

## Integrating migration into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

*1. International migration, while addressed in United Nations summits for decades, was not included in the Millennium Development Goals.*

**The Programme of Action<sup>1</sup>, adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), provides the most comprehensive, negotiated text on international migration to date.** In Chapter X, the Programme of Action examines the opportunities and challenges of international migration for development, highlights the rights of documented migrants and lists concrete actions to address the challenges of undocumented migration. The Programme of Action, which was extended by the General Assembly beyond 2014<sup>2</sup>, also calls on governments to address the root causes of forced displacement, to strengthen protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers, and to redouble efforts to seek durable solutions to their plight. Subsequent United Nations conferences and summits in the social and economic field have affirmed the need to uphold the human rights of international migrants, respect labour standards for migrant workers, enhance the contributions of international migration to development, address the challenges associated with migration, and strengthen international cooperation on migration.<sup>3</sup>

**Previous world population conferences had examined aspects of international migration.** In addition to considering international migration within the context of overall population dynamics, the World Population Plan of Action, adopted at the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest, and the Recommendations for Action, agreed at the 1984 International Population Conference in Mexico City, called attention to the need to respect the human rights of international migrants, to mitigate the effects of the "brain drain", to uphold labour standards for migrant workers, to prevent discrimination, to promote understanding about contributions of migrants to development, to provide prospective migrants with

accurate information, to regulate migration flows through bilateral and multilateral agreements, and to find lasting solutions to the situation of refugees.<sup>4</sup>

**Despite the emerging consensus, the Millennium Development Goals did not take account of the role of international migration.** Although the international community had recognized the important relationship between international migration and development and identified a series of concrete actions to enhance the benefits of migration for development while mitigating its negative effects as early as 1974, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) did not refer to the role of international migration, or financial remittances by migrants, in reducing poverty, improving health, and expanding access to education.<sup>5</sup>

*2. Since 2006, the international community has taken important steps to integrate international migration in the global development agenda.*

**The 2006 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development was the first UN summit focusing on international migration.<sup>6</sup>** Since the Cairo Conference, held in 1994, the General Assembly had regularly considered the question of whether to convene an international conference on international migration.<sup>7</sup> After years of deliberation, the General Assembly decided in 2003 to organize a High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. The 2006 High-level Dialogue was the first high-level event convened by the General Assembly dedicated exclusively to this issue. Ahead of the High-level Dialogue, and in response to recommendations of the Global Commission on International Migration, the Secretary-General established the Global Migration Group (GMG), an inter-agency group responsible for promoting the application of international instruments and norms in the area of international migration, for increasing system-wide coherence, and for strengthening the response of the United Nations system

and the international community to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration.<sup>8</sup> Although the 2006 High-level Dialogue did not result in a formally agreed outcome document, the proposal of the Secretary-General to create an informal, voluntary and state-led forum to continue discussions on international migration and development received widespread support.

**Since 2007, the Global Forum on Migration and Development has provided a platform for informal dialogue and cooperation on international migration.<sup>9</sup>**

Annual meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), chaired by the governments of Belgium (2007), the Philippines (2008), Greece (2009), Mexico (2010), Switzerland (2011), Mauritius (2012), Sweden (2014) and Turkey (2015), have fostered dialogue and cooperation on international migration. The forum has allowed governments to examine controversial issues, such as the rights of migrants, linkages between migration and the environment, and the challenges of forced migration. In addition, it has promoted partnerships and cooperation, and strengthened interactions with civil society. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration, a position created by the Secretary-General in early 2006, acts as the main link between the United Nations and the state-led Global Forum and fosters cooperation between the GFMD and members of the GMG.<sup>10</sup>

**The second High-level Dialogue, convened in October 2013, paved the way for the integration of migration into the next generation of development goals.<sup>11</sup>**

At the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held in October 2013, the General Assembly adopted a landmark declaration by consensus, acknowledging the role of migration in realizing the MDGs and recognizing that human mobility is a key factor for sustainable development that should be adequately considered in the elaboration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the 2013 meeting, the Secretary-General presented an eight-point agenda for action, a roadmap that the GMG has committed to implement.<sup>12</sup> In 2014, the General Assembly decided to hold a third High-level Dialogue before the end of 2019.<sup>13</sup>

*3. By mainstreaming migration as part of the sustainable development goals, the 2030 Agenda marks a new era in the consideration of international migration at the United Nations.*

**With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, migration has been well integrated into the sustainable development goals and targets.** The Declaration of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development,<sup>14</sup> a transformative, ambitious and inclusive agenda that promises to "leave no one behind", includes

references to international migration, mobility and migrants in all key sections, namely (a) in the introductory text, (b) in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and targets, and (c) in the outcome document of the third international conference on financing for development. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the international community has recognized the important linkages between international migration and development for countries of origin, countries of destination and for migrants and their families.

*(a) Declaration of the 2030 Agenda*

**The Declaration of the 2030 Agenda stresses the multidimensional reality of migration.** The Declaration of the 2030 Agenda recognises the contribution of migration to inclusive growth. It calls on Members States to strengthen international cooperation to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration with full respect for human rights and for the humane treatment of migrants, regardless of their migration status, and of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The Declaration highlights the vulnerability of migrants, refugees and IDPs, and emphasizes that forced displacement and related humanitarian crises threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades.

**Figure 1. Migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**



- Respect the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status
- Take into account the vulnerabilities of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons
- Recognize the contribution of migration for global sustainable development
- Address forced displacement and humanitarian crises
- Promote international cooperation
- Strengthen the resilience of host communities
- Support the right of citizens to return to their country of origin

The Declaration reiterates that migrants have the right to return to their country of citizenship, and that countries must facilitate the return of their citizens. Further, it notes that migrants, refugees and IDPs should be protected from forced labour and human trafficking and should have

access to education to enable them to participate fully in society. The resilience of communities hosting refugees, particularly in developing countries, should be strengthened. To measure progress and to leave no one behind, the Declaration stresses the importance of data, disaggregated by migratory status, in following up and reviewing the implementation of the SDGs.

