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Assessment of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa on Nigerian Irregular Migrants

Abstract: This study assessed the impact and examined the challenges of EUTF for Africa on Nigerian irregular migrants. The study relied on primary data collected through in-depth interviews (IDIs) on key respondents and analysed using thematic content analysis. Findings from the study showed that EUTF for Africa was used to improve security, combating human trafficking, provision of training skills for irregular migrants who returned voluntarily, promoting awareness of the risk of embarking on dangerous trips to Europe and strengthening vulnerable communities through the provision of basic social service. However, findings among others revealed that much of the Funds were disbursed to Northern region that does not experience irregular migration to Europe, and to support the enforcement agencies for stricter border policing that result to violence against irregular migrants. More so, there is lack of participation from government institution in the formulation and implementation of projects and that much of the Funds has been used to promote European interests to stifle migration and ensure increased return of irregular migrants. The study concluded that EUTF for Africa are restrictive in nature and this continued to propel traffickers to navigate irregular migrant's journey to other riskier routes.

Key words: European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, Migration, European Union, Nigerian Irregular Migrants

Introduction

The European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa is one of the frameworks used by the European Union (EU) to control and prevent irregular migration to Europe. It is part of a larger EU policy for Africa which emphasised on economic development in Africa to dissuade irregular migration to Europe (Zanker, 2019; Marin, 2020). The basic assumption here is that socioeconomic and political conditions in Africa, as well as economic growth and labour supply in EU are among indices that drive irregular migration to Europe. To this ends, EU established EUTF for Africa to promote economic development, improve security and migration governance in order to deter irregular migration to Europe (Juncker, 2017; Tardis, 2018). Essentially, underdevelopment in Africa serves as a significant push factor for irregular migration, while economic development acts as a key pull factor. As such, such a phenomenon can be addressed through development cooperation with countries of origin.

Much of the budget of EUTF comes from the European Development Fund (EDF) which provides 75% of its funding, while the EU budget provides the remaining 20%

(Kervyn, Shilhav, 2017). The EU budget includes funds for home affairs, neighborhood policy, humanitarian relief, and development. Contributions from member states and other sources account for 7%. The three regional operational committees; Horn of Africa, Sahel and Lake Chad, and North Africa including strategic board oversee its management. However, while the EUTF actively seeks to adopt a universal monitoring system, its execution is still quite uneven (European Court of Auditors, 2018). Some of its projects, it was argued, are a response to European political motives and the urgency of stopping irregular migration to Europe. These responses, however, are not always transparent, such that short-term interests always put development, the eradication of poverty, and the protection of the fundamental rights of migrants at risk (Boersma et al., 2020).

Numerous projects in African nations are funded by the EUTF for Africa. As stated in the EUTF's 2018 Annual Report, the framework of the EUTF is composed of four distinct themes: increased employment and economic possibilities; community resilience building; better migration management, and better governance and conflict avoidance (European Union Trust Fund, 2018). The EUTF projects covers all the three regions in Africa; North Africa, Sahel/Lake Chad, and Horn of Africa (Boersma et al., 2020). In this respect, Nigeria is located in the Sahel/Lake Chad region. More than EUR 4.4 billion has been allocated to projects in 26 countries in the Horn of Africa, North Africa, and the Sahel/Lake Chad since its inception in November 2015 (EUTF, 2020). For example, statistics shows that EUTF for Africa has facilitated the voluntary return of 66,700 vulnerable irregular migrants, helped 277,000 people establish income-generating ventures and produced over 55,000 jobs (EUTF, 2020).

As one of the major origin country, Nigeria is strategic to the EU realisation of reducing irregular migration to Europe. According to the International Organization for Migration (2017) the southern states of Edo, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Ogun, Osun, Rivers, and Lagos among others are home to traffickers who organise and enable irregular migration to Europe. Some of the popular unauthorised routes used by the irregular migrants to reach Europe seem to be those that connect the Strait of Gibraltar and Morocco to Spain, as well as those that connect Libya and the Mediterranean Sea to Malta or Italy. Research indicated that majority of irregular migrants from Nigeria travel *via* the Libya route, starting from either Kano, Sokoto, Kastina, or Jigawa to Agadez in Niger Republic and pass through the Sahara Desert to connect Libya, before crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Malta or Italy (Egbuta, 2019; Oberti, 2021). In 2016 and 2017, Nigerian nationals with about 181,000 and 18,158 respectively made up the largest number of irregular migrants that were disembarked from Italy (European Commission, 2017).

