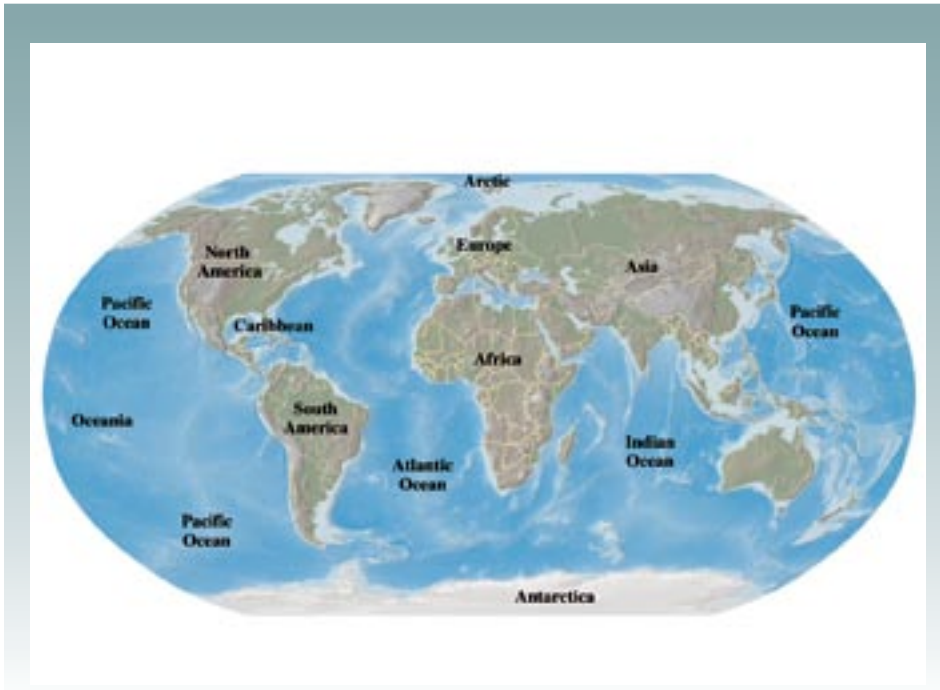


Africa's Migration Brain Drain:

The Costs and Benefits to the Continent

By Dr. Amadu Jacky Kaba



Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century is witnessing two major problems confronting the continent of Africa. They are the massive migration to the West by the educated and economic elites of the continent and the massive deaths of Africans in countries or parts of the continent where not only high proportions of people can at least read and write, but they also have stronger economies. The first problem is that, since the 1990s, hundreds of thousands or more of educated Africans have emigrated

to Western Europe, North America and other parts of the developed world seeking better paying jobs, leaving the continent (with 874 million people as of July 2004) without the adequate human resource needed for any real chance of economic development. The second problem is that countries and regions in Africa with relatively high proportions of Africans who can read and write, or have high school or college education, and strong economies are also the countries and regions that are severely being devastated by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The entire

Southern African region, Kenya, and Nigeria, for example, are where one finds victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The author will pursue this other side of the African brain drain in future research.

This paper focuses on Africa's migration brain drain in order to contribute to the general literature on this important issue. The paper is divided into two sections. The first section examines the rate of emigration to the West by educated Africans and their numbers in these Western nations. It attempts to provide examples for the reasons for such high rates of emigration by the best minds of the continent. It also examines the contributions that these Africans are making in those Western nations and the benefits to their original or ancestral countries as a result of their success in the West.

The second section of this paper presents an overview of estimates of the total numbers and percentages of blacks or people of African descent spread across the world. The data show that due primarily to historical reasons (such as slavery), people of African descent have significant to substantial populations in many countries and regions of the world. Let us begin by presenting an overview of the brain drain from developing countries and Africa's participation in it.

“ ...people of African descent have significant to substantial populations in many countries and regions of the world. ”

Migration Brain Drain from Developing Countries to the West

There has been a substantial increase in the populations of Europe, North America and other developed nations since the 1960s. A substantial portion of that population increase in the West is a result of migration of people from developing nations. Africa is among the parts of the developing world that has contributed significantly to that increase in populations in Europe and North America. The problem, however, for Africa and many other developing countries, is that a large number of those leaving for the developed world are highly educated individuals (Brain Drain) seeking a better life.

