

Uppsala 15 september 2009

## NEWSLETTER FROM THE NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE

### Comment by Göran Holmqvist Excessive Cost for Migrant Remittances

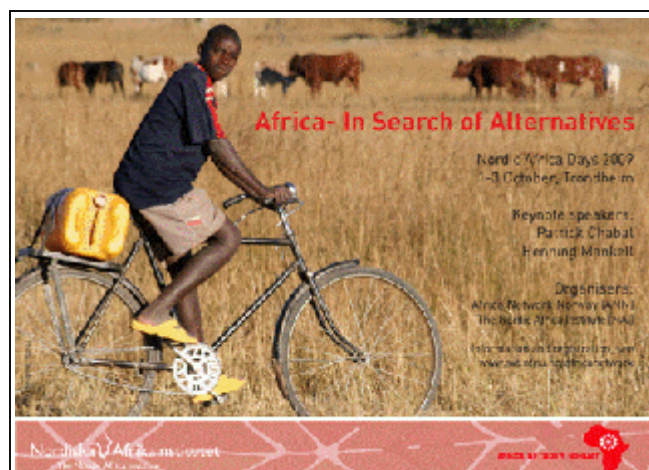


Swedish migrant remittances amount to some 5-6 billion SEK/year and are closely correlated with business cycles. Surprisingly high transfer costs reduce the real value of these flows at the receiving end. More should be done to reduce official data on

these flows and to facilitate cheaper and safer ways for migrants to send money home.

The global flows of migrant remittances - money and gifts sent to relatives back home - have attracted increasing international attention. For many developing countries these flows are an important source of foreign exchange, in some cases even exceeding export earnings. They also constitute an essential element of the survival strategies pursued by many poor households. However, there is surprisingly little knowledge about the remittances sent from Sweden. In a recently published NAI policy note, *Migrant remittance, an Overview of Global and Swedish Flows* (download Policy Note 2009/5 [here](#)), written by Mattias Engdahl of Uppsala University, the topic is reviewed. Some of the findings and conclusions:

- Swedish migrant remittances amounts to some 4 billion SEK according to official statistics, but the true magnitude of this flow is likely to be 30-50% higher, as many migrants prefer to remit through informal channels. There are no official records on the destination of Swedish remittances.
- The Swedish remittances are strongly associated with the business cycles; they were reduced by some 40% after the 1991 financial crisis and by some 20% in the aftermath of the IT bubble crisis in the early



### Nordic Africa Days 2009 Hosts Henning Mankell and Patrick Chabal

Renowned writer and dramatist Henning Mankell and professor Patrick Chabal will deliver keynote lectures at the Nordic Africa Days (NAD) 2009. The conference will take place at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway, on 1-3 October 2009.

Patrick Chabal will speak on 2 October on the subject "**Africa: Suffering and Smiling**". Henning Mankell will deliver his keynote lecture "**On Dignity**" on 3 October.

The conference, titled "Africa - in search of Alternatives" is a co-arrangement between the Nordic Africa Institute and Africa Network Norway.

Read more about NAD [here](#)

### NAI at the European Development Days



NAI participates in the European Development Days (EDD) in Stockholm.

As part of its presidency of the European Union in

2000s. It is safe to predict a substantial reduction as a result of the present financial crisis as well.

- Sending back money home is costly. Remitting 1000 SEK could require a fee of close to 20% of the remitted amount. A more competitive market for remittances would reduce fees and increase the real value of these remittances at the receiving end.
- Two actions that are called for, and which are particularly justified given the objectives of the Swedish Policy for Global Development: i) Improved statistical collection of data on remittances, and ii) a review of the competitiveness of the market for remittances, with view to make it cheaper and safer for migrants to send money home.

**Göran Holmqvist**  
NAI Senior Policy Analyst

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### Recent NAI publications

Liv Haram & Bawa Yamba (eds), *Dealing with Uncertainty in Contemporary African Lives*.

Read more [here](#)

### Co-published books

Bonnie Campbell (ed.), *Regulating Mining for Development in Africa* (with IDRC Canada & Pluto books).

Read more [here](#)

H. Melber & R. Southall (eds), *New Scramble for Africa?: Imperialism, Investment and Development* (with KwaZulu-Natal Press).

Read more [here](#)

### Policy Dialogue

No. 4. Mats Utas, *Sexual Abuse Survivors and the Complex of Traditional Healing. (G)local Prospects in the Aftermath of an African War*.

Download [here](#)

### Discussion Paper

No. 42. Ron Sandrey and Hannah Edinger, *Examining the South African-China Agricultural Trading Relationship*.

Download [here](#)

No. 43. Xuan Gao, *The Proliferation of Anti-Dumping and Poor Governance in Emerging Economies: Case Studies of China and South Africa*.

Download [here](#)

the second half of 2009 Sweden will be host to the yearly European Development Days on 22-24 October 2009. NAI will have a stand in the Swedish Pavilion at the conference and will arrange several events and discussions.

Read more about the EDD [here](#)

### NAI at the Gothenburg Book Fair 2009



The Nordic Africa Institute is again an active participant in the yearly **Gothenburg Book & Library Fair**.

NAI participates with a stand on the "International Square" ("Internationella torget") on the second floor of the fair ground at Svenska Mässan in Gothenburg and is responsible for three seminars and stage events.

NAI guests include Jan Eliasson, former Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs and former president of the UN General Assembly, and the economist Kenneth Hermele, who will have a discussion with NAI research Director Fantu Cheru under the title "**Brussels, Obama and Africa - New Transatlantic Perspectives**".

The event will take place in hall K2 on Saturday 26 September, at 2 p.m.

Read more about NAI participation in the Book & Library Fair 2009 [here](#)

### "Afrika 2010" Web Site Unveiled



A web site for the "Afrika 2010" focus of next year's Book & Library Fair in Gothenburg was unveiled during the summer.

The fair is expected to attract a number of leading African writers, including Nobel Prize Laureates

Wole Soyinka and Nadine Gordimer.

Find the "Afrika 2010" web site [here](#)

### Lecture series on Social Protection

The Nordic Africa Institute, the Institute for Future Studies and Stockholm University/SOFI, arranges a series of lectures on social protection in the autumn of 2009. A select group of internationally recognized scholars have been invited to present findings from recently finalized research programs.

Read more about the lecture series [here](#)

### NAI is on Twitter

To "follow" NAI on Twitter go to [twitter.com/NordicAfrica](https://twitter.com/NordicAfrica).



**Policy Notes**

09/5: Mattias Engdahl, *Migrant Remittances: An Overview of Swedish and Global Flows*.

Download [here](#)

09/6: Ukoha Ukiwo, *Les causes et les remèdes des conflits pétroliers du Delta du Niger*.

Download [here](#)

09/7: Paul Goodison, *The Impact of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Reform on Africa-EU Trade in Food and Agricultural Products*.

Download [here](#)

09/9: Paul Goodison, *Situating the EPA Negotiations - Issues and Unresolved Debates in Africa-EU Trade Relations*.

Download [here](#)



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