regions, with the African continent accounting for about 36% of the annual world population growth (Binns, Lynch, & Nel, 2018). The region of tropical Africa is the most growing in terms of population, where annual growth was 2.7% in 2017 compared with the world average of 1.2%. It should be noted that the problem of the world population growth and extremely rapid population growth in Africa is not just a problem of numbers. This is a problem of the well-being and development of people, since rapid population growth can have serious consequences for the well-being of each inhabitant of the regions. In terms of population, the fastest growing countries in the world are the countries of Tropical Africa. Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Tanzania have a population growth rate of over 3% per year. With today's population growth rates, continent countries such as Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Uganda are expected to double their population over the next 20 years. Based on these prospects, modern demographic trends and the changes in the dynamics of the population complicate the task of eliminating the socio-economic problems of providing livelihoods. It should also be noted that these conditions are compounded by the lack of effective social security programs in most African countries (Assan, 2014). In current research, we consider socio-economic development of Africa. In particular, we focused on current demographic development in Africa, the consequences of demographic changes on the continent, urbanization problems and the effects of migration on population dynamics.

## **2. Current demographic development in Africa**

The current demographic situation in African countries is very controversial, since on the one hand, there are positive changes, and on the other, the conditions for population growth remain largely unfavorable. Natural movement mostly determines the growth dynamics of the continent's population. The countries with the largest population are Nigeria, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Tanzania, Kenya (Figure 1). The population density in Africa is uneven, ranging from 9 to 300 or more people per km<sup>2</sup>. The highest population density is in Egypt, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. The average population density of the continent is low and is about 22 people on 1 km<sup>2</sup>. The highest population density is in Mauritius – about 500 people per 1 km<sup>2</sup> and the lowest is in the Sahara and countries of the Sahel region. A significant concentration of the population remains in the areas of developed agriculture (the Nile River Valley,

the Maghreb, Nigeria) or industrial activity (the “copper belt” in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, industrial areas of South Africa). Comoros, Seychelles and Sao Tome and Principe are also highly populated countries on the continent. On the mainland of the continent, the countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Nigeria, Gambia, Uganda and Malawi also have a high population density.

**Figure 1:** Population Dynamics in Africa: current trends and projections



*Note: the left vertical axis shows the population of selected African countries; the right vertical axis shows the population of the whole continent.*

*Source: United Nations. Economic & Social Affairs (2017)*

Currently, the urban population is estimated at 40%, compared with 27% in 1980 (World Bank, 2018b). Despite the high growth rates and the fact that Africa is the region with the highest urbanization rates in the world, it nevertheless remains the least urbanized continent. The most urbanized countries of the continent are Gabon, Libya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Djibouti. The average urban population growth rate is 3.7% and according the projections it is expected to be 2.6% in 2025-2050. Africa's urban population is expected to increase by another 867 million over the next 35 years. By 2050, Africa will be predominantly urbanized, with 56% of the population living in urban areas (“Selected Results of the 2019 UN World Population Projections,” 2019).

Over the past 30 years, the average total fertility rate in all regions of Africa has fallen by about half. According to UN forecasts, this trend will continue. It is estimated that the current fertility rate is 4.7 children per woman. The rate and extent of the decline in the fertility rate vary significantly across the continent. Africa has made significant strides in reducing infant mortality, although much remains to be done. During 1980-1985 more than half of all

African countries recorded more than 100 deaths among newborns per 1000 live births. However, during 2010-2015 this figure fell to less than 100 in all African countries. Angola (96), Chad (96) and Sierra Leone (94) currently have the highest infant mortality rates on the continent. The countries with the highest death rates among children under the age of five are South Sudan, Mali, Sierra Leone, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Chad, Somalia, Nigeria, Burundi and the Central African Republic (United Nations, 2016).

