



Thematic Workshop on Migration for Development: a roadmap to achieving the SDGs

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1. Framing migration for development

Migration is one of the defining features of the 21st century. It contributes significantly to all aspects of economic and social development everywhere, and as such will be key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Different levels and opportunities of development can be a driver of migration. At the same time, migration can increase development and investment for those who stay, fill labour gaps in host countries and contribute to development in 'transit' countries.

Migration can be an important strategy to achieve development outcomes: it can increase productivity, raise overall education standards and the remittances that migrants send to their countries of origin can support entire communities. Migration is a strong poverty reduction tool – not just for migrants themselves, but also for their families and their wider communities. As such, it has an important role to play in realising the Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

But migration can also have negative impacts on development, and though the relationship between the two is increasingly recognised, it remains under-explored. It is essential to understand the impacts of migration on the achievement of all SDGs, and – equally – the impact this achievement will have on future migration patterns.

The 2030 Agenda and the forthcoming Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration (GCM) are important and concrete opportunities to ensure that the linkages between migration and development are placed at the heart of the global cooperation agenda.

For migration, the SDGs represent an important step in development policymaking. The global targets are the first to recognise migration formally in international development frameworks and processes. This highlights the importance of migration as an issue, and cements it as a factor that can contribute to development and poverty reduction (Box 1).

Box 1: Migration targets within the 2030 Agenda

Within the SDGs, there are five targets which explicitly mention 'migration', 'migrant' or 'trafficking':

- **8.8:** Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.
- **10.7:** Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
- **10.c:** By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%.
- **16.2:** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
- **17.18:** By 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for Least Developed Countries (LCDs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Crucially, the 2030 Agenda has the necessary political 'traction' – in many UN Member States and within the multilateral system. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which mainly focused on low or middle-income countries, the SDGs provide a genuine global framework for action, which require cooperation between all countries. This is crucial as the impact of migration, can be felt at all stages of a migrant's journey: in origin, transit and destination countries. As such, migration requires coordination between countries, different sectors and multiple actors, as well as enhanced coherence across policies. This kind of coordination is only possible with high-level buy-in, something the SDGs have already secured.

By explicitly referring to migration, the 2030 Agenda recognises the economic value of migrants and the challenges they face. While migration and remittances are covered by selected targets, the SDGs are otherwise silent on the myriad ways in which migration interacts with development.

Migration is relevant to many of the other SDGs. If countries are to achieve them, they need to consider the impact of migration at all levels and on all outcomes, beyond the migration-specific targets. Efforts have been made to fill this gap. Migration is not a development 'problem' to be solved, but a mechanism that can contribute to the achievement of many of the goals (see Table 1).

The draft of the GCM that is currently being negotiated by UN member states includes several references to sustainable development, which is one of its 'guiding principles', stating that:

The Global Compact is rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and builds upon its recognition that migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance

for the sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination. Migration contributes to positive development outcomes and to realizing the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Global Compact aims to leverage the impacts of migration on the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the impact this achievement will have on migration in the future.

This represents a concrete opportunity to ensure that sustainable development is not only part of the framing of the GCM, but crucially also its implementation.

2. Linking migration, development and the 2030 Agenda

Based on [recent ODI research](#), we propose four key dimensions of the relationship between migration, development and the SDGs, to be discussed during the workshop in Rabat:

a. Migration is a powerful poverty reduction tool, which can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs

Labour migration can reduce poverty for migrants themselves, their families, and their origin and host countries. Migrants and their families benefit from increased income and knowledge, which allows them to spend more on basic needs, access education and health services, and make investments. For female migrants, increased economic resources can improve their autonomy and socio-economic status.

In origin countries, migration can lead to increased wages and greater economic growth through higher incomes, spending and investment of migrant households. Migration is mostly a regional phenomenon with migrants moving to neighbouring countries either temporarily or as part of their journeys. Economic and other opportunities in these 'transit' countries are important factors in migrants' decision making, and the contribution that migrants make to local economic development in different countries along their journeys is often overlooked. In host countries, migrants can fill labour gaps and contribute to services and the fiscal balance.

