



**United Nations Population Fund
Contribution to the Implementation of the
Migration-Related Targets of the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

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A. INTRODUCTION

International migration is a key feature of globalization in the 21st century and an important enabler for inclusive and sustainable development. Migrants play a vital role in reducing poverty in countries of origin, and contributing towards prosperity in countries of destination.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognized the important role of migration in development. By adopting the Sustainable Development Goals, world leaders agreed to promote well-regulated migration and mobility, protect the labour rights of migrant workers, and combat transnational criminal human trafficking networks. By addressing root causes, the international community seeks to tackle the development, governance and human rights challenges that make people flee their home countries. The migration discourse is increasingly focused on maximizing the development benefits and mitigating the negative consequences of migration to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for both sending and receiving countries, as well as for the migrants themselves.

The development benefits of migration notwithstanding, people are at the heart of the migration experience. It is therefore essential to ensure that policies recognize that migration is both necessary and inevitable. This underscores the need for comprehensive, collective approaches underpinned by universal principles of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Such policies must facilitate greater mobility and ensure safe, orderly and regular migration with full respect for human rights and humane treatment of migrants regardless of their migration status, and of refugees and internally displaced persons.

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). To leverage the human, social and economic development potential of migration, UNFPA works at global, regional and country levels providing policy, advocacy and technical support to increase understanding of migration issues and their interlinkages with development, to advocate for better migration data to inform policy, to promote the incorporation of migration into national development plans, to protect those in transit, and to address the root causes of migration.

B. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MIGRATION-RELATED TARGETS OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In working with its partners to ensure that migration figures prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNFPA seeks to raise awareness of the important link between migration and development and to increase understanding of how migration

can contribute to the achievement of development goals including poverty reduction, maternal and child health, primary education, and gender empowerment.

The Framework of Actions for the Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD Beyond 2014 noted the increasing complexity of migratory flows and the diversity of migrants, including the rise in the proportion of women migrants over the preceding 20 years, either migrating on their own or as heads of households. It reasserted the need for ensuring the protection of the human rights of migrants and recommended that States embrace the contributions migrants make to the development of both countries of origin and destination.

UNFPA is guided by the ICPD and notes that the values and visions of the ICPD Programme of Action are re-affirmed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the centrality of dignity and human rights, non-discrimination, and equality. UNFPA has worked hard with its partners to ensure that migration and the needs of migrants were included within the Sustainable Development Goals in the spirit of leaving no one behind. As a member of the Global Migration Group Working Group on Data and Research, UNFPA worked with colleagues on migration indicators for inclusion in the implementation framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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. The reasons why people choose to move are complex and specific to the context of the country, community, family and individual. Often the motivation for moving is related to the expectation that the life of the individual, or those related to the individual, can be improved in a different place. This suggests that there are perceived – and real – differences in opportunities, prospects, and security between the two points of movement. These may relate to vertical inequalities in income (such as employment, remuneration, business environment) or horizontal inequalities corresponding to the characteristics of individuals (such as ethnicity, gender, age, disability). Access to essential services, including health care, education and social protection, is shaped by both vertical and horizontal inequalities. Understanding why people move, and how they fare in the process of moving and at destination, is therefore conditioned by our understanding of these inequalities.

As co-chair of the Thematic Working Group on Demographic Changes and Migration of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) established by the World Bank, UNFPA seeks to promote enhanced understanding of the dynamics between demography, migration and socio-economic development. The group reviewed existing migration assumptions in population projections in order to improve future projections, clarify the implications of possible alternative projection outcomes for policy making, and formulate policy recommendations and produced a report entitled “Comparative Analysis of International Migration in Population Projections”. The next phase of the project will include a software tool that will enable demographers and other experts working in statistical offices to model the impact of migration on future population. There are also plans to conduct a desk review of research on the effect of

international migration on fertility and mortality in countries of origin and destination with a focus on the major migration corridors in each region.

To meet the current challenges of migration, UNFPA has revised its Concept Note on International Migration to address emerging needs. The Concept Note points out that women and girls face a unique combination of deeply-rooted socio-cultural and health-related challenges that are compounded by socio-political instability and displacement. Particular risks for women and young girls include malnutrition, maternal mortality and morbidity resulting from a lack of access to reproductive health information and services, including contraception and delivery care. Exposure to sexual exploitation and abuse further limit the potential of young girls and increase the risks of adverse health outcomes, including high rates of adolescent pregnancy for young women in transit, and in vulnerable social circumstances in destinations. UNFPA is especially concerned with the fate of the many female migrants who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including gender-based violence, human trafficking as well as sexual exploitation and the risk of sexually transmitted infections including HIV.

Globally, the high proportion of female migrants, mostly young adults of reproductive age, underscore the need for increased programming by UNFPA for women and girls in transit, in refugee camps and other humanitarian settings. It also highlights the need for added attention to the root causes of women's migration, and the need to strengthen the resilience of nations and communities to withstand unforeseen crises and extreme poverty, by ensuring that all countries create opportunities for women's education and empowerment, reproductive health and rights, economic participation and political leadership.

UNFPA knows that young people also have special needs. Many countries cannot provide enough decent jobs for the largest youth cohort in history. As a result, youth migrate in search of better education and employment opportunities and to escape conflict, war, persecution, humanitarian crises, and natural disasters. UNFPA advocates for investing in young people as key to catalyzing development in the world's poorest regions, and stemming the tide of out-migration.

UNFPA's Concept Note points to three key areas for action.

Improve Data on Migrants

Migration is changing the demographics of both origin and destination countries. There is an urgent need for real-time disaggregated migration data to better understand the new 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 census, surveys and registries, some of which provide valuable data on population mobility.

