

**EXPERT SYMPOSIUM ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Population Division

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**CONTRIBUTION
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United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

¹The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

A. INTRODUCTION

International migration is a key feature of globalization in the 21st century and an important enabler for inclusive and sustainable development. Estimates show that one in seven people in the world is either an internal or international migrant, accounting for an estimated one billion persons worldwide. In 2017, 258 million people, 3.4 percent of the world's population, lived outside their country of birth. Over 65.5 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide; among them 22.5 million refugees, 40.3 million internally displaced persons and 2.8 million asylum seekers. People are at the heart of the migration experience, underscoring the need for comprehensive, collective approaches underpinned by universal principles of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

The age structure of migrants' peaks in the young working ages, displaying a sharp rise after age 20 and peaking at ages 30-34 years. Male and female participation in international migration is relatively balanced, with female migrants accounting for an estimated 48.4 percent of all migrants worldwide in 2017. Yet major geographic variations exist. While women are overrepresented among all migrants in Europe, they are largely outnumbered by men in Africa and Asia, particularly in Western Asia.

As one of the key population dynamics with important implications for both human and sustainable development, international migration has clear implications for the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). UNFPA works at global, regional and country level in three major initiatives relevant to migration: through our work on population and housing censuses, advocating for the integration of measures of migration in questionnaires of the 2020 census round; through our development work that speaks directly to the drivers of migration, especially for adolescents and youth, with targeted interventions on enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health and expanding the potential for countries to achieve a demographic dividend; and through our humanitarian work by providing protection to those in transit.

Since the convening of the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, international migration has increasingly engaged the attention of the international community. When the ICPD adopted its Programme of Action, it was a first major intergovernmental agreement to address the highly interrelated issues of population dynamics, migration and urbanization – and to recognize that migration is a natural outcome of the world's inequalities, and people's quest for a better life. Earlier this year, the international community adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Compact presents a significant step forward and an opportunity to improve governance on migration, to protect those in transit, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.

Both, ICPD and the Global Compact recognize values of humanity, dignity and human rights of all person, regardless of their status; while recognizing the high social cost of inequality; and providing both security for development, and the freedom to move, while offering compelling recommendations on the values that should guide both national and global approaches to large movements of refugees and migrants.

B. DEMOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE

The aspiration to 'leave no one behind' cannot be met without understanding who faces the greatest inequalities, and therefore who is most likely to be systematically disadvantaged at the various stages of mobility. This notion places a high demand on all governments to develop population data systems that will allow them to locate and track the most vulnerable across a wide range of needs and outcomes. There is an urgent need for better disaggregated migration data to improve the understanding of these dynamics and to provide the evidence needed to inform policies that make a difference on the ground.

UNFPA commits substantial technical and fiscal resources to help countries strengthen their national population data ecosystems, including population and housing censuses. UNFPA supports National Statistical Offices and population

research institutions to conduct reliable censuses, advance civil registration of all vital events, and assure good national data on internal and international movements as the basis for policy options and program design. As such, UNFPA advocates actively for the integration of measures of migration in all questionnaires of the 2020 census round and strengthens capacities to translate data from the census into widespread availability and utilization of such data to their fullest use. UNFPA also supports UN-wide efforts to strengthen and expand the definition what constitutes legal identity and mechanisms for recognizing it to cover all people, including those in irregular and humanitarian situations. UNFPA’s work also includes regional and sub-regional initiatives that facilitate interoperability of civil registration and legal identity systems.

C. ADDRESSING THE DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

UNFPA plays an important role in addressing the drivers of migration through intellectual and operational leadership in the demographic and gender dividend, advocating for countries to invest in education, women empowerment and economic development. The notion of a demographic dividend offers a fundamental reappraisal of the prospects and pathways for sustainable development in countries with high proportions of young people. UNFPA provides development assistance to address the drivers of migration, especially for young people, with targeted investments in women’s and girls’ empowerment, SRHR, and access to livelihood opportunities. UNFPA has supported national appraisals on the potential for a demographic dividend in more than 28 countries of Africa since 2015, including national and subnational analyses of age structure and youth needs; integrating priorities within national development plans, funding and legislation; and providing guidance on the convergence of the demographic dividend with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

UNFPA is currently partnering with the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4MI) to focus on the policy and service needs of young migrants in cities located in countries experiencing major forced and voluntary mobility, both internal and international, and locations where UNFPA has strong country support programmes. Recent UNFPA research has found that more than half of all youth migrants in Beirut, Tunis and Cairo moved due to insecurity or political unrest back home. While one-third of youth migrants in Tunis reported that they alone made the decision to migrate, another third was encouraged to migrate by their parents.

These data will be used to better understand the specific needs of young men and women migrants to strengthen UNFPA’s direct work in service delivery, and drive our work in advocacy and policy development for young migrants’ protection and support systems.

D. PROTECTION IN TRANSIT

Urban populations in some regions are augmented by the growing placement of refugees within urban centres, with over 60 percent of the world’s refugees and 80 percent of all internally displaced people currently residing in cities. In 2014 an estimated one fifth of the global foreign-born population lived in “gateway” cities, where migrants represent over a third of the population. Protecting those transiting through their territories has become an increasing challenge for many countries due to the irregular and fast changing nature of migratory movements.

UNFPA has widespread activities in more than 130 countries, including all the major countries of migration origin and transit. The Fund continues to be an active and critical partner in circumstances of humanitarian crises providing lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services and support to victims of gender-based violence (GBV). UNFPA offices are active in relief and protection efforts and the provision of sexual and reproductive health care, including antenatal and postnatal care services, safe delivery and dignity kits, HIV and Sexually transmitted infections (STI) counseling and testing, and counseling and emergency care for those subjected to gender-based violence.

UNFPA works closely with others in the United Nations system, particularly UN Women and WHO, to end gender-based violence (GBV), and within the UN system, leads the GBV Area of Responsibility in humanitarian settings. UNFPA is committed to delivering sexual and reproductive health services in the midst of conflict, the aftermath of natural disaster and in transition settings. Building resilience and preparedness for “building back better” is a global priority.

Given that the Global Compact speaks clearly to many of these policies and efforts, it enables UNFPA to expand its partnerships to support governments fulfilling the vision of Compact; one in which migration is a force for good, and serves the betterment of people and countries across the world.