To reduce the risk of irregular migration from origin countries in West Africa, particularly Nigeria, Ghana, Mali and Senegal, where nationals from these countries drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015, EU redefined frameworks on external migration through the establishment of joint action plan in Valletta with major origin and transit countries, Nigeria inclusive. The joint action plan led to the establishment of EUTF for Africa. The fund is meant to support African countries on economic programme such as the creation of employment opportunities for the youths, vocational training, micro and small enterprises especially for the returnees and displaced persons, as well as support for basic services and migration management that deal with the underlying causes of irregular migration to Europe (Beber, Scacco, 2018; Latek, 2019). In Nigeria, EUTF projects are

noticed in the area of food insecurity, social amenities and security of borders.

In order to ground this research, it has been limited to Nigeria on the rationale that it is the most populous country in Africa, one of the major country of origin, country with highest number of irregular migrants to Europe and the major beneficiary of EUTF for Africa in the Sahel/Lake Chad region (European Commission, 2017; Oberti, 2021; Arhin-Sam, Zanker, 2019). Thus, the objectives are to examine the impact of EUTF for Africa on Nigerian irregular migrants, and examine the challenges of EUTF for Africa on Nigerian irregular migrants. This study is divided into six sections which include the introduction, objectives of the study, conceptual review of EUTF for Africa, literature review on historical background of Nigerian irregular migration to Europe and the emergence of EUTF for Africa in Nigeria, methodology, results and discussion based on the stated objectives before conclusion.

European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF): Conceptual Review

The EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa was designed at the Valletta Summit to pool resources from the EU budget and other EU donor countries in order to finance a coordinated project in non-European countries in response to migration crisis in EU member states (Idrissa, 2018). According to the Vidal et al. (2019) the EUTF for Africa was formed in 2015 to address irregular migration in Africa through the implementation of economic and security programmes such as job creation, vocational training and funding border surveillance project to curbing human trafficking. The EUTF for Africa is the primary financial instrument for the EU's political engagement with African countries on migration issues. According to De Guerry, Stocchiero and Concord EUTF (2018) the EUTF for Africa strategies are aim to reduce youth unemployment, improve resilience, development, and governance.

With about 1.8 billion Euros allocated for the EUTF for Africa in the period 2015–2020, EU purposively aimed at building more capacity in migration development of non-EU countries to manage migration more efficiently (Campbell, 2019). The fund is directed towards addressing the causes of irregular migration and displaced persons and also contributes to migration management in Africa. Latek (2019) and Koch et al. (2018) posits that the EUTF is one of the components that link connections between development aid and migration policy, with a renewed focus on major origin countries such as Nigeria and Mali and key transit countries especially Niger. Specifically, the Trust Fund is intended to aid in addressing the underlying causes of instability, forced displacement, and irregular migration by promoting economic and equal opportunity, improving vulnerable people's resilience, and promoting security and development (Kipp, Koch, 2018).

As observed by Parshotam (2018), the EUTF for Africa provides economic opportunities for young women and men through initiatives and measures to create employment opportunities and stimulate vocational training and entrepreneurial programmes in order to deter irregular migration. This is achieved through networks of European and African vocational training institutions, with the goal of ensuring that vocational training meets

labour market demand (European Union, 2021). The fund provides access to capital and micro-loans to small and medium-sized businesses in the formal and informal sectors, with a focus on women, youth, and rural people (Action Document for the EU Trust Fund, 2016; Campbell, 2019). In sum, majority of EUTF for Africa initiatives are aimed at limiting and discouraging irregular migration by enforcing migratory containment and control, creating awareness about the hazards of irregular migration, implementing policy reforms for returns, and promoting national development.

Historical Background of Nigerian Irregular Migration to Europe and the Emergence of EUTF for Africa in Nigeria

Migration from Nigeria to Europe predate colonisation and can be traced to Atlantic slave trade between African and European countries. The Atlantic slave trade from the 16th to 19th century witnessed forced migration of African nationals through different routes across the sea and land borders to industrialised economies of Europe and America as workers in agricultural plantations for the production of sugar, cotton and other commodities (International Organisation for Migration, 2017; Yin, 2021). Migration during this period was mainly linked to inter-ethnic conflicts and warfare between empires and kingdoms where victims and the enslaved were sold to Western European slave traders and transported to European colonies in America and Europe as slave labour.

