UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

Division for Inclusive Social Development

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

United Nations Expert Group Meeting

in preparation for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of Family, 2024

New York, 7-8 September 2022

**Megatrends & Families:**

**Focus on Digital Technologies,**

**Migration and Urbanization**

## General

- Integrate a family lens in the analysis, implementation, and follow-up of international frameworks like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration; the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Paris Agreement, and others. Using family lens and focusing on families will allow for a clearer picture of family

wellbeing to develop and will contribute to the evidence base for policy development, improvement and implementation.

- Increase the awareness and collaboration between policy makers, transnational NGOs, and academics that address the linkages between the appropriate SDG's and their targets specifically around migration, urbanization, gender equality, and vulnerable populations.

- Promote research on the impact of urbanization on family dynamics and cohesion, examining the consequences of household size on fertility decisions, and exploring the impact of migration on nuclear families' wellbeing and their extended families back home.

- Support civil society and local leaders that are doing important work at the grassroots.

- In the spirit of SDG 17, facilitate strong multilateral and regional partnerships on climate-induced migration, labor migration, transnational/multi-local family policies, and other relevant issues driving displacement of families.

- Routinely collect and share disaggregated data – in collaboration with UN agencies, universities, and NGOs – to better document statistics on migration, climate-induced displacement, labor migration, and changes to the family unit over time.

## New technologies

- Harness new technologies allowing for innovative types of data gathering, storing, analysis and sharing.

- Ensure access to the internet, to higher speed internet, and to devices for communication and access to the internet. Attend to equity issues to ensure level access and digital skills for immigrant and transnational

families across the trajectory from preparation for migration to settlement and potential re-entry.

- Ensure that professionals who support families also have the devices, internet access, skills and competencies to deploy with families ethically, safely and effectively and can serve as good role models for digital practices.

- Help family members gain digital literacy skills to use the internet comfortably and safely for social connectivity and integration into new communities.

- Empower immigrants, particularly women, with skills to deploy technology in work, and as members of the tech sector.

- Attend to regulation and policy for the ways in which immigrants are represented in data sources, viewing data as a public good. This includes attention to public discourse and to policies that safeguard immigrant children and families from surveillance, privacy invasions and threats from traffickers.

- Establish programs to help parents face the challenges they meet to mediate the relation between their beliefs regarding technologies and childrens' digital media self-efficacy and share good practices in harnessing digital tools for parenting education and overall family well-being.

## Migration and technology

- Attend to equity issues to ensure level access and digital skills for immigrant and transnational families across the trajectory from preparation for migration to settlement and potential re-entry. This includes attention to access and skill of professionals who work with immigrant families

- Provide digital literacy infrastructure that supports social connectivity and integration into new communities.

- Empower immigrants, particularly women, with skills to deploy technology in work, and as members of the tech sector.

- Attend to regulation and policy involving how immigrants are represented in data sources, viewing data as a public good. Attend to public discourse and safeguard immigrant women, children and families from hate speech, surveillance, privacy invasions and threats from traffickers.

- Examine the usability of digital applications used by migrating individuals, children and families, including language and currency conversion, literacy level, and the perception of safety.

## Migration

- Promote progress towards the institution of universal protection systems including for migrants and vulnerable populations in cities and urban margins.

- Address gender inequality at every societal level with a specific focus on family and community environments amongst migrants and / or urbanites.

- Provide access to educational, health, mental health and other such services to migrants.

- Focus on urban margins and the experiences of newly arrived migrants not just migrants who have long lived in a certain area.

- Focus on vulnerable populations in conflict zones and areas of natural disasters, including family members with disabilities.

- Invest in cash and in-kind transfers and subsidies which are one proven mechanism for supporting families and promote progress towards the universal social protection.

- Change the dialogue about migrants and refugees. Shift the global discourse from migrants being a "burden" to migrants as bringing skills, innovation, and an entrepreneurial spirit that can be used to improve their host settings.

- To address the challenging outcomes of LAC migration and support transnational families, it is necessary to implement measures and actions around the four key pillars identified by the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection U.S. Government and Foreign Partner Deliverables (The White House, 2022) including the following:

- Stability and assistance for communities. It includes implementing guidelines on fair hiring practices, provision of mental health services, food, and housing.
- Expansion of legal pathways, including temporary work visas while in transit.
- Humane migration management along migration corridors, such as shelters, detention centers, and refugee centers, safeguarding the family unit.
- Coordinated emergency response by governments to families facing natural disasters due to climate change.
- Strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation to support economic and social development, especially in countries with high levels of poverty and violence. Encourage investment by migrants in their countries of origin and the return of skilled labor (in sectors such as health, education, and agriculture, among others) to promote the institutional accumulation of applied knowledge.

- Focus the immigration policy framework on the potential contributions of each family members to society and avoid, e.g., framing disability as a burden on the healthcare system. To better support family wellbeing, a concerted effort is needed to determine required healthcare and support services, then connect newly arriving families to them immediately.

- Increase cooperation and information sharing between countries about migration, including the collection and collation of meaningful and comparable data that could benefit researchers and policymakers. Invest in research on the impact of migration on left-behind children.

- Empower immigrants, particularly women, with skills to use technology especially in relation to gender-based violence.

- Improve family reunification policies.

