

**EXPERT SYMPOSIUM ON INTERNATIONAL
MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

New York, 26 February 2019



United Nations

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Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Population Division

EXPERT SYMPOSIUM ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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DESA

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations draw to review common problems and take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint courses of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

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PREFACE

The Expert Symposium on International Migration and Development took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 26 February 2019. It was convened in lieu of the annual coordination meeting on international migration, which had been organized by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs since 2001. The symposium was held immediately prior to the high-level debate on international migration and development convened by the President of the General Assembly on Wednesday, 27 February 2019 in response to General Assembly resolution [73/241](#).

The expert symposium was planned in close coordination with the Office of the President of the General Assembly and with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other members of the United Nations Network on Migration. Participants were invited to discuss progress and challenges affecting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets relevant to migration, as well as implementation of Objective 1 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration on collecting and utilizing accurate and disaggregated data for evidence-based policies. By bringing together experts on international migration from the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, national governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector, the expert symposium aimed to provide an opportunity to advance the global discussion and to share practical information about ongoing and anticipated activities in the area of international migration and development.

This report was prepared by Christoph Deuster, Pablo Lattes, Clare Menozzi, and Vinod Mishra, Migration and Urbanization Section of the Population Division. This report, as well as informational materials, contributed papers and presentations from the Expert Symposium on International Migration and Development, may be accessed at:

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/symposium/201902/index.asp>.

Publications of the Population Division, including those on international migration, are available at www.unpopulation.org.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

The following abbreviations have been used in the present document:

CMS	Center for Migration Studies
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GMDAC	International Organization for Migration's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre
GMPA	Global Migration Policy Associates
HLPF	High-level Political Forum
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NSOs	National Statistical Offices
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PICUM	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
RCNYO	Regional Commissions New York Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNU	United Nations University
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VNRs	Voluntary National Reviews

REPORT OF THE EXPERT SYMPOSIUM ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Expert Symposium on International Migration and Development took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 26 February 2019. The symposium was organized by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). The purpose of the expert symposium was to: (a) highlight opportunities for addressing issues related to migration and development in the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in July and September 2019, (b) discuss ways and means of improving the collection and use of migration data in the context of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(GCM\)](#), and (c) present and share information on recent initiatives on international migration and development.

The symposium was attended by more than 200 participants, including representatives of Member States, Observers, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, offices of the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations regional commissions as well as non-governmental organizations active in the field of international migration. Also present were invited migration experts. The list of participants is available at:

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/symposium/201902/index.asp>.

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Director of the Population Division of UN DESA, Mr. John Wilmoth, opened the expert symposium on behalf of the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin. Mr. Wilmoth thanked colleagues from the Office of the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the effective collaboration in creating a week with a focus on migration at the United Nations.

In his statement delivered on behalf of the President of the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Kwabena Osei-Danquah, Chef de Cabinet, emphasized the importance of a whole-of-society approach and stressed that no country can address migration alone. He acknowledged the crucial role migrants played for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by, for instance, sending remittances that, in the aggregate, far exceeded official development assistance (ODA). At the same time, he underlined that migration posed important challenges, such as human trafficking. Mr. Osei-Danquah emphasized that strengthening the global evidence base was essential to ensure that migrants are not left behind, for policies to help reap the benefits of human mobility and to dispel false claims and stereotypes around migration. He highlighted that the positive case for migration needed to be made, while being honest about the challenges it brings.

II. MIGRATION AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The interactive panel on migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was chaired by Ms. Alicia Bárcena Ibarra, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Mr. António Manuel de Carvalho Ferreira Vitorino, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM); Mr. Santiago Javier Chávez Pareja, Vice Minister for Human Mobility of Ecuador and designated Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) 2019; Mr. Felipe González Morales, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants; and Mr. Richard Blewitt, Head of Delegation and Permanent Representative to the United Nations of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) served as members of the panel.

Panellists agreed that the positive potential of international migration could be leveraged to foster *sustainable development*. Migration was related directly and indirectly to the achievement of many SDGs, including the empowerment of women and girls, economic growth, decent work for all, and reducing inequality within and between countries. Remittances and the transfer of knowledge played a particularly important role in improving living conditions in countries of origin. The links between development and migration should be further systematically explored in order to identify connections and synergies between intergovernmentally negotiated agreements, including the GCM and the 2030 Agenda.

With respect to the *gender aspects* of migration, panellists stressed the importance of recognizing the differences in the migration experience of women and men. Women made up approximately half of all migrants and faced particular challenges, barriers, and threats related to migration, such as trafficking and gender-based violence. At the same time, the debate on the gender dimensions of migration should not exclusively focus on vulnerabilities but also acknowledge the specific contributions migrant women make, for instance, in their roles as community leaders, advocates of rights and agents for change. The gender aspects of migration were not limited to female migrants but also included issues that related to the vulnerability of migrant men, such as detention and forced labour.