The data revolution presents new opportunities and risks to tap into traditional and non-traditional data sources to better understand current trends and patterns of migratory movements and the migrants themselves. Integrated applications of non-traditional data sources by UNFPA and partners such as big data, border interviews, aerial surveys and satellite imagery offer new options for locating and supporting migrant populations.

The data revolution also enables potential migrants to readily obtain information on opportunities and risks in order to make informed decisions before, during and after their migrant experience. However, the data revolution also presents new risks for migrants regarding security and privacy concerns.

UNFPA is working with partners on the feasibility of new innovative data-gathering tools including integrated applications of non-traditional sources such as border interviews, aerial surveys and satellite imaging. A number of “Big data” actors offer potential collaborations to expand the options for locating and supporting mobile populations. UNFPA has intensified capacity for geospatial mapping of population data, providing countries with sub-national and small-area estimations of populations and the potential to locate out-of-school and unemployed young people who are at higher risk of migration. UNFPA, together with Data-Pop Alliance, Flowminder, the International Organization for Migration, and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, is engaged in a long-term collaborative research project “Movement as Development in the 21st Century: Harnessing Data for Migration.” The project will draw on new innovations in data production and use, and explore the possibility of using data in new ways to shed light on old questions in six areas of work:

- 1) Trends: tested set of ways using new data sources for monitoring, forecasting, and predicting;
- 2) Social cohesion: research on social network analysis;
- 3) Tracking cohorts of people who move: longitudinal storytelling work on migrants and migrant generations;
- 4) Social protection: transfer of rights and duties, such as pension entitlements;
- 5) Inequalities: migration in the context of rising inequalities; and
- 6) Better information and choices/empowerment for migrants through use of new technologies and data.

The project will look at global trends that have driven people’s movements around the world for the last half century to better understand how migration intersects with other policy questions such as climate change and patterns of economic growth. With a particular focus on inequality, the project will look at when population movements are a response to inequality, and what effect migration has on the distribution of resources and opportunity around the world. It will use data at scale and also individual stories to understand the journeys and experiences of the people making the difficult decisions to leave homes and families, and the lives they encounter along the way. The project will focus on entire societies, on the effect of migration on social cohesion and support, and what governments and other groups can do to support both those who move and those who stay.

Protect Those in Transit

The establishment and maintenance of reliable databases on cross-border movements between countries and geographic regions offers a critical means to enhance the provision of UNFPA supported services and programmes to those in need.

UNFPA already 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 reproductive health and gender-based violence (GBV) services. UNFPA has a wide roster of programmes assisting those in humanitarian crisis, in situations of conflict and in environmental crisis. 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 STI counseling and testing, and counseling and emergency care for those subjected to gender-based violence. For example, last year, UNFPA celebrated the 500th safe delivery in a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan.

UNFPA is the lead agency for the Working Group on Gender Based Violence in Humanitarian Emergencies in Burundi, set up in June 2015. The Group works in the following areas: setting up quick information systems, fundraising and advocacy, gender analysis, monitoring GBV activities in the emergency response, promoting the code against sexual abuse among aid workers, helping survivors, strengthening responses and service delivery, training service providers and rolling out information campaigns. A GBV Standard Operation Procedures document was developed at a workshop led by UNFPA with national and international partners.

Address Root Causes

Migration should be a matter of choice, not necessity. The current exodus of people from Syria, Africa, and the Middle East calls for collective attention to the root causes of displacement and migration. For example, as increasing numbers of the world's largest youth cohort are growing into adulthood in circumstances of conflict or poverty, their hope for the future is undermined, contributing to migration. Too many young people lack access to secondary school, tertiary education or formal employment, or suffer from gender discrimination or social violence, limiting their prospects for the future. While previous generations may have suffered such indignities in silence, today's young people see a better life on television and social media and are desperate to be a part of it.

UNFPA plays an important role in stemming root causes of migration through leadership in the demographic dividend. Convening government leaders around the demographic dividend has been an area of major investment and success for UNFPA in the past year, including the engagement of national presidents in Africa and Asia, new partnerships within the World Economic Forum, the International Labour Organization, and the

private sector. UNFPA has supported demographic dividend population and policy analyses in more than 18 countries of Africa, including six countries of the Sahel region (Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania), as UNFPA implements the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Project (SWEDD).

UNFPA is helping governments to diagnose and locate the challenges facing young people, and strategically invest in the protection of human rights, including reproductive rights, the provision of sexual and reproductive health care, and convening development partners to collectively expand opportunities for young people. Strengthening human capital by ensuring health, empowerment, education and employment of youth can spur economic growth and development, especially where population investments coincide with macro-economic and structural opportunities.

As the lead UN agency on family planning, UNFPA promotes a steady, reliable supply of quality contraceptives, working to ensure that all women and young people will be protected from unplanned pregnancies that can derail their schooling, and life chances. In preventing child marriage, UNFPA is also keeping girls in school, and ensuring that young girls have a greater chance to contribute to the economic development of their communities. Promoting youth leadership and participation is another key area of UNFPA's work that impacts the root causes of migration, as it provides critical opportunities for young people to secure a voice and a place within their countries of origin.

UNFPA has also been championing the role of climate change as a root cause of migration, calling for further analysis of the impact of climate on livelihoods, vulnerability and migration. Where climate change is leading to desertification and shrinking livelihoods, household poverty has intensified, and young people's economic and social prospects have been thwarted. The corresponding loss of opportunity appears to contribute to migration, possibly affecting more people than sudden events.

UNFPA will continue to collaborate with its partners in the monitoring and implementation of the migration-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind, especially the most vulnerable. UNFPA welcomes the upcoming Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants and looks forward to working with its partners to ensure its success. It is only through consultations such as these that we can hope for genuine collaboration that can resolve the many challenges we face.