IOM position on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda

Introduction

IOM strongly advocates that migration be incorporated into the post-2015 UN development agenda. Human mobility within countries and across borders has become an integral part of today's social, economic and environmental landscape: the new development framework must reflect the reality that one in every seven people is on the move. As such, human mobility has direct and multiple impacts on development prospects for migrants, their families and communities, and on development of both countries of origin and of destination.

It is essential that migration be given due attention in the post-2015 UN development agenda. Well-managed migration can contribute significantly to development outcomes; therefore, it is both possible and desirable to identify migration-specific targets and indicators for human development.

This paper outlines the comprehensive consultative process in place to design the post-2015 UN development agenda, with specific reference to IOM's role in this process. It explains how migration is linked and contributes to development, and it proposes a number of key, measurable, migration-related elements that can be used in the consultative process to guide the conceptualization of robust development indicators in the new development agenda.

1. Migration in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda

The broad context

As the 2015 deadline for realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches,[1] the United Nations has embarked on a process to establish global support for a successor framework.[2] This process has two phases. The first phase, now in progress, consists of the UN system's internal and external consultations on the lessons learnt from the MDGs and on emerging challenges.[3] The second phase, starting in September 2013 with United Nations Member States' negotiations, is intended to lead to a United Nations summit on development in 2015.[4] A number of other migration-related activities and events will feed into this process, including (a) the United Nations General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (October 2013), (b) the review of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (2014), and (c) the special post-2015 sessions at the High-level Segments of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The developmental impact of migration

Human mobility is one of the defining features of today's world. Approximately 1 billion of the world's 7 billion people are migrants. Some 214 million are international migrants. Another 740 million are internal migrants. South-to-South migration is now just as important in volume as South-to-North migration, and North-to-South migration is a growing phenomenon. The dynamics of migration flows and patterns underline the complexity of migration trends and illustrate the socioeconomic interdependencies they create between countries.

There are development impacts at both ends of migration corridors: a large share of the GDP of many developing countries consists of migrant remittances. International remittance flows through official channels to developing countries in 2012 reached approximately USD 401 billion, three times the amount of total aid flows from OECD donors in 2011. There is substantial evidence to corroborate the impact of remittances on poverty reduction. How to mobilize and better leverage remittances for purposes of sustainable development, while respecting their private nature, is a major task for policymakers. Aside from remittances, diaspora groups and transnational communities also play an important role as development actors, by facilitating trade, investment, skills transfers and cultural linkages between countries. At the same time, many professional, technical and service circuits in destination countries would not function without the human, economic and cultural capital which migrants bring to their countries of destination. In the coming decades, demographic shifts will profoundly affect labour markets across the globe. The search for high-skilled talent will be particularly acute, but there will also be a strong need for service workers, for instance in the health and human care sectors. The severity of these shortages in some parts of the world, combined with the demands for employment and opportunities by youthful populations in other parts of the world, will keep labour migration at the forefront of policymakers' preoccupations.

At the same time, the varied impacts on migrants themselves and on their families should not be forgotten. IOM's World Migration Report 2013 *(forthcoming) finds that migration has profound consequences for migrant well-being as well as for the resources, skills and innovation of their communities at home and abroad.*

Changing settlement patterns, in combination with environmental changes, are likely to be a major concern for sustainable development, including through their impacts on mobility. Migration has in itself contributed to these changes in human settlement, while increasingly being shaped by the effects of natural disasters and climate change. Thirteen per cent of the world's urban population (now more than half of the world's total population) resides in low elevation coastal zones and is at risk from sea-level rise, stronger and more frequent storms and other hazards induced by climate change. Inadequate disaster risk reduction and adaptation strategies risk leading to losses of lives and livelihoods and to forced migration, which will undermine development efforts and may ultimately incur remedial programmes of intervention that far outstrip the costs of prevention and preparedness. In order to confront these challenges, migration needs to be part of the policy mix.