During the colonial era, migration to Europe was related to colonial ties and legacy. As a result of historical link in common language, the pattern of migration in this period showed a greater tendency of movement to the United Kingdom. Adepoju and Hammar (1996) claimed that activities of the British colonial administration provided large-scale emigration for labour force in mines, plantations and public administration. Migration during this period was generally viewed to be positive due to the economic benefits it provided for countries of origin and destination (Bonifazi, 2008).

With the introduction of visa by the UK and other European countries, the period after independence witnessed substantial migration to European countries mainly by migrants living for education, business or administrative purpose (Castles et al., 2014; Brachet, 2018). Moreover, military coup and dictatorship governments, inter-ethnic conflicts and civil war further led to the migration of low-skilled youth, educated and elites to the European countries (Kohnert, 2007; Idrissa, 2018). Mberu and Pongou (2010) further maintained that the labour recruitment policy of the EU during this period led to increase of Nigerian migrants who work in agricultural, informal service and trade sectors in Europe especially in United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Germany, France, Netherlands and Belgium. Migration to Europe during this period was seen as a voluntary movement to safety environment and improvement of economic condition.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the majority of Nigerians that migrated to Europe, especially the educated and elite did so as a result of civil war and austerity measures from Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced by the govern-

ment which resulted in currency devaluation, decreased in wages for professionals and deterioration in working conditions (Crawley et al., 2019). For the unskilled, restriction placed on labour recruitment in EU in the 1970s and the bureaucratic process of obtaining visa led to the discovery and navigation of risky and dangerous routes, overland and sea to Europe (Obi-Ani et al., 2020). As a consequence, Afolayan et al (2008) argued that the flow of increase in irregular migration from Nigeria to Europe continued to be at equilibrium with Northern African countries who formerly occupied Europe labour sectors through labour recruitment scheme which grant temporal stay to migrant workers.

The history of trafficking and smuggling from Nigeria to Europe can be traced to Edo nationals in the 1980s. During this period, the pioneer group of Edo women who travelled to Italy did so for trade purposes, such as buying and selling of clothes, shoes, and jewelry (Cole, Booth, 2007; Damon et al., 2011). As a result of demand for labour, they were recruited as low-skilled labourers in Italy and Spain to work in tomato and fruit farms during the planting and harvesting seasons (Plambech, 2014; Odorige, 2016). However, in the process of engaging in farm labour, these migrants compromised and supplemented their income through prostitution, as income from farm work were small in comparison with income from prostitution. In essence, high demand for sex workers in Europe and the relative higher pay involved in prostitution caused many female migrants to supplement farm labour with prostitution and also facilitated the arrival of female migrants to Europe for the same purpose (Braimah, 2013).

Benin City, the Edo State capital has been regarded as one of the major areas of recruitment among traffickers who benefit from economies of scale because of the higher number of potential migrants. Larger percentage of Nigerian irregular migrants in Europe are native of Edo, a state that is often described as the passage to Europe where in some towns like Uromi and Ekpoma, it is likely to find households who have relatives, mostly women who have migrated to Europe (Kastner, 2010; Agbakwuru, 2018). Even parents encourage and go beyond to find the smugglers who help their children to travel through Libya route. Trafficking agents in Edo state often recruit victims from rural areas to a larger extent and in urban areas to a lesser extent paid the smuggler 350,000 Naira (US\$840), with an agreement to pay an additional 120,000 Naira (US\$290) if they made it to Europe (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022). Eventually, when they are unable to pay the remaining part of the money before or after they reach Europe, the female are commonly force to sex trafficking, while the male are force into drug peddling, trafficking and smuggling operations (Plambech, 2016; Bruni et al., 2017). In essence, potential migrants increasingly rely on traffickers and large debts to reach Europe. Consequent upon the incessant migratory pressure and crisis, EU formulated frameworks on external migration with Nigeria and other origin and transit countries in Africa. While there were earlier EU frameworks formulated to manage migration in Nigeria, the 2015 migration crisis where majority of West African nationals from Nigeria, Ghana and Mali drown in the Mediterranean Sea necessitated the reformation of EU frameworks on external migration (Council Decision European Union, 2015; Vaughan-Williams et al., 2017). The 2015 EU frameworks on external migration was based on joint action plan with major countries of origin and transit

