

# Migration and Human Security



United Nations Trust Fund  
for Human Security

We live in a world on the move. Today, an estimated 258 million people live outside their country of birth. Some have migrated in search of better opportunities. Others flee from crises imposed by conflict or disasters, or from abject poverty. For many migrants, leaving one country for another can be a complex process fraught with risks, particularly for those faced with the most perilous conditions in their country of origin.



# Realizing the promise of international migration

To enhance cooperation on all dimensions of international migration, governments, with support from the United Nations, have expressed their collective commitment and drafted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Global Compact covers all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. It recognizes that migration can be a positive and empowering experience, plus a source of prosperity and advancement for migrants as well as communities and countries of origin, transit and destination. It promotes better management of migration to reduce risks, build resilience and create conditions in which all migrants can contribute to the communities where they live, and in which all societies can flourish.

Making migration work for all requires translating the commitments of the Global Compact into actual policies and programmes for migrants and host communities. To this end, the human security approach provides a valuable framework for crafting comprehensive, people-centred and inclusive solutions that bring together a broad range of actors to better manage migration in our increasingly interconnected world.



## Promoting safe, orderly and regular migration in Panama and Costa Rica

The *Ngöbe* and *Buglé* indigenous groups of western Panama cross the border into neighboring Costa Rica in search of seasonal employment. To better manage the movement of these indigenous communities, a UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) programme, in partnership with local and national authorities in both countries, developed an effective cross-border strategy. Based on a comprehensive approach, the programme strengthened the economic, food and health security of those most vulnerable in Panama, while simultaneously improving access to essential services and worker protections in Costa Rica and along the migratory route.

## Minimizing the adverse drivers

Human security recognizes the primacy of cultivating environments in which people can live peaceful and productive lives and fulfill their aspirations in their home countries. It focuses attention on current, emerging and future risks at the local and national level – whether economic, political, social, environmental

or conflict-related – to advance proactive responses to minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to migrate. Not all challenges can be prevented, but by being forward-looking and risk-informed, the approach fosters the development of early warning systems and preemptive resilience-building strategies that reduce the likelihood of crises, ensuring migration remains a choice and not an imperative.



## Protecting and empowering vulnerable children and youth in Morocco

Morocco is a country of origin, destination and transit for refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants. Unaccompanied children and youth comprise ten percent of migrants and forty percent of refugees. These young people making the oftentimes perilous journey to Morocco are highly vulnerable and incur significant opportunity costs from missed education and lack of community support. A UNTFHS programme, co-led by the Government of Morocco, is strengthening implementation of the Moroccan National Immigration and Asylum Strategy, fostering social integration and cohesion and better responding to the health, education and employment needs of this vulnerable group, empowering them to rebuild their lives and realize their aspirations by becoming active participants in their host communities.

# Reducing vulnerabilities in migration

People on the move, regardless of their legal status, may find themselves in highly vulnerable situations, facing a constellation of social, political, economic, health and environmental challenges. Certain groups, such as women and children, people who are trafficked or smuggled, and persons with disabilities, may face heightened or compound threats during the migratory journey or in countries of destination. Some migrants also find themselves further exposed when staying in areas prone to natural disasters or conflicts.

Through the human security lens, national and local governments can holistically identify varying levels and types of vulnerability among local populations, highlighting those in the most vulnerable situations. Doing so can help develop tailored strategies that reduce the harmful human, economic and social costs of migration and establish comprehensive policies and partnerships that enhance the protection of people and safeguard their dignity.

*“The Global Compact speaks to the heart of the mission of the United Nations, as the world’s multilateral platform for the twenty-first century”*

**—UN Secretary-General António Guterres**

# Building resilience and fostering inclusivity

Realizing the benefits of migration for economic growth and sustainable development requires strategies that strengthen the resilience of host communities, foster inclusive and cohesive societies, and harness the contributions of migrants as a source of growth and innovation in host communities. By combining institutional strategies with community-based actions, human security gives rise to conditions that encourage participation, expand opportunities, build capacities, promote mutual respect, and integrate migration into development planning. As such, it advances a whole-of-society approach that protects and empowers host and migrant communities, resulting in greater social harmony and improved prospects for the advancement of sustainable development.



## Regional cooperation for addressing climate-induced migration and displacement

The small island states of the Pacific region are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Increases in the frequency of extreme weather events, flooding, rising sea levels, and coastal erosion pose significant risks to the governments of the region and the lives and livelihoods of their people. As a result, climate-induced migration and displacement is on the rise. A UNTFHS programme, bringing together the UN, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Platform on Disaster Displacement, will contribute to the development of a regional framework for well-managed labour mobility as an opportunity for sustainable development and climate adaptation. It aims to strengthen government capacity and coordination through a human security and rights-based approach, promoting safer labour migration, developing the capacities of the most vulnerable communities, and providing good practices on better managing migration in regions highly susceptible to the adverse effects of our changing climate.

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