Although there were references to migration in the Millennium Declaration,[5] specific goals or targets for migration were not included in the MDG framework itself.[6] However, as the first phase of the post-2015 process has unfolded, a broad consensus has emerged on the relevance of migration as a key factor affecting the big development questions confronting the international community.[7] These

include how to generate equitable and inclusive growth and create employment for a growing world population; how to continue the MDGs' push for poverty alleviation for the poorest while generating sustainable management of the world's resources for today's population and future generations; how to manage new global risks, such as reducing vulnerability to environmental or economic shocks or natural and human-made crises; and how to mobilize financing for development in a world of decreasing aid budgets. A clear understanding of the role of human mobility in development will help formulate answers to those questions, and identify the benchmarks that could be used to measure how, in what way, and to what extent well-managed migration contributes to development.

In the words of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on International Migration and Development, Peter Sutherland:

> "*making migration part of the world's development strategy will have a meaningful impact on the lives of migrants, affording them greater access to rights and to the fruits of their labour. Perhaps even more important, it could change public perceptions of migrants, so that they are viewed as a blessing rather than a scourge.*"[8]

IOM's role in the post-2015 process

- IOM has been invited by the United Nations Secretary-General to take part in the *United Nations System Task Team (UNTT),* which supports system-wide preparations and brings together over 60 United Nations entities and agencies and international organizations. IOM has contributed directly to the work of UNTT by co-authoring "think pieces" related to human mobility. IOM is also a member of that part of the UNTT that serves as an inter-agency technical support team for the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.[9]

- IOM, together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and in partnership with the governments of Bangladesh and Switzerland, co-convened the *Global Thematic Consultation on Population Dynamics in the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda*, with topics covering rising fertility and population growth, declining fertility and population aging, and migration and urbanization, among others. The consultation culminated in a High-level Leadership Meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 12–13 March 2013, which was attended by representatives of 51 countries, a number of international and non-governmental organizations, and academics. The Leadership Meeting issued the Dhaka Declaration, which militated strongly in favour of including population and migration issues in the post-2015 UN development agenda.[10]

- IOM has also taken part in more than 20 of the *national and regional consultations on the post-2015 UN development agenda* that were organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), providing expert advice on how to factor migration into the broader development discourse.[11]

2. Migration and development – the main points of intersection

Three key migration and development policy issues need to be highlighted:

First, it is essential to establish proper working linkages between migration and development. The Rio+20 Outcome document included a commitment to systematically consider population dynamics, including migration, in development strategies and policies.[12] Such considerations are essential to the realization of a range of development objectives, including decent work and access to health, water, food and energy.[13]

However, there needs to be a determined effort on the part of both migration and development stakeholders to establish links between their respective policy domains in order to achieve the full development potential of migration. At this juncture, there is an unprecedented opportunity for the migration and development communities to work together.[14] The positive impact of migration is neither predetermined nor guaranteed. On the contrary, comprehensive and well-managed migration policies are crucial, and ideally these should be developed and implemented through close cooperation between the countries of origin and destination, to ensure orderly mobility with full respect for the human rights of all migrants. Only development initiatives such as these will be able to unleash the development potential of migration and allow migrant diaspora resources to be fully utilized, beginning with the benefits accruing to the migrants themselves.

Growing awareness of these policy requisites is apparent at the demand end of the policy spectrum, as has been seen, for example, in current debates in the European Union and the United States, where migration policy reform looks at how to facilitate the necessary legal avenues for entering labour markets and/or for citizenship. It is equally apparent at the supply end of the spectrum, where developing countries are expressing a keen desire to establish strong relationships with their migrant communities abroad and to encourage them to invest social and financial capital in development endeavours in their countries of origin. At both ends of the spectrum, the considerable efficiency gains brought about by freedom of movement and establishment in the context of regional integration are being closely studied, and are being emulated across the globe.