Life expectancy in Africa as a whole has improved significantly. If during 1980-1985 life expectancy was on average 50 years, during 2010-2015 this figure rose to 60 years. Improvement is expected to continue and reach 70 years by 2050. Life expectancy increase was achieved mainly through improved health, education and better nutritional conditions. Improvement of access to food was also achieved through reduction in malnutrition in tropical Africa from 27% in 2000 to 20% in 2014 estimated as a share of the region's total population (World Bank, 2019c). Substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals program. Eritrea, Ethiopia, Algeria, Morocco and Niger have achieved the greatest gains in increase in life expectancy during 1980-2015. Countries with a net decrease in life expectancy, mainly caused by HIV and AIDS epidemic, are Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa (Kharsany & Karim, 2016).

Africa is characterized by the young age structure, in which approximately 40% of the population is between the ages of 0 and 14 (Table 1) and almost one fifth (19%) is between the ages of 15 and 24. Children aged 0-14 made up almost 45% of the African population in 1980, although this figure fell to 41% by 2018. The active population of working age (25-64 years) grew faster than the population of other age groups – from 123.7 million (33.3%) in 1980 to 425.7 million (36.2%) in 2015. The elderly population (65 years and older) also increased from almost 15 million in 1980 to more than 40 million in 2015. However, although the elderly population still makes up the smallest share of the total population (3.1% in 1980 and 3% in 2018), it is expected that by 2050 its share will reach 6% (United Nations, 2016). With a slowdown in the fertility rate in Africa, the age structure of the population is changing and, accordingly, the demographic burden is decreasing slowly. The demographic burden coefficient decreased from 0.85 in 2001 to 0.79 in 2018, although this indicator differs markedly depending on the geographic region of the continent (Table 1). The so-called age-gender pyramids also differ depending on the African region. While the regions of East Africa, West Africa and Central Africa reflect the general African pyramid of the population with a large proportion of the minor population, the age-gender pyramids for the regions of North and

South Africa show a different population structure. In these two regions, there is also a general downward trend in the total fertility rate (African Union, 2015).

**Table 1:** Age distribution of the population of Africa, %

	2001				2018			
	<15	15-64	>65	Demographic burden	<15	15-64	>65	Demographic burden
North Africa	37	59	4	0,69	32	63	5	0,59
West Africa	45	52	3	0,92	44	53	3	0,89
East Africa	45	52	3	0,92	43	54	3	0,85
CentralAfrica	47	50	3	1,00	46	51	3	0,96
South Africa	35	60	5	0,67	30	65	5	0,54
Africa	43	54	3	0,85	41	56	3	0,79
World	30	63	7	0,59	26	65	9	0,54

Source: Population Reference Bureau (2019)

As shown in Table 1, changes in the age structure occur within the regions. In the context of changing age structure, in the long term, an aging population will have to deal with chronic physical and mental disabilities that will put pressure on health care and pension funds in the future. Despite this, African average health spending is low, and health systems are weak and ineffective in addressing new challenges. In addition, the lack of social safety nets for an aging population requires the development of policies to address this problem in most African countries. African countries in the future will need the current young potential through investments in education, health and job creation to provide social support to the current working population in old age. Such investments will also be the basis for sustainable economic growth and development of Africa (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2018).

### 3. The consequences of demographic changes in Africa

Population growth and demographic changes will have social and economic consequences for African countries. As some African countries, especially in the south of the continent, move along separate stages of the demographic transition, it is expected that the demographic burden of the younger generation (<15 years) will decrease and the proportion of the working-age population will increase. Changes in the age structure and entry into a new stage of the demographic transition indicate an increase in the number of labor force and an improvement in per capita income. Given the right combination of investment and development programs, the influence of a changing age structure with a falling demographic burden will contribute to the economic growth and development of African countries. Economists M. Todaro

and S. Smith, in this context, mention that the growth of the working-age population in relation to other groups is an important “window” of opportunities for earning income and increasing productivity. The so-called demographic dividend is a period during which people need to take care of a smaller number of the younger generation, when most of the women remain the part of the workforce for longer periods and more resources for investing in human capital are available. Since adolescents make up a large part of the African population, investing in the younger generation (especially in the education and health of women) will help to achieve the mentioned demographic dividend. To achieve maximum effect, it is also important to take into account the particular vulnerability that adolescent girls face in Africa. Young age structure, combined with disabilities for young people, especially women, has been and continues to be a source of economic and social problems of inequality and poverty (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2018).