**(b) Sustainable development goals and targets**

The sustainable development goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda integrate migration in three ways. Concrete measures to implement the SDGs are captured under a specific goal (SDG 17) and included also under each of the 16 other goals. At least 10 of the 169 targets include references to issues directly pertaining to international migration, migrants, and mobility.

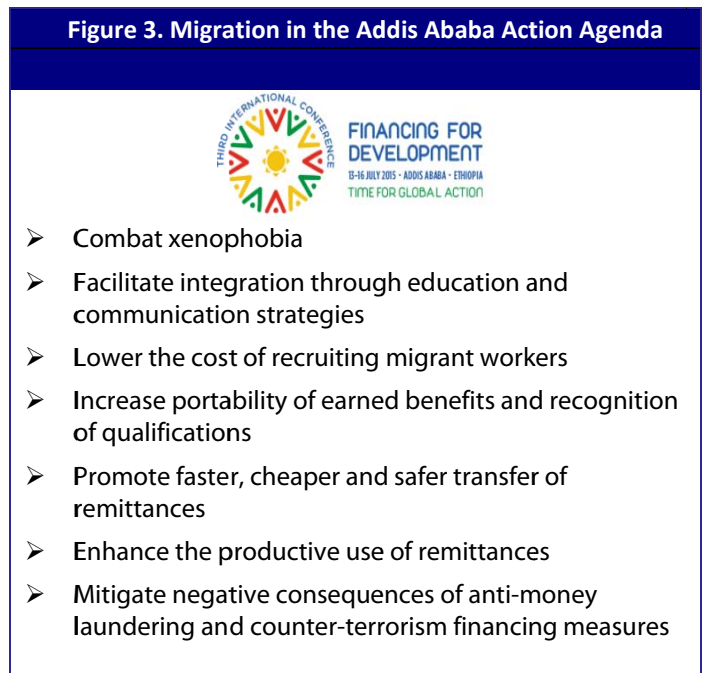


First, a **migration-specific** target (10.7), calls on countries to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies". Second, there are several **migration-related** targets, including those that refer to training and retaining health workers in developing countries and other measures to mitigate the "brain drain" (3c), providing scholarships for study abroad (4b), ending human trafficking (5.2, 8.7, 16.2), respecting labour rights of migrants workers, in particular women (8.8), reducing the costs of transferring remittances (10.c), and providing legal identity for all, including through birth registration (16.9). Third, **disaggregation by migratory status** (target 17.18)

will facilitate a comparative assessment of outcomes of relevant SDGs for the foreign-born population, or foreign citizens, in relation to the native-born population, or citizens. Disaggregation by migratory status will be particularly relevant for goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda that refer to persons in vulnerable situations.

**(c) Addis Ababa Action Agenda**

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda includes various means to implement the migration-related sustainable development goals and targets.<sup>15</sup> The outcome document of the third international conference on financing for development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, constitutes an integral part of the 2030 Agenda. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) calls on Member States to ensure that migration is governed with full respect for human rights, to combat xenophobia, and to facilitate migrant integration through education of migrant and refugee children and through social communication strategies. The agenda proposes concrete measures to reduce migration costs, including by (a) lowering the costs of recruiting migrant workers and combating unscrupulous recruiters, (b) promoting cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances by fostering competition and transparency in the market place and the introduction of new technologies, (c) enhancing the productive use of remittances by increasing financial services, inclusion and literacy, and (d) facilitating migrants' access to, and portability of, earned benefits and recognition of qualifications. Further, Member States should mitigate the potentially negative consequences of measures that address anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing related to the flow of remittances and access to financial services by migrants and their families.



#### ***(d) Follow-up, review and implementation***

#### **Follow-up, review and implementation of the migration-related commitments of the 2030 Agenda is critical for achieving the development goals.**

Progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda will be reviewed at global, regional and national levels as well as thematically. The High-level Political Forum (HLPF), meeting annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and quadrennially under the auspices of the General Assembly, will have a central role in overseeing the follow-up and review process at the global level. The functional commissions of ECOSOC are expected to play an important role in the thematic reviews of the SDGs. The Commission on Population and Development is well placed to conduct substantive, periodic and evidence-based reviews of progress

migration and mobility, given its existing mandate to assess the status of implementation of the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action.<sup>16</sup> Other intergovernmental bodies and forums, such as the GFMD, are also expected to contribute to the periodic thematic review of the HLPF. A robust indicator framework to monitor the status of implementation of the SDG indicators will be critical in order to hold all actors to account. In March 2016, the Statistical Commission is expected to adopt a global set of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs. Members of the GMG continue to collaborate with the Interagency and Expert Group on SDG indicators in developing a set of indicators to measure the migration-related targets of the SDG framework. The GMG will also play a key role in assisting Member States in implementing the SDGs at the national level.

---

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/65/234

<sup>3</sup> United Nations (2006). *Compendium of Recommendations on International Migration and Development: The United Nations Development Agenda and the Global Commission on International Migration Compared*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/hld/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> A/56/167

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/>

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.gfmd.org/>

<sup>10</sup> See

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/partners/srsg.shtml>

<sup>11</sup> See

<http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/HLD2013/mainhld2013.html>

<sup>12</sup> A/68/190

<sup>13</sup> A/RES/69/229

<sup>14</sup> See

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

<sup>15</sup> See

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/frameworks/addisababaactionagenda>

<sup>16</sup> See

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/index.shtml>