However, migration does not always achieve its full potential: poor urban migrants often work in the informal sector where the rewards of migration are lower. The high costs involved in different stages of the migration process reduce financial payoffs, and restrictions on mobility prevent those who would benefit the most from migrating in a regular and orderly way. Large and unexpected migration flows can also disrupt education systems, disadvantage migrant and refugee children, and create tensions in host communities.

b. The specific risks and vulnerabilities of migrants are often overlooked

The risks and vulnerabilities of migrants throughout the migration process are often overlooked in development processes. Migrants experience both migration-specific vulnerabilities – that is, those experienced by migrants only – and migration-intensified vulnerabilities, when migration exacerbates a disadvantage that can be experienced by all. An example of the former is female migrants working in less regulated and less visible sectors being at greater risk of exploitation and abuse, including trafficking. An example of the latter is that migrants are more likely to live in informal settlements, lacking access to health, education, water and social protection services.

c. The implementation of existing programmes is often weak for migrants

Access to basic services, such as health education and social protection, is key for migrants' livelihoods and development prospects. While in some cases migrants are able to access these services through existing or specifically designed programmes, their implementation is often weak and levels of uptake are low. A number of factors contribute to this: limited capacity in implementing institutions; funding gaps; a lack of political support; and reluctance among migrants to participate.

For instance, while migrants in Thailand are covered by the country's universal healthcare scheme, relatively few migrants take advantage of it. This is due to language and cultural barriers, fear of discrimination, fear of losing employment due to absence, and poor employer compliance with the scheme.

In principle, three quarters of the world's migrants are entitled to some form of social protection through a multilateral, bilateral or unilateral agreement. But in practice, enforcement of these agreements is poor, implementation weak and take-up by migrants low. Likewise, while often eligible for education, immigrant students tend to face greater difficulties than their host-country peers in accessing education and achieving good learning outcomes.

d. There are major data gaps

Finally, there are significant data gaps. Data are often not disaggregated by migrant status or comparable across different groups and countries. As a result, we do not know the share of migrants actually able to participate in social protection programmes, access health services or attend school.

The collection and monitoring of this disaggregated data, accompanied by migrant-specific indicators, is vital to understand the vulnerabilities and needs of migrants. Only then can governments and non-governmental organisations design migrant-specific and sensitive support.

Unfortunately, there are no internationally standardised approaches for collecting this data, and only limited coordination of the data that different actors have already collected. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the agreement of a new GCM offer opportunities to address this important gap.

3. Implications for migration and development policies

As the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) is being negotiated at the UN, it is more important than ever to understand these relationships and their implications for policy. Beyond the guiding principle above, it will be important to integrate sustainable development across the objectives of the GCM, highlighting the different ways in which migration can help achieve development outcomes.

However, the GCM and migration policies are not the only entry point to ensure policy coherence. Development policies and programmes can be part of a comprehensive strategy to better manage migration and make the most of its economic and social benefits. To do this, migration should be 'mainstreamed' in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is important to identify and highlight the links, opportunities and challenges related to migration under specific goals and targets. Policymakers should consider, measure and take account of migration to harness its positive benefits and reduce potential challenges.

The multiple facets of the relationship between migration and development offer concrete policy entry points to help achieve the SDGs – including in specific sectors, such as health and education. For instance, the International Labour Organization’s decent work agenda is highly relevant to migration. Any programming as part of this agenda should consider the specific vulnerabilities of migrants in the workplace and the specific barriers migrants face in accessing workplace social protection schemes.

The GCM represents a unique moment of opportunity to put the nexus between migration and development on the global policy agenda. The SDGs, meanwhile, provide a holistic and comprehensive framework to support this nexus. It will be important not to limit the focus to specific targets on migration and remittances, but rather to consider the role of human mobility in achieving all the goals. And, while the GCM framework and aspirations are global and grounded in international cooperation, actions need to be led locally and rooted in the specific contexts, countries, regions and markets where particular development opportunities and challenges exist.

4. The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)

In its first decade, the GFMD has remained at the forefront of international debates and cooperation on migration and development. By offering its informal space, in-depth substance and multi-stakeholder participation, the GFMD advocates for the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the promotion of evidence-based policy-making and practical action in the field of migration and development.

Upon the invitation by the President of the ECOSOC, the GFMD submitted a thematic contribution to the 2017 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017, and will submit its report to this year’s HLPF with the theme, ‘*Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies*’, by the end of April 2018. Conversely, pursuant to the New York Declaration, the GFMD contributed to the GCM’s intergovernmental process. The GFMD Thematic Recollection 2007 to 2017 was submitted as a substantive input to the Zero Draft of the Global Compact. The latest GCM draft invites the GFMD to contribute its platform for the implementation, follow up and review of GCM commitments.

Under the Co-Chairmanship of Germany and Morocco, the GFMD will propose to the Steering Group that it conducts a review in 2018 to consider GFMD’s potential role after the adoption of the GCM.

5. Workshop objectives and structure

There are three overall aims for this event:

1. To discuss and make concrete proposals on how the Global Compact on Migration can take forward the interaction between migration and the SDGs.
2. To explore the role of the GFMD in showcasing state-led initiatives and experiences on the implementation of migration-related commitments in the SDGs.
3. To feed back on and finalise the GFMD report and plans for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2018.