A precursor to the demographic dividend is the declining fertility rate, which is typical for most regions of the African continent. A lower fertility rate implies a larger share of productive employment than the share of the economically and socially dependent population, which represents a demographic burden. Consequently, for each child, a large share of the disposable income that can be invested is provided. With increased investment in the younger generation, for example, in health care or nutrition, mortality rates also decrease, which contributes to the demographic dividend. The total fertility rate in Africa has been steadily declining over the past two decades. At the beginning of the new millennium, total fertility rate was 5.2 children per woman, while in 2018 this indicator was already 4.6 (World Bank, 2019a). Despite these reductions, compared with other regions of the world, African countries still show a relatively high fertility rate. High fertility rates in Africa are mainly the result of early marriage for women, unmet need for family planning and low incomes. The proportion of married girls under 18 reaches 38% in the region of East and South Africa and 46% in West and Central Africa (UNICEF, 2019). Although the overall fertility picture shows a steady decline, the change in fertility in the regions was not uniform. Over the past twenty years, total fertility rate in North Africa has practically not changed. In 2001 fertility rate was 3.6 children per woman, while in 2018 this ratio was 3.3. Changes in Central Africa ceased to decline by rate of 6 children per woman. The lowest fertility rate is in South Africa, where the fertility rate in 2018 was 2.5. The highest fertility in the world is represented precisely by the countries of East, Central and West Africa. In the Republic of Niger, the total fertility rate is the largest in the world and represents 7.2 children per woman. The list of the countries with the highest fertility also includes Somalia (6.3),

Democratic Republic of Congo (6.1), Mali (6.1), Chad (5.9) and Burundi, where total fertility rate is 5.7 children per woman (World Bank, 2019a) (Table 2).

**Table 2: Demographic Indicators in Africa, 2016**

	GNI per capita, PPP	Fertility (per 1000)	Mortality (per1000)	Mortality <5 years (per 1000 births)	Life expectancy	Average fertility rate (births per 1 woman)
Tropical Africa	3 387,5	36,3	9,2	78,3	60,4	4,8
Burundi	721,2	42,2	10,8	63,9	57,5	5,7
Niger	897,5	48,1	9,7	88,7	60,1	7,2
Nigeria	5 325,6	38,9	12,5	103,8	53,4	5,5
DR Congo	791,9	42,3	9,9	94,4	59,6	6,1
Chad	1 849,7	43,3	13,0	126,9	52,9	5,9
Mali	1 901,2	42,6	10,3	109,6	58,0	6,1
South Africa	11 948,1	21,0	9,8	38,5	62,8	2,5
Morocco	7 148,5	20,0	5,1	24,3	75,8	2,5
World	15 072,5	18,9	7,6	40,5	72,0	2,4

Source: World Bank (2016)

As noted above, Africa has a high fertility rate. Due to the improvement of socio-economic conditions, a certain increase in the level of culture and education, mortality, especially for children, decreased. Decreasing mortality and high birth rates in most countries give high rates of population growth. However, mortality rates in selected regions of Africa are still high. Mortality in Africa has declined from 14 deaths per 1,000 people in 2001 to 9 in 2018. Despite these reductions, mortality rates vary by region. For example, mortality in Central Africa is constantly higher than the average for the continent and in 2018 amounted to 10 people per 1000 inhabitants (in 2001 this figure was 16 deaths). In the North African region alone, mortality was lower than the average for Africa (6 deaths per 1000 inhabitants). Infant mortality has halved over the period 1995-2017, from 101 to 51 deaths per 1000 live births (World Bank, 2019b). With a reduction in mortality in Africa, life expectancy is expected to rise to 64 years in 2030 and, consequently, an aging population (Rabobank, 2015).