including Nigeria, to cope with migration at EU external borders. The joint action plan emphasised on measure to safeguard the rights of migrants in need of international protection, provision for return procedures of irregular migrants, prevention of migrant smuggling and trafficking, as well as the creation of EUTF to support African countries and returnees on economic programme and capacity building in the security sector to curbing irregular migration to Europe (European Commission, 2015a; Juncker, 2018; Tardis, 2018).

Furthermore, the European Agenda on Migration (EAM) formulated for the period of 2015 and 2020 for Nigeria and other countries of origin and transit in Africa, also contained some EUTF for Africa frameworks on external migration. These includes reducing the factors that cause irregular migration, reinforcement of the EU border and coordination of coast guard, protection of Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and review of EU legal migration policy (European Commission, 2015b; European Parliament, 2019). In line with EAM, Migration Partnership Framework (MPF) which encompass EUTF for Africa was adopted in 2016 with five priority countries; Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Niger and Ethiopia, and other 14 non-priority countries. The objectives of MPF are; to save lives in the Mediterranean Sea and curb smuggling network, increase the rate of returnees to non-EU countries, and ensure potential migrants stay at home countries to avoid complex journey to Europe (Collett, Ahad, 2017; Tardis, 2018). In essence, EUTF for Africa as one of the frameworks on external migration on Nigerian migrants is shaped by the promotion of economic development in order to curbing irregular migration by traffickers and smugglers.

Methodology and Area of Study

The study adopted qualitative descriptive research design due to the nature of variables under investigation which cannot be readily quantitatively measured. This method involves the collection of texts, interview, sound, observations, documentary evidence, and subsequently analysing based on qualitative techniques. The study areas include Lagos and Edo states, as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The rationale for the selection of these study areas was based on the location and accessibility to European Union, international, national and non-governmental organisations related to migration, as well as the predominance of trafficking agents that facilitate migration to Europe.

Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of seven key respondents which comprised the EU delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS; European External Action Service; Frontex; International Organisation for Migration, Idia Renaissance (a local non-governmental organisation that focuses on irregular migration); Nigerian Immigration Service and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons. These respondents were selected based on their adequate knowledge and experience on EU and Nigeria migration related issue. Below is the tabular distribution of the respondents.

Primary source of data through Individual In-depth Interviews (IDIs) conducted on key respondents in 2021 was relied upon as the source of data and analysed through the use of thematic content analysis. The research instrument used for the data collection

was the objectives which was divided into two sections. The first objective section measured the impact of EUTF for Africa on Nigerian irregular migrants while the second objective section measure the challenges of EUTF for Africa on Nigeria irregular migrants.

Table 1

Distribution of the Selected Respondents

S/N	Category	Designation	Number in Subcategory	Total
1	European Union officials on migration	European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS	1	3
		European External Action Service	1	
		Frontex	1	
2	Nigerian experts on migration	Nigeria Immigration Service	1	3
		National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons	1	
		Idia Renaissance	1	
3	International organisation on migration	International Organisation for Migration	1	1
Total		7	7	7

Source: Compilation by the author from the field work, 2021.

Impact of EUTF for Africa on Nigerian Irregular Migrants

The introduction of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa is based on the belief that migration development cooperation from the EU would deter irregular migration from origin and transit countries to Europe. The increase in the migration crisis in 2015 resulted in the formulation of a joint action plan between EU and 35 African nations in Valletta, which consequently established the EUTF for Africa as a mechanism designed to pool resources from the EU budget, the European Development Fund, and EU donor countries to finance a coordinated response to irregular migration from Africa (Valletta Summit on Migration, 2015). In essence, the EUTF for Africa is a framework that connects development aid and migration as well as security with a renewed focus on major countries of origin such as Nigeria and Mali and countries of transit, especially Niger and Libya (Idrissa, 2018; Akkerman, 2018). The assumption is that good governance and sustainable economic development devoid of insecurity would provide the opportunity for Nigerians to thrive rather than considering irregular migration to Europe (R1, 2021).