To achieve these aims, the two-day event will be structured in the following way:

- **Opening plenary**

This session will set the scene, exploring the overarching relationship between migration and development, and the links with the Global Compact on Migration.

- **Breakout Thematic sessions**

The substantive part of the event will be structured around six thematic break-out sessions: access and contribution to basic services, climate and natural resources, labour and skills, cities and urbanisation, women and girls and citizenship and identity. These sessions will discuss the specific impact of migration on development outcomes, and explore how migration can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

These sessions will be led by thematic experts and states with first-hand experience on the ground of the issues at play. The workshops will be structured to allow for open discussion of the challenges and opportunities, and an exploration of good and innovative practices on the ground. At the end of the session, there will be a chance to formulate policy options and/or options for practical actions to these discussions forward.

- **Closing plenary on regional experiences**

At the end of Day One, there will be a Ted Talk style panel focused on regional initiatives. Two important frameworks will be explored in this regard: the OECD's newly completed project on the [Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development](#) and the IOM's [Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning](#) initiative.

Within all of these sessions, there will be ample time for member states to contribute, to discuss the challenges and opportunities involved in navigating the relationships between migration and development, and to chart a proactive and sustainable way forward.

Table 1: The impact of migration on different SDGs and Targets

Prepared by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) as part of its [Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) project.

Goal	Target	Link with migration	Brief	
1	No poverty	1.1	<p>Migration is a powerful poverty reduction strategy, for migrants themselves and their families in origin countries. It has substantial positive impacts on income and other areas of human development.</p> <p>Increased immigration does not lead to higher poverty rates in host countries; in fact, migrants often add value to domestic economies.</p> <p>Rural to urban migration contributes to economic development and to overall poverty reduction.</p> <p>Access to education for migrants can lead to rising incomes.</p>	<p>Poverty</p> <p>Poverty</p> <p>Urbanisation</p> <p>Education</p>
		1.3	<p>Labour migrants can be a particularly poor and vulnerable group, but often lack eligibility for legal social protection and/or are not effectively covered. Where migrants are covered, benefits are often non-portable, further reducing coverage amongst a group that is highly mobile.</p>	<p>Social protection</p>
		1.4	<p>Migration can help families in countries of origin to improve their wellbeing through increased income and consumption. Indirect effects include higher savings, investment and protection from shocks and stresses.</p>	<p>Poverty</p>
		1.5	<p>The poor are the most vulnerable to climate change. They are likely to live in high-risk areas, have fewer means to prepare, and lack information to anticipate, and respond to, a disaster. Yet they are also the people who will find it hardest to migrate.</p>	<p>Climate change</p>
		1.a	<p>Labour migrants present an opportunity to increase the tax base, and a greater number of contributors to social insurance-type schemes leads to better risk pooling and financial sustainability.</p> <p>Remittances and other forms of diaspora financing can be mobilised to improve infrastructure, services and development more generally.</p>	<p>Social protection</p> <p>Poverty</p>
2	Zero hunger	2.2	<p>Migrants are a particularly vulnerable group but may not be reached by assistance programmes aimed at improving nutrition.</p>	<p>Health</p>
3	Good health and well-being	3.1	<p>Eligibility for health access is often tied to citizenship/permanent residency status, with only some countries opening up (emergency) health care to all, regardless of status.</p> <p>Migrants, particularly those without legal residence permits, sometimes experience higher maternal mortality and morbidity relative to the host populations.</p>	<p>Citizenship</p> <p>Health</p>