#### 4. Urbanization in Africa

In contrast to the global distribution of the population between rural regions and the city in favor of the second (in 2016, about 4 and 3.4 billion residents respectively lived in the city and in the village), rural population still dominates in tropical Africa, representing 60% of the total population of the region (Nkalu, Edeme, Nchege, & Arazu, 2019). However, the rapid growth of



urban population in the region should be noted. Over the past decades, Tropical Africa has shown the fastest growing urban population in the world – about 4.6% annually since the 90s of the last century. The United Nations predicts that the urban population of Africa will grow from 591 million in 2015 to 1.4 billion by 2050. Thus, Africa is in line with global trends in the rapid process of urbanization, which is closely linked to the rapid economic growth and structural transformation of developing countries in Africa. However, urbanization brings with it the problems of rural development, where the number of working-age people is declining rapidly. Big cities with the populations of more than 10 million will play an increasingly important role in the economic future of the world. Among twenty six such cities, three are located in Africa – Cairo in Egypt, Lagos in Nigeria and Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Johannesburg in South Africa, Luanda in Angola and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania by 2030 should be added to the list of the cities of the continent with a population of more than 10 million (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, & Population Division, 2019).

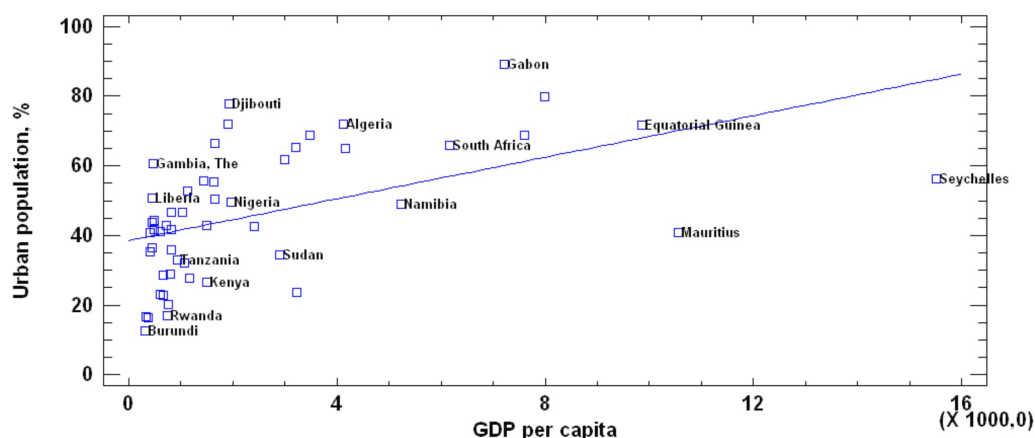
The measure of urbanization varies across the countries of Africa. For example, Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso are still predominantly rural, and in Gabon and Western Sahara, more than 80% of the population lives in urban areas. Urban growth, which reflects significant migratory flows from the rural areas, poses serious challenges to economic development, as internal migrants need access to land, infrastructure, health, education, and basic public services. Return migration is unlikely as more people from rural areas travel to urban centers, making urban poverty a permanent feature of most African countries. Typically, countries in the North and West African region are more urbanized than countries in the East African region. The leading countries include Gabon, where about 90% of the population lives in urban areas (Figure 2). The least urbanized countries are Kenya, Chad, Niger, Ethiopia, Malawi. The East African state of Burundi is urbanized by only 12%. East Africa is the least urbanized region, while the most urbanized region is North Africa (Güneralp, Lwasa, Masundire, Parnell, & Seto, 2017).

Urbanization is closely linked to economic growth and development. Countries with high per capita incomes have a large percentage of residents living in cities. A similar principle can be observed on the African continent (Figure 2). With the process of industrialization, there is an increasing need for urban labor that services the industrial sector and the services sector in cities, so urbanization has a direct proportional relationship with structural changes in the economy and economic development. However, this logical pattern is not always confirmed, and in some African countries, such as the Central African



Republic, urbanization occurs despite a negative increase in income per inhabitant (Dodman, Leck, Rusca, & Colenbrander, 2017).

**Figure 2:** *The effect of GDP per capita on urbanization in Africa, 2017*



Note: the vertical axis indicates urbanization, the horizontal axis shows the level of GDP per capita.