A number of reasons have been cited for the migration brain drain from developing countries: “The main reasons for leaving are political conflicts, search for material advantages

and professional dissatisfaction. These and other ‘push’ factors encourage people to leave their countries of origin. At the same time, many industrialized countries lack health professionals and therefore attempt to ‘pull’ doctors, nurses and midwives to work in their countries.”¹ Writing about Taiwan’s brain drain in the 1980s, Zweig (1997) points out that “...low salaries, a lack of political and economic freedom, and a poor intellectual atmosphere were still pushing people to leave Taiwan” (p.94). Commenting on the reasons for China’s brain drain, Zweig notes “Numerous factors have been found to influence China’s brain drain including politics, jobs, family, problems of readjustment, and economic issues” (p.95).² In an article discussing Africa’s brain drain, the World Markets Research Centre asserted that “South African teachers are tempted to go abroad as the salaries and working conditions in the UK and other developed countries are much better than they are at home.”³ As noted above, low salaries are a major factor for the emigration of highly skilled individuals from developing countries. As Faye (2002) observes, in the Western African country of Senegal, a university lecturer earns between \$246 and \$261.5 a month, while a senior professor earns “about 923 U.S. dollars.” In Europe or North America, on the other hand, Faye notes that those same professors will earn three to five times their salaries in Senegal. Faye quoted the Nigerian-born American computer scientist

Philip Emeagwali as saying “In reality, an African professional will not resign from his 50,000-U.S.-dollar a year job to accept a 500-U.S.-dollar a year job in Africa... (p.1).⁴

Zeleza (2002) points out that “The available estimates indicate that the number of foreign-born people, including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, in the 243 countries or territories that made up the world in 1985 increased from 75 million in 1965 to 120 million in 1990” (p.9).⁵ As of 2002, the total number of international migrants was estimated at 175 million (“Approaches to and Diversity of International Migration,” 2003:3).⁶ Leiman (2004) notes that the number of South-North migration of highly skilled workers from 1961 to 1972 was estimated at 300,000. By the end of the 20th century that figure increased substantially. According to Leiman, in the United States alone, the 1990 U.S. Census showed that

“In reality, an African professional will not resign from his 50,000-U.S.-dollar a year job to accept a 500-U.S.-dollar a year job in Africa...”

there were no less than 2.5 million highly educated immigrants from the developing world working or residing in the country (p.677).⁷ In the year 2000, there were 1.92 million employed foreign-born Asians, and 290,400 foreign-born blacks, with at least a bachelor's degree in the United States (National Science Foundation, 2004:176).⁸ Kollehlon and Eule (2003) point to a 1994 study in Britain that found that 26% of African-origin blacks, compared with 13.4% of white Britons have some college education (p.1165).⁹ From 1960 to the 1980s, Canada, Britain and the U.S. accepted over 500,000 specialists (scientists, engineers and medical experts) from developing countries (Ushkalov and Malakha, 2001:80).¹⁰ Gwynne (1999) notes that in 1993, of the 2,685,000 scientists and engineers with degrees in the United States, 431,000 were born abroad. Of the 345,000 scientists and engineers with Ph.D.s, 101,000 were also born abroad. Gwynne also pointed out that 15.5% of all scientists and engineers in U.S. industries were born abroad and that one in three Ph.D.s was born abroad (p.2).¹¹

Migration Brain Drain from Africa

The migration of highly skilled Africans has reached a point that it has caused international debates and suggestions as to how to reduce its impact on the societies left behind. In a speech at the Pan African Conference on the Brain Drain in Elsah, Illinois, on October 24, 2003, the renowned Nigerian-born

“For 10 million African-born emigrants, the world over ‘home’ is synonymous with the United States, Britain or other country outside of Africa. Ten million Africans now constitute an invisible nation that resides outside Africa.”