Voluntary returnees and displaced persons, origin and host communities, victims of trafficking and smuggling, potential irregular migrants, national and local authorities, civil society groups, and community-based organisations are among the primary beneficiaries of the EUTF for Africa (European Commission, 2015b). In other words, the EUTF for Africa was established as a comprehensive and coordinated response to the various causes of insecurity, irregular migration, and forced displacement in Africa. For example, in Nigeria, it was asserted that:

The EUTF for Africa is a platform for EU cooperation on migration which reinforced political engagement and dialogue to better understand the drivers and dynamics of migration. It is a comprehensive approach to support aspects of stability, security and resilience for the purpose of addressing the reasons that could be conducive to violence and destabilisation, and supporting Nigerian governments in their efforts to improve security (R2, 2021).

The EUTF for Africa is used to address four main goals which are economic and employment opportunities; strengthening vulnerable communities’ resilience; improved migration management in countries of origin, transit, and destination; and improved governance, conflict prevention, and reduction of forced displacement and irregular migration (European Union, 2021). Kervyn and Shilhav (2017) claimed that 63% of EUTF for Africa is dedicated to development projects, 22% to migration management projects, and 14% to security and peace-building initiatives. In most cases, these projects are given priority based on the prevailing circumstances in Africa countries. In Nigeria, where the northern region is facing food insecurity and social amenities as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency, about 477,500 people are receiving food security-related services and 560,800 people are receiving basic social services with £50.0 million from EUTF for Africa under goal 4 (R3, 2021; R4, 2021).

Citizens of Northern region of Nigeria are not prone to irregular migration to Europe but prefer intra-Africa migration as a result of border proximity and the visa-free movement among ECOWAS states. Explaining further, it was stated that because the northern region is faced with insurgency resulting in the displacement of millions of people and considering the fragile socioeconomic and food insecurity particularly in Yobe, Gombe, Borno, and Adamawa, the EUTF for Africa is a channel for humanitarian aid projects especially for displaced persons and refugees (R5, 2021). This is reflected in table 2 below, where €5.5 million was earmarked for promoting stability in the northeast in 2016–2019, €4 million for multi-sector assistance for the displaced in Adamawa and Borno states from 2016 to 2019 and €12.2 million for fostering resilience and peaceful coexistence among northeast displaced communities from 2016–2018 respectively. In other words, the EUTF for Africa is intended to connect relief, rehabilitation, and development, which includes improving access to basic services, enhancing livelihood, and developing self-reliance opportunities for displaced persons and host communities affected by humanitarian crises (Valletta Summit on Migration, 2015; EUTF, 2020).

Table 2

Migration-Related Projects in Nigeria Funded by the EU through EUTF and EDF

Program/project	€ million	Source of Fundin	Timeline
1	2	3	4
Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in Nigeria	10.15	11th EDF	2018–2021
Promoting Stability in Nigeria’s North-East	5.5	EUTF	2016–2019
Multi-Sector Support to the Displaced in Adamawa and Borno States	4.0	EUTF	2016–2019
Strengthening Migration Governance in Nigeria and Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrants	15.5	EUTF	2016–2019

1	2	3	4
Promoting Resilience and Peaceful Coexistence among Displacement Affected Communities in North-East Nigeria	12.2	EUTF	2016–2018
Promoting Better Management of Migration in Nigeria	25.0	10th EDF	2008–2013
EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration	346.9	11th EUTF	2006–

Source: Adapted from Arhin-Sam and Zanker, 2019.

Nigeria has benefited from security and peace building which are part of goal 2 of the EUTF for Africa as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency. Responding to this foregoing, it was argued that the fund is used to strengthen military operations in the Northeast such as building resilience to counter violent extremism and promoting stability, addressing youth at risk of criminality and radicalisation, improving community safety and conflict mediation and resolution capacity, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa (R3, 2021; Arhin-Sam, Zanker, 2019). Apart from using the fund to strengthen military operations, it is noteworthy to say here that the EUTF for Africa is also used to fund surveillance projects and border security in Nigeria to stop irregular migration to Europe. This position was vividly expressed in the following sentiments:

The EUTF for Africa contains many security cooperation and assistance, including provision of military equipment, information and intelligence sharing and the development of communication networks for border surveillance and the funding of civilian and local vigilante mission to help combat banditry, terrorism and trafficking in the Northern region of Nigeria. In the same vein, the fund is used to design a data system, training and knowledge centre for the NIS, as well as the introduction of better digital system for custom officers at Nigerian airport. Through the IOM, the EUTF for Africa has supported the NIS in putting in place border management information systems at selected land and sea borders to check and document regular and irregular movements and to align border data systems with the latest travel documents used in the region. These actions represent the first time that Nigeria would have data systems at any of the land or sea borders (R6, 2021).