Source: author's calculations based on World Bank (2018a, 2018b)

Urbanization brings its economic, environmental and social challenges. The concentration of a large number of people in cities has certain advantages associated with the agglomeration economy. These are mainly the positive effects of economies of scale, proximity, numerous economic and social exogenous factors such as skilled labor or cultural amenities. However, the cost of overcrowding and social services, not to mention the increase in crime and environmental pollution, may outweigh the benefits of urban centers. A side effect of urbanization in the world and on the African continent was the formation of huge slums near the main urban centers. Today, about 70% of the urban population lives in urban slums of tropical Africa. In the Central African Republic, an astounding 96% of the urban population lives in slums (Hamann, 2018). The problem of the growth of urban centers is not only the rapid migration from village to city, but also the erroneous policy of local authorities. Urban planning policies based on obsolete building codes often led to the illegal development of urban areas, resulting in slums in some urban centers in Africa. For example, building regulations of the colonial era in Nairobi made it impossible to build legal housing for less than US\$ 3,500. As a result, only two-thirds of Nairobi's territory is occupied by only 10% of the population, and many slum dwellings cannot be legally legalized (Brown, 2015).

National development strategies of the African continent play an important role in urbanization. Given that fertility levels are gradually declining

in many African countries, the rapid growth of the cities and the faster emigration from rural areas will be one of the most important issues of development over the next decades. It is safe to say that in the cities the growth of the so-called informal sector will prevail, its role will also grow as a catalyst for economic progress and absorbent labor from rural areas.

About half of the urban workforce in developing countries works specifically in the informal sector, which is characterized by low-skilled and low-productivity jobs in the small-scale sales and services sector. In accordance with the model of economic development of the dualistic economy of W. A. Lewis (Lewis, 2006), the growth of the urban population due to emigration from rural areas is a natural process of structural change. With the growth of income per inhabitant, the able-bodied population leaves rural areas for the urban industry and services. Economist S. Kuznets also argues that the migration of young people from rural areas to the cities is a useful process by which underutilized or excess labor in rural areas can be transferred from traditional agricultural production and involved in urban industry (Simon Kuznets, 2013). Thus, internal migration to urban areas can lead to positive results regarding the accumulation of social capital, the development of the potential of the remaining relatives and the diversification of income. However, internal migration does not always justify theoretical concepts. Some recent studies in South Africa show that migrants from rural areas to the city have a relatively lower level of participation in official labor markets than local residents and work mainly in the informal sector or remain unemployed. This means that rural migrants are less likely to support the formal industrial sector of the economy than local residents and to a lesser extent contribute to structural changes towards industrialization.

The main economic reason for migration from village to city is the difference in the expected income that a rural worker can receive after immigrating to the city. These theoretical aspects of rural-urban migration were first described as an economically rational process within the framework of the Todaro migration model (Harris, J. and Todaro, M., 1970). The principles of this model have been empirically confirmed. For example, R. Lucas studied internal and international migration in Botswana. The results of the study showed that the higher the expected income and the higher the expected probability of employment after migration to the city, the higher the likelihood that the worker will migrate from rural regions to the city center. Lucas found that urban incomes were 68% higher for men than rural incomes (Lucas, 1985). Rapid urbanization also has implications for women's rights, which is reflected in working conditions and the provision of adequate medical services. Studies

show a high concentration of women in the street trade (part of the informal urban sector), which has low entry costs and flexible working hours. In sub-Saharan Africa, 84% of non-farm women work in the informal sector. Women make up more than two-thirds of the street vendors in the main cities of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Togo, and more than half in Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal and South Africa. Studies show that women in street trading usually earn less than men (Galdino, Kiggundu, Jones, & Ro, 2018).

## **5. The effects of migration on population dynamics**

Migration in Africa, regardless of its cause, has an important impact on population dynamics. Data from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs show that migrants from Africa are younger (29 years old on average) compared with migrants from other regions of the world (Table 3). International migrants from the African continent are on average 10 years younger than the global average age (39 years). Africa as a whole suffers population loss as a result of international migration. Although some of the local losses are the result of migration between individual countries of the continent. A large number of migrants immigrate to the countries of South Africa. A significant part of migrants seeks to find the best opportunities in Europe and other regions outside of Africa. Only for the period 1990-2015 Africa accounted for about 14% or 32 million people who live outside their home state. About two-thirds moved to higher-income countries. More than half of the 32 million migrated within the African continent, around 30% migrated to Europe. Over 10% of the population immigrated to Asia. For the period 1990-2015, most emigrants living abroad came from Egypt, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Algeria. Regarding the number of immigrants, South Africa is the most popular destination country in Africa, with about 3.1 million international migrants, or about 6% of its total population. Other countries with a large share of immigrants are Gabon (16%), Djibouti (13%), Libya (12%), Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia (10%) (United Nations Publication, 2018).