American computer scientist, Philip Emeagwali, claimed that “For 10 million African-born emigrants, the world over ‘home’ is synonymous with the United States, Britain or other country outside of Africa. Ten million Africans now constitute an invisible nation that resides outside Africa.”¹² Versi (2003) notes that an estimated five million African entrepreneurs and professionals are living in the Diaspora; 40% of African professionals and higher level managers are residing outside the continent” (p.11).¹³

Khan (2003) reports that

Between 1960 and 1975 an estimated 27,000 highly qualified Africans left the continent for the West... This number increased to approximately 40,000 between 1975 and 1984, and then almost doubled by 1987, representing 30% of the highly skilled manpower stock. Africa lost 60,000 professionals (doctors, university lecturers, engineers, etc) between 1985 and 1990, and has been losing an average of 20,000 annually since (p.1).¹⁴

In Europe, Hakata (2003) notes that there are over 7,000 African professionals living and working there (p.60).¹⁵ Among individual African countries, Mclymont (2001) notes that in 1978, 17% of doctors, 20% of university lecturers and 30% of engineers in Sudan had left to work abroad (p.32).¹⁶ Crush (2002) points out that between 1987 and 2001, South Africa lost an estimated 310,000 of its citizens, including 50,000 professionals as a result of the brain drain (p.152).¹⁷ According to Carrington (1999), the migration rates to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries of highly educated individuals from Ghana was “...a dramatic 26 percent; for South Africa, it is more than 8 percent; for Egypt, the Brain drain includes 2.5 percent of such individuals emigrating to the United States and the other 5 percent emigrating to other OECD countries” (p.169).¹⁸ African Brain Drain to the United States.

The United States may have the largest number of educated Africans who live and work in Western nations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2002, there were just over 1 million African immigrants residing in the United States.¹⁹ Just as most African slaves were brought to the United States from West Africa, so also are West Africans, the highest proportion of all African immigrants emigrating to the United States. This fact might contribute to why West Africa is still underdeveloped, because for hundreds of years, that part of the continent has been losing its talented people to Western nations and other parts of the world. According to the United States Census Bureau, as of the year 2000, there were an estimated 881,300 African immigrants in the United States. During that year, West African immigrants comprised 326,507 (37% of the total

African immigrants), with Nigerians comprising 134,940 (41.3%), Ghana 65,572 (20.1%), and Sierra Leone 20,831 (6.4%) of the West African total. East African immigrants in 2000, comprised 213,299 (24.2% of the total African immigrants), with Ethiopians comprising 69,531 (32.6%) of the East African total. North African immigrants in 2000 comprised 190,491 (21.6% of the total African immigrants), with Egyptians comprising 113,396 (59.5%) of the North African total. In 2000, Middle African immigrants in the United States comprised 26,900 (3% of all African immigrants in the United States). In 2000, Southern African immigrants in the United States comprised 66,496 (7.5% of all African immigrants in the United States), with South African immigrants comprising 63,558 (95.6%) of the Southern Africa total. There were 57,607 (6.5% of all African immigrants) African immigrants in the United States in 2000 whose origin was not classified. The 134,940 Nigerian immigrants in the United States in 2000 comprised 15.3% of all African immigrants in the United States.²⁰

As a group, despite their relatively small population, proportionally, the 700,000 African immigrants in the United States (as of March 2000), were not only more highly educated than their compatriots in Africa, but they also have become one of the most highly educated groups within the entire United States, at a time when the people of Africa are at the bottom of the literacy ladder of the

world. Carrington and Detragiache (1999) note that immigrants from Africa to the United States "...consist primarily of highly educated individuals...Migration of Africans with only a primary education is almost nil." (p.48).²¹ According to a 2001 U.S.

"...they also have become one of the most highly educated groups within the entire United States..."

Census Bureau report, 94.9% of these African immigrants age 25 and over have at least a high school diploma, compared with 87% of the American population. Furthermore, among the 700,000 Africans in the United States (as of March 2000), those aged 25 and over with at least a bachelor's degree was 49.3%, substantially higher than the average for the general population of 25.6%, and other foreign born populations in the country such as Asians (44.9%).²²

In a study of blacks in the United States entitled, "Black Diversity in Metropolitan America," Logan and Deane (2003) claimed that, "Education attainment of Africans (14.5 years) is

"According to the United States Census Bureau, as of the year 2000, there were an estimated 881,300 African immigrants in the United States."

higher than Caribbean (12.8 years) and of African Americans (12.5 years) –Indeed, it is higher than even whites and Asians. This suggests that black Africans immigrate selectively to the U.S. based on their educational attainment or plans for higher education.”²³

