



SESSION IV NOTES

DAY 2: Thursday, 20 July 2023

Session IV: Urbanization and international mobility in an increasingly interconnected world

Background

This session consists of two interconnected components: Part A focuses on the interlinkages between international migration, the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and human rights, whereas Part B focuses on the future of urbanisation and the challenges and opportunities it presents for sustainable development.

Part A: International migration

International migration is a global phenomenon affecting millions of people. Since the ICPD, the number of migrants has increased significantly, rising from 161 million in 1995 to nearly 281 million in 2020.¹ In addition, international migration has a significant impact on hundreds of millions of family members of migrant workers and well as on communities of origin and destination of international migrants. When migration occurs in a safe, orderly and regular manner, it creates opportunities for the migrants themselves, their families, and for both country of origin and countries of destination.

Since 1994, conferences, summits and meetings at the United Nations have fostered global dialogue and international cooperation on international migration. The ICPD Programme of Action (1994) acknowledges the complex and multifaceted nature of migration and calls for policies that promote the well-being, rights, and dignity of migrants, while addressing the underlying factors that drive migration. It emphasizes the importance of gender equality, human rights and international cooperation in governing global migration. However, many of the challenges relating to migration that were highlighted in Chapter X of the ICPD Programme of Action remain.

¹ www.un.org/development/desa/pd/news/international-migration-2020

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1) recognized the contributions of migrants to inclusive and sustainable growth and called on Member States to strengthen cooperation to promote safe, orderly and regular migration with full respect for human rights. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1),² and the ensuing Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195) and the Global Compact on Refugees (A/73/12 (Part II)), have placed international migration and displacement at the heart of the international agenda. The Progress Declaration of the first International Migration Review Forum (A/76/266), adopted by the General Assembly in May 2022, provides an action agenda for national governments and the international community.

Migration flows will most likely continue to grow both in numbers and in complexity, shaped by global labour markets, climate change, demographic trends, as well as urbanization. Yet many gaps remain in the understanding of migration processes, its drivers and its impacts. It is critical, therefore, to ensure that discussions on international migration at the national, regional and international levels are based on facts rather than on perceptions or myths. It is also important to promote evidence-based decision-making on the part of policymakers and to provide objective information on the benefits and challenges of migration to the public.

Part B: Urbanization

Today, the majority of the world's population resides in urban areas, a trend that is projected to continue for the foreseeable future.³ The ICPD Programme of Action recognizes the relevance of urbanization and its impact on population dynamics. The New Urban Agenda, the outcome document adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016, provides a shared vision and roadmap for sustainable urban development globally, focusing on issues such as urban governance, slum upgrading, sustainable infrastructure, environmental sustainability as well as resilience and risk reduction. Urbanization is also a significant aspect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is directly addressed in Goal 11 on 'Sustainable Cities and Communities'. The interconnectedness of urbanization with various aspects of sustainable development highlights the need for integrated and holistic approaches to urban planning and management, and sustainable development.

Guiding questions:

Part A: International migration

- What are some of the emerging trends in international migration today? What is the impact of international migration on current and future population trends?

² For recent migration-related resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, see: www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/general-assembly-resolutions-international-migration

³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *World Urbanization Prospects 2018: Highlights* (ST/ESA/SER.A/421).

- What are some of the major challenges in the global governance of migration today and in the foreseeable future?
- What are some key priorities for national policies and international cooperation to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration?
- What are some of the opportunities and challenges of creating prospects for people to migrate in a safe, orderly and regular manner, including migrant workers with different levels of skills and qualifications?
- Reflecting on how international migration has changed since “Cairo”, especially from a gender perspective, how has the profile of women migrants evolved? What are the implications of migration for gender equality in both countries of origin and destination?
- How will climate change and water scarcity affect international migration in the next years. Which are the policies that countries may implement to build adaptive capacity?

Part B: Urbanization

- What are the prospects for urbanisation between now and 2050 in different regions of the world?
- What measures can governments take to address the environmental impact of rapid urbanization, such as air and water pollution, waste management and loss of green spaces?
- How can policies encourage sustainable urban planning that balances economic growth with social and environmental considerations?
- What policies can be implemented to address the housing affordability crisis in cities, particularly for low-income individuals and families?
- What policies can governments implement to ensure the smooth integration and social inclusion of migrants in urban areas?