



RETREAT ON MIGRATION INDICATORS FOR THE POST-2015 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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Summary

Background and objectives

The 2013 General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development recognized that human mobility should be adequately considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.¹ The High-level Dialogue also called upon the United Nations system, the Global Migration Group (GMG) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development to strengthen their collaboration and cooperation and to consider migration issues in their contributions to the preparatory process for the post-2015 development agenda.

Against this background, the GMG Working Group on Data and Research convened, in collaboration with the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) of the World Bank and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Migration, a one-day retreat on post-2015. The main objective of the retreat was to develop a set of indicators on international migration and development, which could be included in the implementation framework of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. Discussions focused on the selection of a limited set of indicators out of the more than 60 indicators that were submitted.²

The set of illustrative goals and targets, proposed by the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP)³, served as the main framework for the discussions. Guidance was also provided by the UN System Task Team report on Statistics and indicators for the post-2015 development agenda.⁴ The retreat benefited from prior work undertaken by the International Organization for Migration, the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development, the SRSG for Migration, and civil society.

Some 40 delegates, representing members of the Global Migration Group, the SRSG for migration, civil society as well as experts, participated in the retreat (see list of participants).

¹ See Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (A/RES/68/4).

² See <http://esa.un.org/unmigration/migrationretreat.htm> for the indicators that were submitted for review. Further proposals will be made, based on the discussions at the retreat and ongoing work by GMG entities.

³ <http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>

⁴ http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/UNTT_MonitoringReport_WEB.pdf

Discussion and main findings

Indicators should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable (and also reliable, comparable and contextually appropriate), **A**chievable (and also cost effective), **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound (and also sensitive). It is crucial to *limit* and to *prioritize* the number of indicators for the post-2015 development agenda. While indicators should be globally applicable, they should be generated nationally. Where possible, indicators should employ concepts and definitions that have already been agreed upon by Member States.

Indicators should be simple and not favour migrants over citizens (principle of non-discrimination). Given the lack of migration data, consideration could be given to proxy indicators. Indicators should have the potential to set global norms, trigger collective action, and be integrated into national policies.

Indicators should be understandable, clear and unambiguous, and within the capabilities of national governments to develop and collect. Participants noted the importance of proposing indicators that are relevant for developing countries. For example, an indicator that only takes into account the contribution of migrants to the formal economy, thus leaving out the significant role migrants play in the informal sector, should be avoided.

A “vertical” approach could promote a target for a global partnership on migration, including a few migration indicators, under the partnership Goal 12, as proposed by the HLP. A “horizontal” approach could propose one or more migration indicators across other thematic goals, such as goals 1 through 11, as proposed by the HLP. A third approach could ensure that migrants are included when relevant targets and indicators (e.g. on social protection) are disaggregated to capture the development outcomes of different populations, including vulnerable groups.⁵ All three approaches should be pursued, while being mindful of the target audience, the nature of discussions and the traction each option might gain at particular points in the discussions.

It was noted that for some priority areas, indicators were not yet ready for implementation. Several GMG entities reported that were taking new initiatives that would trigger fresh data collection. Some indicators which did not make it into the original Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were later included at the request of the Secretary-General. A similar path could be envisioned for migration indicators for which data collection was only starting.

It was suggested that the formulation of migration indicators should take into account, and could benefit, similar work in other development processes, such as International Development Association (IDA) 17, Rio+20, etc. Migration related indicators were also being prepared through various working groups of GMG and KNOMAD.

In addition to pursuing joint work through the GMG, GMG entities were also promoting the inclusion of their own mandated priorities in “post-2015” through their publications and presentations. Participants underscored the importance of reflecting migration and development, including possible indicators, in these own agency initiatives.

⁵ See HLP report, page 63.

It was suggested that indicators should focus mostly on the opportunities that migration presents for development. Where possible, indicators should be disaggregated, including by sex and age.

Cooperation should be sought with the statistical community, given its role in vetting indicators for “post-2015”. In line with the HLP report, the case should be made to strengthen migration data, along the lines of Migrants Count.⁶

There was general consensus that:

- The most obvious “candidate” for a post-2015 indicator was reducing the costs of transferring remittances, an existing G-20 target. This indicator was already used by Member States, while data was collected through remittanceprices.org;
- Other areas where progress could be made include focusing on skills recognition, portability of benefits, recruitment costs, human trafficking, diaspora contributions, and resettlement (or durable solutions more generally) (tier 1);
- Another strand of work should focus on disaggregating proposed targets /indicators (on gender, health, education, work, etc.) for international migrants (tier 2).

Controversial issues, such as mobility targets, should be avoided. Participants observed that several topics, such as migration levels (immigration, emigration, return/circular migration), “brain drain” and (re-)integration, should not be addressed through targets and indicators in the context of “post-2015”, given their sensitivity, conceptual weakness or lack of data.

In addition to identifying indicators for post-2015, the GMG should work on a broader set of indicators in the context of the follow-up to the 2013 High-level Dialogue.

The retreat identified opportunities to engage with Member States, including meetings of the Open Working Group, the 12th coordination meeting on international migration (20-21 February), the 45th session of the Statistical Commission (4-7 March), and the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development (7-11 April). The PGA was also planning to organize several meetings.

Next steps

- Launch website of the retreat, including all proposed indicators (see: <http://esa.un.org/unmigration/migrationretreat.htm>)
- Prepare GMG technical report with the results from the retreat, including guidances notes and templates with metadata for proposed indicators;
- Continue work on indicators, especially in priority areas identified during the retreat;
- Review and contribute to “statistical notes” for the Open Working Group;
- Highlight migrants/migration in own agency contributions to the post-2015 agenda;
- Support stakeholder discussions at national level;
- Explore opportunities for cooperation with the Global Compact on issues such as corporate social responsibility.

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⁶ <http://www.cgdev.org/publication/migrants-count-five-steps-toward-better-migration-data>