

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON BRAIN DRAIN AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN AFRICA

By Economic Commission for Africa

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I. INTRODUCTION

I. The development of capacity to manage in the public and private sectors and community groups has been found to be critical for development both in the newly industrialised countries of East Asia and elsewhere. However, in Africa, a lack of consensus on the critical elements needed to build and strengthen indigenous capacities as well as maintain and effectively utilise them have been the problem with past capacity building efforts and the subsequent migration of human capital in the form of brain drain. As Africa loses its 'best and brightest' to the industrialised world the argument has been made that the continent is simultaneously losing a significant proportion of the wealth needed to establish a foundation for future growth. It is against the backdrop of the continuing trend in human capital flight from the continent to developed countries and the implication of this for development capacity that the question of brain drain and capacity building was adopted as the theme for the Regional Conference on Brain Drain and Capacity Building in Africa. The Conference was organised in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 22 to 24 February 2000. The purpose of the Conference was to provide a forum for discussion and critical examination of the key issues pertaining to the brain drain in the African region in the context of the current debate about capacity building in the continent. The Conference specifically attempted to:

- . Review various approaches (and experiences) in capacity building and the extent to which they took account of the flight of human capital and its impact on existing or future capacity .
- . Develop a comprehensive approach for effectively utilising human resources in Africa.
- . Make recommendations and disseminate to African policy-makers practical implementation modalities to stem or reverse the brain drain and build capacity at national and regional levels.
- . Propose the development of concrete project activities geared to strengthening human resource capacity building and the return of qualified African to the continent.

Descriptors : Capacity Building, Private Sector, Economic Development,
Public Sector, Brain Drain, International Migration

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