In South Africa, an important argument for intra-African immigration is the demand for labor in the mining and construction sectors. Demand in the informal sector of South African cities, such as trade, also remains important. Agriculture is the main magnet of immigration in Côte d'Ivoire, where more than two million visitors live. Since the 1980s, Libya has been a major destination for immigrants from outside Africa, especially from Indonesia and Iraq who have worked in the oil industry. However, since the beginning of 2010, Libya has become a major transit country for migrants traveling to Europe, which is largely due to its

strategic location in the Mediterranean Sea. In 2017, Equatorial Guinea recorded the largest share of migrants in the total population (17.5), which is the result of a growing offshore oil industry. The smallest share of immigrants in the period 1990-2017 is characterized for Egypt, Eritrea, Lesotho, Somalia and Madagascar. In some countries, such as Eritrea and Somalia, an unstable political situation contributes to low migration (UNCTAD, 2018).

**Table 3:** *International immigration in Africa*

	The number of immigrants, thousand		The number of immigrants,% of the total population		Annual changes in immigration,%		Refugees and asylum seekers, % of immigrants		The average age of migrants
	1990	2017	1990	2017	1990-1995	2015-2017	1990	2017	2017
World	152 542	257 715	2,9	3,4	1,0	2,0	12,3	10,1	39
Africa	15 690	24 650	2,5	2,0	0,8	2,5	36,2	25,5	31
Eastern Africa	5 964	7 591	3,0	1,8	-3,4	4,6	53,1	44,5	30
Central Africa	1 460	3 539	2,0	2,2	11,9	1,5	30,6	37,9	29
North Africa	2 403	2 410	1,7	1,0	-2,9	1,2	50,0	35,1	32
South Africa	1 392	4 338	3,3	6,7	-3,1	2,7	9,7	7,3	24
Western Africa	4 470	6 770	2,5	1,8	3,8	1,2	16,4	5,8	30
Tropical Africa	14 690	22 975	2,9	2,2	0,8	2,8	37,5	25,5	31

Source: DESA (2017)

In recent decades, the overall intensity of intra-African migration has decreased, with the exception of West Africa. Such a tendency towards a decrease in the intensity of migration may be associated with state formation and the associated obstacles to free movement as a result of decolonization, as well as a concomitant increase in nationalism and interstate tension. In this process, the new independent states are trying to assert their newfound sovereignty by demarcating the borders. In addition to the likely role of interstate tensions in reducing unrestricted migration, such as in southern Africa during the apartheid era, anti-immigrant attitudes are also very influential in African societies. This is reflected in the high level of visa restrictions on African countries for African citizens. In 2015, in South Africa, for example, there was a growing tendency towards xenophobia in relation to migrant visitors. Visitors often compete with locals for decreasing job opportunities. Unemployment is often an important factor in anti-immigration sentiment. Most of the unemployed in Africa (60% of all unemployed) are the young generation of 15-24 years old. Youth unemployment rates compared with adults have risen sharply in Morocco and South Africa, where young people are almost three times more likely to become unemployed than their older colleagues (Baah-Boateng, 2016). The problem of youth employment in Africa is caused by a

combination of rapid growth in the number of educated youth, the slow pace of job creation in the formal sector of the economy and underemployment in the informal sector. Thus, migration is inextricably linked to the youth employment, urban development, local security and access to basic social services (OECD, 2016).

Over the past decades, the degree of geographical diversification of migration from Africa to Europe has increased. Increasingly, migratory flows lead to North America and Asia. While a large portion of migration came from North Africa, in recent decades there has been a rapid increase in migration from West Africa and, to a lesser extent, from East Africa to rich countries outside of Africa. This geographic diversification of African emigration seems to be partly due to visa and other immigration restrictions imposed by European destination countries and the declining influence of old colonizers, as well as economic growth, labor demand and more liberal immigration regimes in new destination countries.

