Executive summary

1.1 African Solutions to African Migration (ASAM) is an innovative, African-run, UK-based non-profit human rights and development organisation, which is working to promote African solutions to African migration.

1.2 We believe that, even with the best moral and political will, the UK and its EU partners would not be able to absorb and resettle the millions of African youths, who may be forced by political and environmental disasters to flee the continent in search of a better life – thanks to population explosion.

1.3 This submission focuses on what the FCO should do within the institutional frameworks for a post-Brexit Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in order to find lasting but humane African solutions to African migration, which is increasingly becoming an international crisis.

1.4 Whether they are called ‘economic migrants’ or ‘refugees’ fleeing persecution, the causes of mass migration from Africa are so deeply rooted in a complex web of social, political, economic, environmental, developmental and cultural issues, that neither the UK, nor the remaining 27 EU member state would effectively handle separately after Brexit.

1.5 Moreover, the UK and all other EU member states are experiencing identical impacts of immigration. For example, anti-immigration parties and racial violence have sprung up, destabilising the established political order all across the European Union. Consider the following:

1.6 The UK’s United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP) and the 2016 vote to leave the EU, France’s National Front, Germany’s Alternative Germany, the Netherlands’ Party for Freedom, Greece’s Golden Dawn, Sweden’s Democrats, Austria’s Freedom Party and Slovakia’s People’s Party.

1.7 Crucially, African migration has potential serious implications for international peace and security. The Horn of Africa, a major source of African migrants, is located in the vicinity of the Red Sea, a strategic trade route between western Europe and the emerging markets in Asia.

1.8 A report by the Centre for International Relations and Sustainable Development (CIRSD) is instructive:

1.9 “There is one overriding truth about the Horn of Africa. It straddles a geographical space of such strategic importance that those who treat it with indifference will one day pay a price for their neglect… Whether the Western interest in counter-terrorism, good governance, and economic growth can find common ground with the security concerns of the Gulf so as to sustain a momentum towards stability and coherence—rather than fracture in the Horn—is one of the great challenges that we collectively face and must meet.”
A post-Brexit Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) should, as a priority, developing practical measures aimed institutional framework for the delivery of sustainable African solutions to African migration.

In the immediate, intensified efforts should be put in creating UN ‘Safe Havens, in Africa to accommodate rescued migrants until suitable resettles arrangements are made.

In the medium to long term, a focus should be directed at empowering rural women do decide if, when and how many children they can afford to feed, cloth, send to school and pay for their medical bills.

1. Population growth and the vicious cycle of poverty and mass migration

2.1 *We believe that, even with the best moral and political will in the world, the UK and its EU partners would not be able to absorb and resettle the unknown numbers of African youths, who may be forced by political and environmental disasters to flee the continent in search of a better life.*

2.2 Why?

According to the 2017 World Population Prospects report:

2.4 “of the additional 2.2 billion who may be added between 2017 and 2050, 1.3 billion will be added in Africa. Beyond 2050, African will be the main contributor to global population growth. The concentration of population growth in the poorest countries will make it harder for those governments to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, combat hunger and malnutrition, expand and update education and health systems, improve the provision of basic services and ensure that no-one is left behind.”

In a related developed, the 2017 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) report ‘Dividend or Disaster’, has indicated that:

2.6 “High-fertility rates and rising numbers of women of reproductive age mean that given current trends, over the next 35 years nearly 2 billion babies will be born in Africa, and its under-18 population will increase by two thirds, to almost a billion children.”

This exponential population growth is likely to present the UK and its European partners with particular humanitarian challenges abroad, and political problems at home for decades to come.

3. Knee-jerk reaction – false solutions
3.1 This inquiry is also taking place when newspaper reports are indicating that “European policymakers had been desperately seeking solutions that would not just deal with those (migrants) already here, but prevent more from coming.”

3.2 According to a report by The Guardian. ‘How Europe exported its refugee crisis to north Africa’, this means:

3.3 “disrupting humanitarian rescue missions in the Mediterranean, offering aid to north African countries that commit to stemming the flow of people themselves, funding the UN to repatriate migrants stuck in Libya and beefing up the Libyan coastguard to detain African migrants pending their deportation.”vi

3.4 The same report also indicated that this approach follows the “creation in 2015 of an initial €2bn EU-Africa trust fund meant to prevent people from leaving in the first place. Spread between 26 countries, the fund pays for skills training in Ethiopia and antenatal care in South Sudan, as well as helping migrants stranded in north Africa return home on a voluntary basis.”