Panellists underlined the importance of a *human rights-based approach* to international migration. They reaffirmed that basic freedoms and rights stressed by the 2030 Agenda should apply equally to all migrants irrespective of their legal status. A migrant-centred approach to relevant policies accounting for the human rights of all migrants would enhance their capacity to make a positive contribution to countries of origin, transit, and destination and minimize some of the negative aspects of migration, such as exploitation and trafficking. Maintaining the separation (‘firewalls’) between migration enforcement and social service providers would ensure that migrants’ access to basic services, such as healthcare, education and housing, were not negatively affected by their migratory status.

Panellists emphasized that *accurate and timely data* were key to policy design and decision-making. Objective 1 of the GCM recognized that improving the evidence base on migration extended beyond solely collecting more data. It was crucial to address specific data gaps and to disaggregate data by sex, age and migratory status. Interagency coordination to consolidate different data sources and methodological approaches could strengthen the role of the UN in serving as a credible repository of evidence base on international migration. Interpretation and communication of migration data could be equally important in order to contribute to factual debates on the topic and evidence-based planning and policy making.

Panellists noted that cooperation at the regional level could complement existing multilateral tools and mechanisms for the implementation of the objectives of the GCM and the achievement of migration-related SDG targets. Such cooperation can be instrumental in improving the living conditions of migrants, providing them with basic services, ensuring equal access to human rights and fostering integration. Regional solutions and approaches could play a vital role in improving migration governance, as illustrated by examples and best practices from Latin America.

Finally, panellists noted that the political *environment and conditions* for migration were subject to change over time. This pointed to the importance of reassessing and reevaluating migration frameworks and migration-related development agendas on an ongoing basis.

III. MIGRATION-RELATED ISSUES AND THE 2019 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

The interactive panel on migration-related issues and the 2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) was chaired by Mr. François Héran, Professor at the Collège de France. Ms. Marion Barthélemy, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development of UN DESA; Mr. Owen Shumba, Team Leader for the Livelihood and Economic Recovery Group in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery; Ms. Michelle Leighton, Chief of the Labour Migration Branch of the International Labour Organization (ILO); and Ms. Michele LeVoy, Director of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) served as members of the panel.

Panellists stated that the achievement of key migration-related targets was closely interlinked with progress on all *SDGs*. Therefore, the HLPF should, as the central review instrument for the implementation of the *SDGs*, examine the relationship between all relevant *SDGs* and migration. Members of the panel acknowledged the role of the HLPF in providing guidance to Member States and UN entities on how to include migration and displacement when implementing the *SDGs* and monitoring progress. In addition, the HLPF should encourage countries to consider the aspects related to the situation of migrants in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for the 2030 Agenda.

Several panellists underlined that migrant workers were often in situations of precarious employment and emphasized the importance of renewing the commitment to the *social contract¹ and decent work*. Human-centred agendas focussing on the protection of human rights of migrants and the realization of *SDG Target 8.8²* would reduce the vulnerabilities of migrants and uphold decent work. In this context, panellist reiterated that firewalls might have a crucial role for the protection of migrants' rights.

Since migration governance is often fragmented, the development and promotion of *coherent policy frameworks* was highlighted as an additional recommendation for the 2019 HLPF. Such frameworks needed to be informed by a sound evidence base and should include a commitment to the protection of human rights. Panellists noted that more than 200 international labour standards, as well as guidelines on fair recruitment and skills recognition, could provide guidance for specific policies ensuring the social protection of migrant workers and their families. In addition, the GCM specified how migration governance could be improved. Finally, panellists pointed to best practices at the city and local level that provided examples of sound migration governance and requested that migration should be mainstreamed into national and local development planning.

Several participants advocated in favor of a more active involvement of all *stakeholders* in the area of migration. Involving various relevant actors, such as employers, worker organizations, trade and business unions, civil society and migrants themselves, could ensure that migration governance was robust, coordinated and well-managed. Furthermore, the involvement of multiple stakeholders at numerous levels might contribute to dispelling myths and negative stereotypes around migration and migrants. In particular, members of the panel noted that the HLPF should recognize the important role of civil society in the area of migration.

¹ "In the world of work the market, state and citizens interact continuously and their relationship evolves constantly. As a result of this process, an implicit social agreement often emerges that broadly determines the relationship between the actors and establishes guiding principles in building economic, social and political institutions. Such an agreement is called a social contract." Source: ILO (2016). [Social contract and future of work: Inequality, income security, labour relations and social dialogue](#). Geneva: International Labour Organization. The Future of Work Centenary Initiative, Issue Note No. 4.

² Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

IV. IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE BASE ON MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 2030 AGENDA

The panel on improving the evidence base on migration in the context of the 2030 Agenda was chaired by Ms. Ann Singleton, Senior Research Fellow at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. Ms. Yongyi Min, Chief of the SDG Monitoring Section of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD); Ms. Ellen Kraly, Professor at Colgate University; Ms. Karima Belhaj, demographic statistician for the Demographic Studies and Research Centre at the High Commission for Planning in Morocco; Mr. Jean-Christophe Dumont, Head of the International Migration Division of the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); and Ms. Rachel Snow, Chief of the Population and Development Branch at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) served as members of the panel.

Panellists highlighted the importance of addressing migration *data gaps*. Mainstreaming of migration data into statistical systems was crucial for producing better and suitable evidence on migration and increasing analytic capacities. Improving the basis for policy could, for instance, be achieved by disaggregating data by migratory status and relevant characteristics, as well as by including relevant questions in censuses and surveys. While new data collection efforts were needed in many contexts, it was also important to improve utilization of existing sources of migration data, including administrative and survey data, and explore synergies between different data sources. Challenges identified by the panellists included gathering data on minority groups and migrants with irregular status, potential biases and sampling issues.

Developing common *definitions and standards* for migration data and indicators were noted as important tasks for the international community. The guidelines established by the UN Statistical Commission on migration-related questions in censuses and the accompanying recommendations on how to adapt such questions to national contexts were mentioned as examples of a good approach in this regard.

Members of the panel further reaffirmed the call for the inclusion of all *stakeholders* at the global, regional, and local levels in the discussions about migration. With respect to the evidence base on migration, panellists argued that actors, such as civil society, migrants themselves, academia, the international community, national and governments at the national and sub-national levels needed to cooperate in order to improve migration data and evidence. In this regard, the approach of Morocco of engaging with migration data at different levels of government and civil society was described as an example of multi-level stakeholder engagement.

The importance of *capacity development* in enhancing the evidence base on migration was also highlighted. Panellists referred to initiatives that strengthened statistical systems at multiple levels, including international efforts by UNSD and UNFPA, regional collaboration, such as South-South cooperation, and national coordination. Specific tools for capacity building consisted of needs assessment missions, regional workshops, and webinars. Furthermore, panellists described the emerging demand by National Statistical Offices (NSOs) for improved capacities in the areas of geospatial modelling and small area estimation.

Finally, panellists outlined a number of *ongoing and future work* on improving the evidence base on migration. These included the revision of the [Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration](#) and the Global Programme on International Migration Statistics by UNSD, the [OECD Databases on Migration](#), the [International Forum on Migration Statistics](#) convened by DESA, IOM, and OECD, and the Population Data Fellows programme by UNFPA. Panellists listed several challenges for improving the evidence base on migration. In particular, the limited funding for migration data collection through censuses and surveys was mentioned. Low investment in data and research, especially in developing countries, was considered a hinderance to improving the data and evidence base on migration.

V. TOUR DE TABLE

The tour de table, chaired by Mr. Jonathan Prentice, Head of the United Nations Network on Migration, provided an opportunity for participants of the expert symposium to share information about recent or upcoming activities on migration and development of the various entities represented. A total of 28 statements were delivered, of which three were by delegates of Member States, 15 were made on behalf of entities of the United Nations system, and eight were by representatives of non-governmental organizations (see list in Annex A.II). In addition, two participants made statements in their personal capacity.

The activities included *government* initiatives such as the Manila Conference on the Future on Migration organized by the Philippines in August 2018 and the first thematic workshop of the GFMD to be co-convened by the Philippines and Bahrain in March 2019. Furthermore, the representative of Bangladesh referred to the country's 8th Five-Year Plan that prominently features migration, consultations between Bangladesh and the European Union on Standard Operating Procedures regarding the return of irregular migrants, and consultations with civil society organizations focusing on the implementation of the GCM to be held in May 2019. The delegate of Mexico pointed to the re-launch of the "Friends of Migration" group by Bangladesh, Benin, Ireland, and Mexico and the work of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico on a sub-regional comprehensive development plan for migration management.

Representatives of several *United Nations System entities* shared information about their activities on migration. Participants mentioned the joint initiative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the European Commission to enhance the impact of remittances in Africa, while the United Nations University (UNU) highlighted its research on migration through a range of activities and outputs, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) mentioned the framework of indicators to measure progress in the implementation of international human rights in the area of migration. Other activities included the 2018 Economic Development in Africa Report with a specific focus on migration published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the policies and practice guide for gender-responsive implementation of the GCM developed by UN Women, the launch of the first Global Refugee Forum by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in December 2019, the launch of a practical guide for national and local migration governance by IOM, and the work on a whole-of-institution strategy on migration, also by the IOM.