Moreover, Egyptian and Nigerian immigrants in the United States are among the most highly educated groups. For example, according to a 1998 U.S. Census Bureau publication, of a list of over 65 ancestry groups listed in 1990, 60.4% and 52.9% of people of Egyptian and Nigerian descent age 25 and over, had at least a bachelor’s degree respectively. No other single group (English, German, Irish, Italian, Scottish, Dutch, etc.) had a 50% bachelor’s degree attainment rate. For master’s degrees, 26.3% of Nigerians and 25.6% of Egyptians age 25 and over held such degrees in 1990, with Egyptians third only behind Nigerians and Iranians (26%).²⁴ In a World Bank policy research paper (2003), Richard H. Adams, Jr. points out that in 2000, there were 90,620 Nigerian immigrants and 75,170 Egyptian immigrants age 25 and older who had attained tertiary education in the United States. Adams, also points out that in 2000, there were 361,773 Moroccan immigrants, and 91,019 Tunisian immigrants aged 25 and over who had attained tertiary education in OECD countries (p.26).²⁵

According to Leiman (2004) “...hardly any educated people are left in Sierra Leone to help a country with a literacy rate of only 15%” (p.675),²⁶ with a high proportion of them now

residing in the United States. Faye (2002) notes that in the West African nation of Senegal, over 105 lecturers and researchers have emigrated primarily to American and French universities in recent years (p.1).²⁷ Let us now turn to the costs and benefits of the African brain drain to Africa.

Benefits of the Migration Brain Drain to Western Nations

Many scholars and other commentators have argued that the brain drain from Africa not only benefits Western nations economically and socially, but it also has negative short and long-term consequences for the world’s poorest continent.²⁸ Oyowe (1996) writes that:

The US Congressional Research Service, for example, computed in 1971- 72 that the USA gained \$20,000 annually on each skilled migrant from the developing countries. If this rather conservative amount is extrapolated for Africa, then the continent lost more than \$1.2 billion of investment between 1985 and 1990 on the 60,000 or so African professionals who emigrated during that period. Much closer perhaps to the truth today would be the estimate made by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), using 1979 prices which put a cash value of \$184 000 on each African professional migrant (and this only for those between the ages of 25 and 35) (pp. 59-60).²⁹

Writing about an effort to recruit 44 South African physicians to Canada,

Crush (2002) notes that “The estimated cost of training a South African doctor is \$150,000. The Alberta [Canada] government spent a mere \$1.2 million on the recruiting scheme, providing a \$10.4 million net gain of medical expertise at South African expense” (p.147).³⁰ Leslie (2003) notes that there were 1,700 South African trained doctors practicing in Canada alone (p.12).³¹

An estimated 100,000 expatriates from Western nations or the developed world are employed in Africa. It costs the continent \$4 billion annually to pay the salaries of those foreign expatriates (Kollehlon and Eule, 2003:1165). The World Markets Research Centre (2002) points out that “Skilled workers emigrating from South Africa are estimated to have cost the country R67.8bn (US\$7.8bn) in lost human capital since 1997 and this has retarded economic growth.... Currently there are no official statistics on the number of teachers who have left South Africa, but estimates put the figure at about 8,000”³² According to the International Organization for Migration:

Development in Africa cannot be achieved without the participation of an adequate contingent of human resources. African countries see their efforts on the way to a better health system stifled by professional migration.... an important part of development aid to Africa is used for the training of medical personnel, who subsequently leave to apply

their skills and qualifications in developed countries.... The number of Beninese doctors in France now far exceeds the number in Benin.³³

“...we are operating one-third of African universities to satisfy the manpower needs of Western nations. One-third of [the] African education budget is a supplement for the American education budget.”

The Nobel Prize winning human rights organization, Physicians for Human Rights, released a report in July 2004. They recommended that rich countries in the West reimburse African countries for the loss of their health professionals who leave the continent for the West after being trained by African universities at the expense of the people of the continent. The 129-page report entitled “An Action Plan to Prevent Brain Drain: Building Equitable Health Systems

in Africa” notes that “Data from the American Medical Association (AMA) reveal that 5,334 non-federal physicians trained in African medical schools were licensed to practice medicine in the United States in 2002” (p.2). The report also noted that 1,200 Ghanaian physician are in the United States (p.2).³⁴