Goal	Target	Link with migration	Brief
	3.8	As internal migrants are often in the informal sector they risk exclusion from coverage of insurance schemes and in many cases are not considered in universal health coverage programmes.	Health
4	Quality education 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.7	Migration helps improve education access and educational outcomes for families in origin countries, yet migrant children in host countries often suffer disadvantages in accessing quality education Education plays an important role in social integration, economic mobility and learning outcomes for migrant children.	Education Education
	4.1	Eligibility for primary and secondary school education can be tied to citizenship/permanent residency status, which means that migrant children can be prevented from accessing education, particularly children who are undocumented. Often this also includes second generation migrants.	Citizenship
	4.4	Internal migrants often lack the skills and training required to access decent jobs and as a result end up working in low-productivity jobs in the informal sector.	Urbanisation
5	Gender equality 5.2	Migrant and refugee women and girls can experience violence at all stages of the migration process, especially during transit (e.g. at refugee camps) or at their destination (e.g. by an employer).	Gender
	5.4	Many migrant domestic workers are female. Actions that increase the value of domestic work would reduce the burden of unpaid work and enhance the well-being, dignity and status of paid and unpaid care and domestic workers, including migrants.	Urbanisation
6	Clean water and sanitation 6.1, 6.2	Large-scale movements of people could increase stress on fragile water supply systems.	Health
7	Affordable and clean energy	NONE	
8	Decent work and economic growth 8.5	Migration, in particular remittances, can lead to economic growth in origin countries. It can also lead to a reduction in unemployment and increase wages in countries of origin, also affecting poverty indirectly. Female migrants and refugees may be prevented from working, or may experience de-skilling or being confined to 'feminine' jobs, often paid or valued less than other work.	Poverty Gender
	8.8	Low-skilled rural to urban migrants seeking better job opportunities in the city often end up working in precarious occupations in the informal economy. Female migrants in stereotypically 'feminine' work (e.g. live-in care and domestic work) are frequently isolated and therefore more vulnerable to exploitation, violence and abuse.	Urbanisation Gender

Goal		Target	Link with migration	Brief
9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	9.5	<p>Migration leads to greater diversity in host countries, and this can foster innovation.</p> <p>In origin countries, migration can also foster innovation through social remittances, skills transfers and return migration.</p>	Poverty
10	Reduced inequalities	10.1	<p>Migration can reduce global inequalities, among countries and people, as people migrate from low- to high-income countries, and send remittances back home.</p> <p>Whether migration reduces inequality within origin countries depends on where migrants sit on the income distribution. In some contexts, migration can lead to higher inequality as the poorest are often unable to migrate. When the costs of migration are reduced, the potential to reduce inequality is also greater.</p>	<p>Poverty</p> <p>Poverty</p>
		10.2	Education can improve the social, economic and political inclusion of migrant children, particularly if they are better educated regarding their host country and able to speak the majority language.	Education
		10.3	Removing legal barriers to accessing education – particularly for the children of irregular migrants and refugee children – would boost enrolment rates, as would ensuring that all people have a legal identity and the necessary paperwork to allow them to enrol in school.	Education
		10.4	Social protection policies often do not guarantee equal access to all workers, which means that labour migrants have lower eligibility for and take-up of social protection. If vulnerable groups are unable to participate in social protection, inequalities widen.	Social protection
11	Sustainable cities and communities	11.3	Actions that take into account the needs of poor internal migrants, and the urban poor more generally, enhance their well-being and are more likely to maximise benefits of migration for the host city economy.	Urbanisation
12	Responsible consumption and production		<i>NONE</i>	
13	Climate action	13.1, 13.3	People affected by climate change will seek to diversify their livelihoods and rely on remittances from relatives elsewhere to cope with seasonal variation, extreme events and longer term trends. Adaptation policies can ensure income diversification into less climate vulnerable sectors.	Climate change
		13.2	Not taking into account rural-to-urban migration patterns in the future could result in incomplete adaptation plans, which fail to protect important economic sectors from climate change impacts.	Climate change
		13.3, 13.a	Better consideration of migration as a response to climate change – both extreme and slow-onset changes – and better financial planning are required to divert funds from adaptation to addressing a migration crisis.	Climate change
14	Life below water		<i>NONE</i>	

Goal	Target	Link with migration	Brief	
15	Life on land	NONE		
16	Peace, justice and strong institutions	16.2	<p>Attempts to eliminate child labour, exploitation and trafficking through financial support to families are all likely to boost education for migrant children by freeing them to receive an education that they would not otherwise be able to have.</p> <p>Irregular and young migrants are at greater risk of violence, trafficking and exploitation. Migrant girls are more likely to be trafficked or experience sexual exploitation than boys.</p> <p>When migrants, including second-generation migrants, cannot obtain citizenship or residency status, they are more vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers.</p>	<p>Education</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Citizenship</p>
		16.7	Migration can contribute to making host countries more diverse and inclusive. Lack of citizenship or residency can prevent migrants from being full members of society, including access to services, and can lead to tensions and conflict.	Citizenship
17	Partnerships for the Goals	17.8	<p>Data on migration, particularly on internal migration, is very limited. Improving the evidence base is fundamental in order to better understand the scale and impact of internal migration, and design better policies.</p> <p>Data pertaining to migration background and education level should be collected together. This information should be used to support vulnerable groups, and not for reporting to security-related institutions.</p>	<p>Urbanisation</p> <p>Education</p>
		17.18	There are no international standardised approaches for monitoring variables relating to the health of migrants. Development of data collection, monitoring and surveillance mechanisms is needed to understand migrant health needs.	Health



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