The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants referred to his reports on returns and reintegration of migrants and on migrants' access to justice. He also announced the publication of two reports on the gender dimensions of migration in the summer and fall of 2019. Representatives of international organizations also referred to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Migration Framework, the launch of the FAO flagship publication focused on migration in October 2018, the launch of two UNDP reports based on interviews of irregular African migrants and interviews of migrants in Sudan, as well as a report entitled "Fatal Journeys Volume 4: Missing Migrant Children" published by the IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC). The representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) described the work on guidance material on human trafficking, such as the revision of the guide for the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

In addition, representatives of *non-governmental organizations* called attention to an SDG and migration matrix prepared by the Global Migration Policy Associates (GMPA) that presents links between migration and 45 SDG targets, Pew Research Centre's work and surveys on the attitudes towards migrants and migration, and the "talent catalogue" on the skills of migrants in Lebanon and Jordan developed by Talent Beyond Boundaries. They also pointed to a report of the Civil Society Action Committee surveying civil society organizations working on migration, an annual policy report on issues related to the GCM, and the International Migration Review, both published by the Center for Migration Studies (CMS).

VI. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

In his closing remarks, Mr. John Wilmoth, Director of the Population Division, UN DESA, recapitulated that data and evidence on migration should serve as the backbone of policymaking and be used to frame discussions about human mobility. He summarized the topics and key concepts that could help to guide future work in the area of migration by underlining three aspects. First, it was crucial to strengthen national and local capacities to collect, analyse, and use migration data in the context of the GCM and the 2030 Agenda. Second, a commitment to improving the understanding of the complex and multifaceted relationship between migration and development was needed. Third, ensuring the access to high-quality data, statistics and research, as well as offering appropriate expertise on how to interpret and use such information, were important. In closing, Mr. Wilmoth thanked the panellists, moderators, and attendees of the expert symposium for their contributions and participation.

ANNEX

A.I ORGANIZATION OF WORK

UN/POP/MIG-1ES/2019/INF.3

26 February 2019

**EXPERT SYMPOSIUM ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Secretariat

New York, 26 February 2019

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Morning session (10:00-13:00)

Opening of the meeting

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly

I. Interactive panel on migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Chair: *Alicia Bárcena Ibarra, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)*

Panel:

- *António Manuel de Carvalho Ferreira Vitorino, Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM)*
- *Santiago Javier Chávez Pareja, Vice Minister for Human Mobility of Ecuador, designated Chair of the GFMD 2019*
- *Felipe González Morales, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants*
- *Richard Blewitt, Head of Delegation and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)*

II. Interactive panel on migration-related issues and the 2019 High-level Political Forum

Chair: *François Héran, Collège de France*

Panel:

- *Marion Barthélemy, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, UN DESA*
- *Owen Shumba, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*
- *Michelle Leighton, International Labour Organization (ILO)*
- *Michele LeVoy, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)*

Afternoon session (15:00-18:00)

III. Improving the evidence base on migration in the context of the 2030 Agenda

Chair: *Ann Singleton, University of Bristol, School for Policy Studies*

Overview of the evidence for monitoring the migration-related SDGs targets
Yongyi Min, Statistics Division, UN DESA

Research and data for informed migration policies
Ellen Kraly, Colgate University

Disaggregated data by migratory status: Challenges and opportunities
Karima Belhaj, Demographic Studies and Research Centre, High Commission for Planning, Morocco

Availability and use of data on the effects and benefits of migration, including contributions of migrants and diaspora
Jean-Christophe Dumont, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

New approaches and the priorities for capacity building
Rachel Snow, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

IV. Tour de table

Chair: *Jonathan Prentice, UN Network on Migration*

Brief presentations on recent or upcoming activities on migration and development

Closing of the meeting

John Wilmoth, Population Division, UN DESA

A.II TOUR DE TABLE

The following Member States, entities of the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations delivered statements during the Tour de table:

MEMBER STATES:

Bangladesh

Mexico

Philippines

ENTITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM:

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

International Organization for Migration's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Regional Commissions New York Office (RCNYO)

Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

United Nations University (UNU)

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS:

ACT Alliance

Center for Migration Studies (CMS)

Civil Society Action Committee

Global Coalition on Migration

Global Migration Policy Associates (GMPA)

International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

Pew Research Center

Talent Beyond Boundaries