Mazrui (2002) points out that Philip Emeagwali might have overstated a claim that Africa is indirectly sponsoring developed countries, but that it might be a claim that is worth considering. According to Mazrui, Emeagwali had asserted that “One in three African university graduates lives and works outside Africa. In effect, we are operating one-third of African universities to satisfy the manpower needs of Western nations. One-third of [the] African education budget is a supplement for the American education budget. In effect, Africa is giving development assistance to the United States” (pp. 86-87).³⁵ Vaknin (2002) also made a similar claim:

Poor countries invest an average of \$50,000 of their painfully scarce resources in every university graduate – only to witness most of them leave for richer places. The have-nots thus end up subsidizing the haves by exporting their human capital, the prospective members of their dwindling elites and the taxes they would have paid had they stayed put. The formation of a middle class is often irreversibly halted by an all pervasive brain drain.³⁶

“The short-term benefit to Africa is seen in the increase in remittances from the West to Africa, especially since the 1990s.”

Haque and Kim concluded in a 1995 International Monetary Fund (IMF) brain drain study that “... human capital flight generates a permanent reduction of per capita income growth rate in the country of emigration, and that the effect of brain drain on the growth in the country of immigration varies over time with the evolution of the ratio of the average level of human capital in the two countries” (p.580).³⁷ It is obvious now that the brain drain from Africa is also beginning to benefit the continent in substantial ways. Let us take a closer examination at this claim.

Benefits of Africa’s Brain Drain to Africa

It is evident that the brain drain from Africa has a short and long-term negative impact on the continent, but it is also true that it has a short and long-term positive impact. The short-

term benefit to Africa is seen in the increase in remittances from the West to Africa, especially since the 1990s. Africans in Western nations such as Canada and the United States tend to be employed in substantial numbers of the top and well-paid occupations of those two host nations, thus giving those African immigrants the ability to send money to their original or ancestral countries. Educational attainment of people in the United States is an important factor in the type of occupation, earning potential or the potential for upward mobility of workers.³⁸ A substantial proportion of African immigrants in the U.S. are "...heavily concentrated toward the top of the occupational hierarchy in managerial and professional specialty (MPS) occupation" (Kollehlon and Eule, 2003:1165). A 2001 U.S. Census Bureau report shows that of the 400,000 African immigrant workers age 16 and over in the United States in March 2000, 36.5% were in managerial and professional specialties (compared to 30.9% of native workers), the highest rank of job categories in the nation. In 1999, that same 2001 U.S. Census report showed that the median income for all households in the country was \$40,816. Of the 300,000 African immigrant households in the United States in 1999, their median income was \$36,371, higher than the average of all foreign-born households of \$36,048.³⁹ In 2000, according to Logan and Deane, the median household income for African immigrants in the United States was \$40,300.⁴⁰ Also, according to the U.S. Census Bureau statistics,

of the over 65 ethnic ancestry groups listed, the median household income for people of Egyptian descent in the U.S. in 1989 was \$40,095, third behind people of Maltese (\$40,552) and Israeli descent at \$40,242.⁴¹

Remittances to the developing world are now reported to be more than foreign aid. In 2003, worldwide remittances to developing countries surpassed \$100 billion (Wucker, 2004: 37).⁴² In 1995 remittances to the developing world was estimated at \$70 billion (Guarnizo, 2003:672).⁴³ Writing about Asian immigrants in the state of California, Saxenian (2002) asserted that "For every 1 percent increase in the number of first-generation immigrants from a given country, for example, California's exports to

that country go up nearly 0.5 percent" (p.30). Lakshmi (2003) reported that 60% of the foreign direct investments in China is made by Chinese people outside the country.⁴⁴ In 2003, migrant worker remittances to Latin America was estimated at \$38 billion (Wucker, 2004: 37).

According to Khan (2003) "Already, remittances (the term for migrant payments) to Africa accounts for more than donor aid flows to the Continent" (p.1).⁴⁵ "The IMF estimates the African Diaspora now constitutes the biggest group of foreign investors in Africa."⁴⁶ According to Khan (2003) "In Eritrea, for example, remittances account for 83 percent of exports. In Mali, payments from migrants account for a staggering 20 percent of gross national product" (p.1). According to Wucker (2004: 37), remittances to Somalia were \$500 million annually. The money wiring service company, Western Union, was cited to have claimed that "... it is not atypical for an immigrant to wire \$300 per month to relatives in Africa."⁴⁷ According to Adams, in 1999, remittances from Egyptians abroad was estimated at \$2.959 billion, \$1.772 billion for Moroccans, \$1.198 billion for Nigerians, \$696 for Tunisians and \$607 million for Sudanese (2003: 23).⁴⁸

The long-term positive benefit of the African brain drain to Africa is that, following the end of the Cold War, various ethnic groups or factions in so many African countries had to settle old grievances and conflicts amongst themselves. Just as we saw with the United States civil war, the Chinese

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civil war or the wars of Europe, those African elites in the West are to some extent there for safekeeping. Many tend to return home once there appears to be political and economic stability.