3.5 With corruption rampant corruption in Africa, government officials are likely to steal and divert most of the EU’s migrant trust fund to their bank accounts.

3.6 Even if the funds are properly utilised, it would take years before would-be migrants see their effects in terms of improved access to employment, health services, education, housing, clean water and sanitation systems.

3.7 Moreover, several tragic incidents in UK Immigration Detention and Removal Centres have shown, there are migrants who would take drastic steps to avoid being be returned to their countries of origin. Some have deliberately destroyed their national identification papers while others have taken their own lives.

3.8 “Prince Fosu, 31, was found lifeless on the floor of his cell at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre in west London on 30 October 2012. The Ghanaian national had arrived at the facility six days before his death, after he was arrested for running naked in the street and found to be in the country illegally.”vii

4. Unintended consequence – the alleged African slave markets in Libya

4.1 It would be disconcerting to the civilised modern society to learn that EU policy of funding Libyan authorities to detain African migrants pending deportation may be leading to the horrific allegations of African slave trade.

4.2 The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and several other reputable humanitarian agencies are reporting, with video images, indicating that hundreds of thousands of African migrants are being sold in Libyan slave markets.
4.3 In response, the UN Secretary General Mr. Guterres expressed horror at news reports and videos showing African migrants in Libya allegedly being sold as slaves…Slavery has no place in our world and these actions are among the most egregious abuses of human rights and may amount to crimes against humanity.”

5. **Exercises in futility**

5.1 Maltese Bishop of Gazo, Mario Grechan, might as well have been giving evidence before this Committee when he said during inter-religious funeral service was held for the 24 African migrants who died at sea in April 2015:

5.2 “We are in the presence of twenty-four unidentified dead human bodies but we know that many more, hundreds, lay in the great graveyard that the Mare Nostrum has become. We know not their names, their lives, – we just know that they were escaping from a desperate situation trying to find freedom and a better life.”

5.3 That being the case, it is highly unlikely that the EU’s policy of intercepting migrant ships, detaining migrants in Libya and deporting them to their counties of origin will deter would-be migrants from leaving their homes further south.

5.4 Already, reports are indicating that migrant boats are avoiding the Mediterranean Sea and taking different and more dangerous routes through Spain.

5.5 According to the IOM:

> “the number of migrants arriving on Spain’s southern coast has more than doubled in 2017 from last year as they avoid passing through conflict-wracked Libya on their way to Europe.”

6. **Conclusion – tackle population explosion**

6.1 An overwhelming body of research evidence shows that population exposition is the primary driver, setting a vicious cycle of environmental degradation, conflicts, famine and finally mass migration.

6.2 It is only logical that the cycle can only be broken by tackling population growth. A recent UNICEF report has made the following pertinent observations, which are worth noting:

6.3 “Educating women is one of the fastest ways to reduce poverty and fertility. In sub-Saharan Africa, women with no education have 6.7 births on average. This falls to 5.8 for those with primary education and more than halves, to 3.9, for those with secondary education.”
6.4 Investing in health, protection, and education must become an absolute priority for Africa between now and 2030.

6.5 Conversely, if investments do not occur in Africa’s youth and children, the once-in-a-generation opportunity of a demographic dividend may be replaced by a demographic disaster, characterized by unemployment and instability.

6.6 Improve health, social welfare, and protection services to meet international standards; or beyond, in countries close to attaining them.

6.7 Adapt Africa's educational, skills, and vocational learning system through curricula reform and access to technology, to enhance learning outcomes, so Africa's children and youth are skilled to meet the needs of a twenty-first century labour market.

6.8 Secure and ensure the right to protection from violence, exploitation, child marriage and abuse; and remove barriers preventing women and girls from participating fully in community, workplace, and political life with enhanced access to reproductive health services.”

7. **Recommendations**

7.1 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office should pursue a post-Brexit policy aimed at securing a collective and coordinated response the African migration unfettered diplomatic cooperation with its EU partners. To that end, the FCO should take the following steps:

7.2 Persuade its EU partners not only to end the arbitrary detention of African migrants in Libya, but also to close down all the detention centres as a matter of urgency.