In Africa, there are significant migration corridors both in the aisles of the continent and corridors leading to other regions of the world. Many migration corridors are associated with geographical proximity and historical ties, as well as with factors of forced migration. Some of the largest migration corridors have been formed between North African countries, such as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and destination countries – France, Spain and Italy, which partially reflects post-colonial ties. There are also significant corridors of labor migration to the Gulf states, such as migration flows from Egypt to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. It is important to note that a large number of migration corridors are located in the aisles of the continent. This is the corridor between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan and South Sudan or Mozambique and South Africa (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2018).

An important feature of migration phenomena in Africa is forced migration. Most refugees and asylum seekers in Africa are located in neighboring countries in the region. In 2016, the largest number of refugees on the continent and the third largest in the world were in South Sudan. The positive results of the referendum in South Sudan and its further separation in 2011 led to a large-scale military conflict with more than 300 thousand victims and 2 million refugees (Warner, 2016). Most of them were adopted by neighboring states like Uganda and Ethiopia. The second largest number of refugees on the continent come from Somalia, which, after a long history of conflict and the recent drought, were forced to migrate to Ethiopia and Kenya.

Other large refugee groups emigrated from Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Eritrea. The main drivers of displacement are conflict and violence, which in some cases exacerbate food insecurity. Along with the unstable political situation, climate change is also a catalyst for internal and international migration on the continent. Integrated and interconnected environmental changes, such as droughts and floods, and over-exploitation of resources, are factors contributing to internal and international migration in the region. Although precipitation in the Sahel region is slowly growing, it is becoming more and more variable, leading to frequent droughts and floods. At the same time, rapid population growth has led to intensification of agriculture, deforestation and excessive degradation of agricultural land. Despite an increase in agriculture, food insecurity continues to affect millions of people in the Lake Chad basin. Millions of people in West and Central Africa depend on the water resources of Lake Chad, which has declined by 90% over the past 40 years, mainly due to intensive irrigation and long periods of drought (Salerno, Mwalyoyo, Caro, Fitzherbert, & Mulder, 2017).

## **6. Conclusions**

Our research has identified the following problems of socio-economic development of Africa. Currently, Africa is facing the highest urbanization rates in the world, however it remains the least urbanized continent. Over the past 30 years, the average total fertility rate in all regions of Africa has fallen by about half.

In the long term, an aging population in Africa is projected to deal with chronic physical and mental disabilities that will put pressure on health care and pension funds in the future. Despite this, African average health spending is low, and health systems are weak and ineffective in addressing new challenges. In addition, the lack of social safety nets for an aging population requires the development of policies to address this problem in most African countries. African countries in the future will need the current young potential through investments in education, health and job creation to provide social support to the current working population in old age.

With the process of industrialization, there is an increasing need for urban labor that services the industrial sector and the services sector in cities, so urbanization has a direct proportional relationship with structural changes in the economy and economic development. However, in some African countries, such as the Central African Republic, urbanization occurs despite a negative increase in income per inhabitant. Given that fertility levels are gradually

declining in many African countries, the rapid growth of the cities and the faster emigration from rural areas will be one of the most important issues of development over the next decades. It is safe to say that in the cities the growth of the so-called informal sector will prevail, its role will also grow as a catalyst for economic progress and absorbent labor from rural areas.

Among current problems of socio-economic development of Africa is international migration. The main drivers of international migration on the continent are unstable political situation and climate change. Integrated and interconnected environmental changes, such as droughts and floods, and over-exploitation of resources, are factors contributing to internal and international migration in the region.

Among positive trends of socio-economic development in Africa is life expectancy increase. It was achieved mainly through improved health, education and better nutritional conditions. Substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals program.

Changes in the age structure and entry into a new stage of the demographic transition indicate an increase in the number of labor force and an improvement in per capita income. Given the right combination of investment and development programs, the influence of a changing age structure with a falling demographic burden will contribute to the economic growth and development of African countries. The future research will be focused on the issues and challenges in searching of sufficient decisions of the complex demographic and economic situation on the African continent.

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