This position also echoed that border control is the second biggest expense of EUTF for Africa in Nigeria, with about €250 million earmarked to create a National Bio-metric Identity Card (NBIC) for every Nigerian, followed by projects aimed at combating human trafficking (R7, 2021). For the most part, the table above supported this position that €10.15 of the EDF is used to tackle action against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in Nigeria in 2018–2021.

The EUTF for Africa is also allocated to strengthening and promoting awareness of the risk of embarking on dangerous trips to Europe through the establishment of Migrant Resource Centre (MRCs) in Edo, Lagos, and Abuja which serve as a referral mechanism and as a one-stop shop for migrants to access migration information. It was expatiated that MRC provide necessary information on legal migration to Europe for potential migrants, rather than sourcing information from trafficking and smuggling networks who provide information on complex migration to Europe (R3, 2021). Furthermore, the EUTF for Africa is also allocated for irregular migrants who are stranded along the way to Europe, returning and reintegrating them to their communities and providing training skills and programme opportunities for voluntary returnees. On this issue, it was professed thus:

Through the IOM-Nigeria and other relevant local non-governmental organisations related to migration, the EUTF for Africa is disbursed to train and assist voluntary returnees on entrepreneurial skills such as fashion designing, fish farming, hair styling, beautician, electric wiring, and mechanics. On the completion of the training, voluntary returnees are divided into groups and given some start-up capital to set up preferred entrepreneurial skills. Part of the EUTF for Africa is also devoted for returnee's upkeep especially for the payment of one year house rent (R5, 2021).

The reason why returnees are divided into groups to set up entrepreneurial skills is partly because of the inadequacy of the fund to cater for the large number of returnees, excluding forced returnees. Unlike before, when the entrepreneurial skills were set up for individual returnees, the event showed that some returnees would sell off the business and used the proceeds to arrange for their complex journey to Europe again. And as a strategy to discourage this tendency, returnees are divided into groups of five or six so that it will be difficult for any returnee in a group to solely sell off the business (R3, 2021; R5, 2021).

Through the IOM initiative, the EUTF for Africa is also used to establish cooperative societies as a means of pooling resources together for returnees in active economic activities to have access to soft loans and microcredit facilities with agreeable repayment schedules (Action Document for the European Union Trust Fund, 2016). Corroborating this viewpoint, it was stated that the cooperative society, which has been established in Lagos, Benin, and Owerri support activities aimed at strengthening the existing cooperation through training and workshops on possible business opportunities and expands the scope to include refugees and displaced persons in the northern part of Nigeria (R3, 2021).

Most of the projects are proposed and designed by EU member state donors and the EU delegation in Nigeria, often in coordination with the United Nations agencies and local non-governmental organisations in Nigeria. On the foregoing, it was postulated thus:

The funds are not given directly to the Nigerian government but through multi-lateral organisations and United Nations agencies such as the International Organisation for Migration, United Nations International Children's Education Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, International Labour Organisation; and intergovernmental organisations like the International Centre for Migration Policy Development who received about 60% of the EUTF for Africa in Nigeria; and the non-governmental organisations and private consultants who received about 13% of the total EUTF for Africa in Nigeria (R4, 2021).

Through the EU Development Fund (EDF), the EUTF for Africa is also used to support the Nigerian government in the implementation and adoption of the 2014 National Policy on Labour Migration (NPLM) and the 2015 National Migration Policy (NMP) respectively for promoting better management of migration in Nigeria (Action Document for the EUTF, 2016). These policies are designed to provide an operational framework for addressing the challenges of migration including irregular migration, the return and reintegration of Nigerian irregular migrants based on three levels of coordination structure covering return and reintegration, migration data management and labour migration.