7.3 Use the UK’s influence in the UN Security Council to authorise the creation of UN ‘Safe Havens’ across Africa to accommodate the rescued African migrants.

7.3.1 If they are given protection and basic services, especially housing, education, health, water, sanitation and tools, the usually resilient and industrious asylum seekers would use the security and facilities in their “Safe Haven’ to grow enough food to feed themselves, with surplus sold to other famine-stricken regions of Africa.

7.3.2 In time, their children would become teachers, journalists, doctors, engineers and other professionals and export their skills to other African countries and Europe. Others would become world-class sportsmen and women. Still others would be trained for peacekeeping missions in other trouble spots in Africa.

7.3.3 These success stories would attract other Africans who feel politically and economically disenfranchised to migrate to the “Safe Haven’.
7.3.4 Such Safe Havens would offer the UK and its EU partners a dignified and humane way to solve the social and economic problems of African mass migration.

7.3.5 It would also enable failed asylum seekers to introduce in the continent a new sense of community and entrepreneurship based on the rule of law.

7.4 Empower rural women do decide if, when and how many children they can afford to feed, cloth, send to school and pay for their medical bills.

7.5 Provide easy access to Sexual and reproductive health education and services.

7.6 Offer cash incentive to families to medically limit the number of children.

7.7 Improve health, social welfare, and protection services to meet international standards; or beyond, in countries close to attaining them.

7.8 Adapt Africa's educational, skills, and vocational learning system through curricula reform and access to technology, to enhance learning outcomes, so Africa's children and youth are skilled to meet the needs of a twenty-first century labour market.

7.9 Secure and ensure the right to protection from violence, exploitation, child marriage and abuse.

7.10 Remove barriers preventing women and girls from participating fully in community, workplace, and political life with enhanced access to reproductive health services.

7.11 Invest in the slum cities where some 30 million Africans are living with adequate housing, food, clean water, sanitation or security.

7.12 According to the UN Human Settlements (HABIAT), “Nairobi’s vast Kibera settlement is described as Africa’s largest slum with now home to anywhere between 400,000 and one million people.”

7.13 Besides, most of Kibera’s 50,000 students are attending informal institutions set up by residents and churches. Alcohol and drugs abuse are rife and clean water scarce. Kibera’s residents also struggle with no garbage services, free flowing sewage and the slum became infamous globally for the so-called ‘flying toilets’ - throw away plastic bags used by residents forced to relieve themselves outdoors.”

7.14 Critically, with nothing at all to lose, it is the Kibera and other Nairobi slum dwellers who are always involved in political violence.

“The echoes of women and children weeping, chants by angry protestors, disturbing sights of maimed neighbours, images of smoke billowing into the sky in most of Kenya’s informal sectors are still evident 10 years after Kenya’s 2007-8 dark moment – the memories remain fresh.”
November 2017

i Rise of the nationalists: a guide to Europe’s far-right parties
https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/2017/03/rise-nationalists-guide-europe-s-far-right-parties

ii The Horn of Africa - Its Strategic Importance for Europe, the Gulf States, and Beyond -

iii 1m African migrants may be en route to Europe, says former UK envoy - https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/apr/02/1m-african-migrants-may-be-en-route-to-europe-says-former-uk-envoy

iv 2017 World Population Prospects report – key findings

v Dividend or Disaster: UNICEF’s new report into population growth in Africa -
https://www.unicef.org/zambia/media_20451.html

vi How Europe exported its refugee crisis to north Africa -

vii Harmondsworth immigration centre: Firms face charges over death - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-39492165

viii UN chief ‘horrified’ at buying and selling of African migrants in Libya -

ix Message by H.L. Msgr Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo, during the migrants inter-faith funeral service

x Migrants once again drawn to deadly Spanish route to Europe - https://www.thelocal.es/20170709/migrants-once-again-drawn-to-deadly-spanish-route-to-europe

xi Dividend or Disaster: UNICEF’s new report into population growth in Africa -
https://www.unicef.org/zambia/media_20451.html

xii Slumscapes: How the world’s five biggest slums are shaping their futures - https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-slums-united-nations-world-insight/slumscapes-how-the-worlds-five-biggest-slums-are-shaping-their-futures-idUKKBN12H1GK

xiii Life in an area mapped out as post-election hotspot; tales of Kenya’s slum dwellers -