There is the potential that just as Europe lost so many of its talented citizens to the United States before and after World War II, and those European emigrants to the United States ended up helping to rebuild Europe (through their taxes) during the Marshall Plan, which gave over \$12 billion in grants (which is said to be around \$100 billion in today's economy) after the war, so also Africans abroad will help to rebuild their ancestral continent. From 1961-1968, Britain lost 26,800 scientists and engineers to the United States (*The International Executive*, 1970:24).⁴⁹ Among those European scientists who fled Germany, were Albert Einstein, one of the greatest physicists of all time, and Leo Szilard, who is credited as being the driving force behind America's atomic bomb.⁵⁰ According to Ushkalov and Malakha (2001), "In the period between 1950 and 1960 about 100,000 highly qualified specialists [in Europe] emigrated to the United States" (p.80).⁵¹ But we are now witnessing Europe and East Asia attempting to lure back many of their scientists from the United States.

Blau (2004) points out that the European Union and other European organizations have begun implementing several plans to reduce the continent's brain drain to the United States. According to Blau, 400,000 of the total of 11 million European Scientists work

in the United States. Furthermore, Blau pointed to a 2003 report that claims that over 70% of citizens of the European Union who attained doctorates in the United States from 1991 to 2000, had no real plans of returning and that 75% of European researchers who spent time working in the United

“Although the history of the Black race or people of African descent includes slavery and its bitter memories, an unintended benefit might have resulted from it: the significant to substantial numbers of black people or people of African descent, spread in countries and regions across the globe.”

States in the past ten years decided to remain in America. Germany accounts for 35.9%, the UK 31.9%, Italy 7.7%, and France 6.5% of European scientists in the United States (p.2).⁵² There have also been reports since the 1990s of East Asian scientists in the United States returning ('reverse brain drain') home to work. Wingrove (1995) notes that a significant number of East Asian science and engineering students in the United States are returning home to China, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore.⁵³ Part of the reason for the 'reverse brain drain' is that as East Asia becomes politically stable, and the economies in those countries grow, Western expertise is increasingly needed.

Although the history of the Black race or people of African descent includes slavery and its bitter memories, an unintended benefit might have resulted from it: the significant to substantial numbers of black people or people of African descent, spread in countries and regions across the globe. Let us briefly examine the numbers and percentages of people of African descent around the world.

Black Populations Across the Globe

There are countries and regions across the world in the beginning of the 21st century that boast hundreds of thousands and millions of people of African descent. For instance, as of 2000, there were 36.4 million African Americans in the United States.⁵⁴ In Canada, according to the 2001 Canadian census, of the 29,639,030

people in that nation, blacks comprised 662,215 (2.2%).⁵⁵ In the United Kingdom, White (2002) claims that as of 2001/2002, of the total population of nearly 60 million, blacks comprised 2 percent.⁵⁶

People of African Descent in Latin America and the Caribbean

Just as the United States is among the most ethnically and racially diverse countries in the world, the 22 countries/territories that make up Latin America (excluding the Caribbean) are also among the most ethnically and racially diverse regions of the world. As of July 2001, research shows that out of the estimated total population of 490 million in Latin America, Whites comprised 182,690,461 (37.3%), Mestizos {mixed race of Whites and Indians} 152,751,357 (31%), Amerindians 58,265,533 (11.9%), Blacks 16,071,290 (3.3%), Mixed {Blacks mixed with Indians or with Whites or Mestizos} 73,844,229 (15.2%), and other racial groups comprised 7,217,685 (1.5%). If the definition of blacks in the United States were used in Latin America, the black population would have been at least 90 million (18.5% of the total 490 million) in July 2001.⁵⁷