- Invest in data collection as data with the family as a unit is needed, including indigenous families and families with disabilities. More research, both short and long-term, is also needed regarding push and pull factors for immigration and urbanization and how family wellbeing is enhanced or diminished by these experiences.

- Invest in data disaggregation to account for migration status, income levels, social groupings etc. to allow voice and reach to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families and populations.

- Invest in research on the impact of migration on left-behind children.

## Urbanization

- Work towards global understandings / definitions of urbanization.

- Prepare for increased rural to urban migration, including expanded services for children and vulnerable groups; simultaneous increased governmental attention to rural areas to dissuade rapid urbanization.

- Fund infrastructure, and continued maintenance that allows and encourages safe spaces for youth and families, such as community centers.

- Invest in public and safe spaces to strengthen communities.

- Integrate the perspectives of local governments into international discussions, given their role in implementing such agendas.

- Institute more wide-spread participatory processes in urban and rural areas to facilitate poverty eradication.

- Incorporate recent migrants into urban planning councils to represent their needs.

- Highlight the needs of recent migrants vs. long-established migrants in urban areas and create appropriate programs and policies to facilitate integration and coordination between urban, regional, national and international development planning.

- Acknowledge and support the link between urbanization, physical and mental health and access to nature / green spaces.

- Include constituencies from rural areas so that those places do not get left behind with respect to access to services, education, and health partnerships.

- Incorporate a life span perspective in urban planning to include special access for children, individuals with disabilities and elderly persons.

- Introduce housing policies that support the spatial closeness of nuclear and extended families.

- Further enhance social inclusion and social protection policies for migrant workers and expatriate families.

- Promote effective partnership between, public, private and non-governmental sectors in developing comprehensive urbanization plans that meet family needs and ensure sustainability.

- Create institutional channels for non-state actors to participate and give their input .

- Devolve more power to municipal governments and let the latter be in the driver seat, for making urban policies.

- Design urban employment promotion policies to provide opportunities for both current families and those who will come in search of better opportunities.

- Design policies focusing not only on homeownership for families but also taking into account the connection to infrastructure and urban services of all family members.

- Improve infrastructure and safety to promote a better use of public transportation for all family members and the reduction of private consumption impact on mobility.

- Promote quality employment, particularly for women and youth by tackling negative externalities associated with urban growth due to the weak planning, low productivity, informality, lack of investment in infrastructure and knowledge economies, that limit the benefits cities can offer to families towards agglomeration economies and of scale, the proximity of the factors of production, the exchange of ideas and innovation.

- Expand access and allocate more funding to social safety nets, services, and floors – especially in climate hotspot cities where rural-urban migration is expected to increase.

- Boost internet infrastructure and connectivity rates and child-friendly digital access as a means of 1.) enabling families to maintain relationships with relatives abroad, and 2.) providing families with critical information and an alternative way to continue education amid natural disasters.

- Create and uplift community support systems/groups for vulnerable families, especially those that contribute resources and services to mental health, relationship-building, and trauma-informed care.

- Reduce intergenerational cycles of inequality, poverty, social exclusion, and discrimination that predispose families to involuntary migration, homelessness, trafficking, domestic violence, and other unsafe situations.

- Ensure that all people have access to safe, affordable, and family-sized housing that can stand up to natural disasters and extreme climate events.

- Improve labor migration regulations and agreements, minimize exploitation of migrant workers abroad, recognize the rights of migrant workers, and endeavor to provide more opportunities for meaningful employment/decent work domestically.

## Climate change as related to urbanization and migration

- Strengthen disaster-risk reduction planning and urban planning by localizing national frameworks to better address the needs and vulnerabilities of communities.

- Identify and promote more environmentally friendly approaches to fishing, farming, and extractive industries, while recognizing that consumption and production patterns from the Global North disproportionately affect the climate and economies of Global South countries.

- Recognize that migration and climate change are highly gendered and offer gender-sensitive programs to support female migrants since migrant mothers and women face challenges that are uniquely exacerbated by gender roles, sociocultural norms, and familial expectations.

- Include families in the design and implementation of policies that affect them, especially those related to climate & disaster risk reduction and other socioeconomic factors that drive migration.

## Homelessness

- Recognize that while the personal circumstances that lead to homelessness can differ for each family, many of the structural and systemic failures contributing to family homelessness are quite similar, especially in urban environments.

- Use Housing First approach and provide families with good quality homes with support as cities and their transformation can play a key role in empowering families and meeting the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Ensure that homeless families and individuals have access to the internet as digital media is key to their accessing information and services.

- Create Social Supportive Housing that is not contingent on private actors and the private market.

## Positive parenting

- At parent/familial level - As the strongest protective factor for OCSEA is involvement of actively engaged parents utilizing positive parenting practices, focus on respect and interest in the child  and avoid excessive internet restriction or punishment, in addition, making sure parents remain an integral support system for children even during adolescence when children often seek greater autonomy is essential.

- At community level - Focus on skill-building and behavior change over attitude and awareness – Long term, intensive, and interactive – Utilize specific examples and scenarios that children will relate to – Trained teachers with access to support and guidance – Mechanism to assess learning.

- At Government level - Adopt clear international standards for enforceable laws to protect children; Develop clear plans to assess prevalence rates, identify indicators of successful intervention, and establish a budget (financial and human capital) – Interventions should include primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.