Challenges of European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa on Nigerian Migrants

One of the challenges of the EUTF for Africa is that the largest chunk of the fund is disbursed to Northern region of Nigeria, a place that does not experience irregular migration to Europe. Most of the irregular migration to Europe is basically linked to migrants in Southern part of Nigeria. Voluntary returnees from this region are expected to feel the impact of EUTF for Africa. However, much of the fund has been used to cater for the displaced persons in the Northern region. Although the fund is also meant to provide resilience for the most deprived and the internally displaced persons, emphasis and concentration on the Northern region has left the returnees, who are majorly from the Southern region, unattended to. Explaining further, this position was maintained:

This is a clear indication of diversion of much needed assistance from core priorities. Similarly, there is uneven disbursement of the EUTF for Africa for conflict prevention to the Northern region, knowing well that even the Southern region is also facing various conflict risks like banditry and violence agitation from Indigenous People of Biafra. Yet, the Southern region have received little from the EUTF for Africa when compare to the Northern region that have been receiving the largest chunk of the fund (R3, 2021).

Followed by conflict prevention, a larger part of the EUTF for Africa is used to support the enforcement agencies like the Police and the NIS for the purpose of enforcing stricter border policing. These enforcement agencies have been accused of violence against migrants. This position maintained that the reward system through the disbursement of EUTF for Africa to enforce stricter border policing undermines respect for human rights and constitutes crimes against humanity, as it ignores the plight of irregular migrants stranded in Sahara desert and Mediterranean Sea (R2, 2021). Moreover, the EUTF for Africa used for policing the border has not been effective, as border corruption from the enforcement agencies limits the effectiveness of the fund to decrease irregular emigration to Europe. In the same vein, it was opined that an increase in border control has continued to propel traffickers and smugglers to navigate migrant's journeys to another riskier route (R1, 2021).

Lack of participation from government institution in the formulation and implementation of EUTF projects for Africa to meet the targeted beneficiary was emphasised. Specifically, it was asserted thus:

EU formulate and implement the EUTF for Africa project solely and determine the areas where the EUTF for Africa is disbursed and the method of disbursing the fund. Government institutions are side-lines in project formulation and implementation. Therefore, most of the projects formulated are not aligned with the desired priority of partner countries who knows the areas they are in need of fund. As a result of this, the funds and projects are not targeted to meet the beneficiary (R3, 2021).

While the EUTF for Africa is also used to promote legal migration, it was argued that much of the Fund has been used to promote European interests to stifle migration and ensure increased return of irregular migrants. Rather than using the fund to promote legal

migration, the EUTF for Africa is diverted from its true purpose of helping those in need, as some of its projects respond to EU politics of stopping irregular migration to Europe. Furthermore, it was postulated thus:

With about €3.9bn of EUTF for Africa approved projects between 2015 and 2019, only €56m is disbursed to fund regular migration which represents less than 1.5% of the total worth of the EUTF for Africa. The chunk of the budget about €2.18bn which stands at 56% was allocated to funding development cooperation, €1.011bn of 26% was spent on migration governance, €382m of 10%, €83.1m of 2% was allocated to research and learning projects, and €243.8m of 6% was allocated to projects which could not be classified because of insufficient detail. In other words, Europe political priority on EUTF undermines economic development and human mobility that could help improve the lives of Nigerians (R2, 2021).

Moreover, the EUTF for Africa emphasised certain conditionality of accepting the return of irregular migrants and the militarisation of borders to prevent migration to Europe. Accordingly, this kind of conditionality led to a reduction in the community's access to livelihoods with the assumption that migration led to development through remittance, a factor for government failure to cooperate on return based on the notion that the returnees would definitely add to the burden of unemployment and poverty in the country (R5, 2021).

Conclusion

The EUTF for Africa is one of the EU frameworks designed to manage irregular migration to Europe. High unemployment rate, poverty, political instability, and insecurity are among other factors that propel irregular migration to Europe, especially among the youths who view Europe as a place to find greener pastures and escape poverty. Moreover, with the perception that wages are higher in Europe, migration from Nigeria to Europe is considered a conscious decision and investment made by households and families to improve standard of living and gain social prestige. Consequently, Europe continued to experience an increase in the inflow of irregular migrants and a migration crisis, specifically in 2015.

