

'Brain drain' hits sub-Saharan Africa: IMF

Skilled workers are leaving sub-Saharan Africa in rapidly increasing numbers, producing a "brain drain" that causes long-term social damage, the International Monetary Fund warned on Tuesday.



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The IMF said that the number of sub-Saharan migrants living in developed countries could increase from about seven million in 2013 to about 34 million by 2050.

It described a "profound demographic transition" underway in the region as the working-age population grows faster than the total population -- driving a migration boom.

"Brain drain is particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa," the IMF's latest report said, noting that it creates "welfare losses beyond those that are purely economic".

"The migration of young and educated workers takes a large toll on a region whose human capital is already scarce," it said.

"The migration of highly skilled workers entails a high social cost, as is evidenced by the departure of doctors and nurses from Malawi and Zimbabwe."

The IMF said migration from sub-Saharan Africa to the developed nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had "picked up sharply" over the last 15 years.

France, Britain and the United States host about half of the diaspora outside the sub-Saharan region.

The report also pointed to evidence of some positive gains from the migration of highly skilled workers.

"Returning migrants bring back new skills... knowledge and experience," it said, adding that "remittance inflows represent an important source of foreign exchange and income".

The IMF report added that growth has fallen in sub-Saharan's powerhouse economies due to lower commodity prices.

Nigeria is due to contract 1.7 percent in 2016 amid disrupted oil production, poor power supply and weak investor confidence.

GDP in South Africa and Angola is expected to be flat in 2016, but growth will be above five percent in Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Kenya and Senegal due to low oil prices, high consumption and strong investment.

Source: AFP

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