Blacks or people of African descent constitute the majority of the 24 countries/territories that make up the Caribbean. As of July 2001, research shows that the total population of the Caribbean was 36.9 million and that at least 65% of that total population was black or people of black

“...as of July 2001, there were at least 151 million (19%) blacks or people of African descent out of the estimated 801 million in the Western Hemisphere”

descent.⁵⁸ Research by this author shows that as of July 2001, there were at least 151 million (19%) blacks or people of African descent out of the estimated 801 million in the Western Hemisphere (the Caribbean, North America and Latin America).⁵⁹

Blacks in the Middle East

There is a significant black population in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Israel, Gaza, the West Bank and Yemen. However, unlike Western countries or Latin American nations, countries in that region do not classify blacks separately. Ann M. Simmons reported in the *Los Angeles Times* on Iraq’s black African population by pointing out that “...some academics [in Iraq] put the number of Iraqis of African descent at about

1%, though others believe that figure could be as high as 5%.”⁶⁰

Benefits of the Large Numbers of People of African Descent Outside Africa to the Continent

Due to their large numbers in countries and regions outside Africa, blacks or people of African descent are gaining significant political and economic positions in those entities. For example, blacks (using the definition of a black person in the U.S.), tend to be major players or important officials in many different countries in the world. It is not uncommon to see black cabinet officials, legislators, judges, businessmen and women, etc., in countries in the Middle East, Europe and the Western Hemisphere. This is a very important development. In the United States, for example, the first George W. Bush administration had three blacks in top government positions: Secretary of State, Colin Powell, National Security Adviser (and Secretary of State nominee for

“...people of African descent are gaining significant political and economic positions...”

the second Bush administration), Condoleezza Rice, and Secretary of Education, Rod Paige. Also, the 108th Congress of the United States, which took office in late January 2003, had 39 black members (9%) of the 435 total members in the House of Representatives.⁶¹ The 109th Congress of the United States has one African American Senator, Barack Obama, whose father was a Kenyan immigrant scholar in the United States. In addition, there is a black man, Clarence Thomas, among the nine members of the U.S. Supreme Court. In Brazil, Raymond Colitt reported in the *Financial Times* in May 2003 that, for the first time a black man, Barbosa Gomes, was appointed to the Brazilian Supreme Court.⁶²

In the United Kingdom, as of June 12, 2003, there were two black cabinet ministers in their government. They are Baroness Amos, the first black woman cabinet minister, who was appointed as International Development Secretary in May 2003, and Paul Boateng, Treasury Minister, who became the first black minister in the United Kingdom's history in 2002. There is also the influential Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, who has an African mother from Sudan. Kofi Annan, a Ghanaian, is the Secretary General of the United Nations as of July 2004.

It is extremely important for the future development of Africa, if these powerful and influential people of African descent, spread across the

world begin to meet annually at conferences to get to know each other and discuss ways that they can be helpful to one another and to Africa. As for evidence of the direct benefit to Africa of the large numbers of people of African descent across the world, African Americans are now contributing in many important ways to the continent (Kaba 2004:18-25).⁶³

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to present a variety of statistics pertaining to the numbers of Africans in the Diaspora. It has presented evidence that demonstrated that the continent is losing in many important ways as a result of the continuous emigration of its talented people. The paper, however, also shows that Africa is beginning to benefit from the brain drain as the economic and political conditions of people of African descent in the West improve.

The paper also highlights the massive numbers of people of African descent in the Western Hemisphere, Europe and the Middle East. One could even venture to suggest that due to historical reasons, we might be witnessing a rising and peaceful 'African Empire' outside of Africa, with strong political and economic influences in the twenty-first century. This author has carefully studied the dispersion of different racial and ethnic groups across the world, and found that compared to other racial groups, proportionally people of Jewish, Caucasian and African descent are spread out in significant to substantial numbers in

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many countries and regions outside of their ancestral continents. This means that their descendants will inherit substantial portions of those countries and regions in the decades and centuries to come.

As they continue to rise economi-

cally and politically, people of African descent outside of Africa and Africans, especially the elites, must begin to meet annually at conferences in order to learn about each other's interests, and how they could best help one another. As the data

in this paper has illustrated, people of African descent outside of Africa have a tremendous potential to make important contributions not only in Africa, but also in the countries and regions that they now call home.

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