As a result of this, the EU formed a joint action plan with major origin and transit countries, Nigeria inclusive, to cope with migration. The 2015 joint action plan led to the creation of the EUTF for Africa. The fund is intended to assist African nations with economic initiatives such as youth employment, vocational training, micro and small businesses, particularly for displaced persons and returnees, support for basic services, and migration management that addresses the underlying causes of irregular migration to Europe. Hence, this study assessed the EUTF for Africa as an EU framework on external migration of Nigerian irregular migrants. As part of the objectives, the study examined the impact of EUTF for Africa on Nigerian irregular migrants and examined the challenges of EUTF for Africa on Nigerian irregular migrants.

Findings showed that the EUTF for Africa was used to improve security, migration governance, and economic development in order to deter irregular migration through the strengthening of military operations, surveillance projects, and border security; the

provision of training skills for irregular migrants who return voluntarily to Nigeria; and the strengthening of vulnerable communities' resilience through the provision of basic social services. However, findings revealed that the largest chunk of the EUTF for Africa was disbursed to Northern region of Nigeria, a place that does not experience irregular migration to Europe, and to support the enforcement agencies for the purpose of enforcing stricter border policing that results in violence against irregular migrants. Moreover, most of the projects formulated are not aligned with the desired priority as a result of the nonparticipation of the Nigerian government in the formulation and implementation of EUTF projects to meet the targeted beneficiary.

The study concluded that EUTF for Africa has continued to increase militarisation of border security, exacerbate repression, and limit democratic accountability in Nigeria, which consequently propels traffickers and smugglers to navigate irregular migrant's journeys to other riskier routes. While putting the displaced persons into consideration as part of the beneficiary of EUTF for Africa, the study recommended that the fund should focus more on regions with the highest number of returnees. This will help to increase awareness of the danger of irregular emigration to Europe and also discourage the returnees from embarking on irregular emigration. The formulation and implementation of projects under the EUTF for Africa should involve government and community participation. This will ensure that the projects reach the targeted beneficiary, discourage Europe-centeredness in projects and encourage inclusiveness, as well as democratic accountability.

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Ocena wpływu Europejskiego Funduszu Powierniczego na rzecz Afryki na sytuację nieregularnych migrantów z Nigerii

Streszczenie

Celem niniejszego badania była ocena wpływu oraz analiza wyzwań związanych z funkcjonowaniem Europejskiego Funduszu Powierniczego na rzecz Afryki (EUTF for Africa) w odniesieniu do nieregularnych migrantów z Nigerii. Badanie oparto na danych pierwotnych zebranych za pomocą pogłębionych wywiadów indywidualnych (IDI) z kluczowymi respondentami, a następnie poddano je analizie treści w ujęciu tematycznym. Wyniki wskazują, że środki z Funduszu były wykorzystywane m.in. do poprawy bezpieczeństwa, zwalczania handlu ludźmi, organizacji szkoleń zawodowych dla migrantów, którzy dobrowolnie powrócili do kraju, zwiększania świadomości ryzyka związanego z podejmowaniem niebezpiecznych podróży do Europy oraz wzmacniania społeczności wrażliwych poprzez zapewnianie podstawowych usług społecznych. Jednocześnie ustalono, że znaczna część środków została skierowana do północnych regionów Nigerii, które nie doświadczają zjawiska nieregularnej migracji do Europy, oraz na wsparcie służb granicznych prowadzących do bardziej restrykcyjnych i nierzadko przemocowych praktyk wobec migrantów. Ponadto badanie wykazało brak udziału insty-

tucji rządowych w procesie formułowania i wdrażania projektów oraz fakt, iż znaczna część Funduszu została wykorzystana do realizacji interesów europejskich, mających na celu ograniczenie migracji i zwiększenie liczby powrotów migrantów nieregularnych. W konkluzji stwierdzono, że mechanizmy EUTF for Africa mają charakter restrykcyjny, co w konsekwencji przyczynia się do wzrostu aktywności przemytników i kierowania migrantów na bardziej ryzykowne szlaki migracyjne.

Słowa kluczowe: Europejski Fundusz Powierniczy na rzecz Afryki, migracja, Unia Europejska, nieregularni migranci z Nigerii

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