Second, there is the importance of migrants' privately-funded contributions to development. In 2012, remittances to developing countries were around USD 401 billion, and these funds had a direct effect on development.[15] UNDP's *Human Development Report 2009* found that migrants who moved from countries with a low human development index (HDI) to a higher-HDI country experienced, on average, a 15-fold increase in income, a doubling in education enrolment rate, and a 16-fold reduction in child mortality.[16] Remittances have been shown to contribute to poverty reduction among the families left behind, by increasing household incomes and enabling them to invest in housing, health and education. Research suggests that internal remittance flows could be even more significant in poverty reduction: internal migrants make up three quarters of the world's migrants and their remittances typically go to the rural poor.[17]

For a number of countries, remittances are a significant part of GDP and thus represent one of the largest sources of foreign currency, allowing critical imports and access to international capital

markets on a more favourable basis.[18] Added to these benefits are the less visible intangibles of social remittances that migration brings, including increasing the flow of trade and the transfer of skills, values and innovation.[19] While there is clearly enormous potential for migrant contributions, much remains to be done to identify innovative strategies and to evaluate, improve and scale up existing approaches.[20]

It has to be noted that the development gains described take place despite the fact that human mobility remains tightly regulated. Initial research on the effects of lowering barriers to freedom of movement and establishment indicates that even relatively small increases in freedom of movement for migrants from developing countries would bring gains that equal, or exceed, the gains from elimination of all remaining policy barriers to movement of goods and capital.[21]

Third, managed migration is an essential part of increasing resilience and enhancing effective disaster risk reduction. Two thirds of coastal cities with over 5 million inhabitants are found in areas that will be affected by sea-level rise and adverse weather conditions.[22] As such, migration needs to be included in disaster risk reduction strategies and in adaptation strategies to environmental change, removing populations from harm's way, easing pressure on critical infrastructure and service delivery for those who stay behind, and stimulating development through (re)integration measures for displaced populations.

3. Elements to consider when developing targets and indicators for the post-2015 United Nations development agenda

The specific structure of the post-2015 UN development agenda is still undecided; nevertheless, the approach that is finally agreed on is likely to require targets and indicators to help establish and measure the impact of migration on development.[23] A combination of factors, including social and economic realities, the cross-cutting nature of migratory phenomena, and political sensitivities, make it unlikely that there would be a stand-alone migration goal. Rather, migration is likely to be identified as a key development enabler and therefore a key element in a renewed global partnership for development, building on the current MDG 8.[24] Moreover, migration should also be included as a cross-cutting issue relevant to the achievement of goals in other key thematic areas, including health, decent work and disaster risk reduction.[25]

In this context, IOM proposes:

> (1) A migration target as part of a global partnership for development, complemented by migration-related development indicators;
> (2) Elements to consider in developing indicators suitable for migration as a cross-cutting issue.

IOM's proposed migration target as part of a global partnership for development
IOM proposes to create cooperative agreements related to human mobility to enable safe, lawful, less costly migration across or within borders, which will ensure the protection of the human rights of migrants and produce positive development outcomes for all stakeholders.***[26]***

At the global level, indicators for progress towards such a target could track advances in global migration and development discourse and action. For example, the Global Forum on Migration and Development could use its dialogue mechanisms to explore global standard-setting or to encourage joint action,.

At the regional level, it would be useful to track and compare progress on arrangements for freedom of movement and establishment under regional integration frameworks.

At the bilateral level, it would be useful to have indicators of progress in establishing and implementing labour mobility agreements, with recruitment systems that protect the human and labour rights of migrants and that facilitate the recognition of qualifications and portability of pensions and other social benefits.

Elements to consider in developing indicators suitable for migration as a cross-cutting issue
IOM believes that migration should also be incorporated into targets wherever it is relevant to achieving specific development goals, particularly poverty alleviation, disaster risk reduction, and access to quality education, health and decent work. In all these areas, it will be necessary to determine how to factor in essential issues, such as the well-being of migrants, the need to combat inequalities and marginalization, and matters relating to the portability of social rights and earned entitlements and savings. The following, in the relevant areas, should be considered, in order to incorporate migration as a cross-cutting issue in development goals, targets and indicators.

Regarding *poverty alleviation* it will be important to track remittance transaction costs and increase of proportion of remittances sent through formal channels, as well as the availability of financial services that are adapted to migrants and that are competitive, legal and reliable. On *disaster risk reduction* it is suggested to track the development of national action plans, with particular reference to actions to reduce exposure to hazard and risk, and the promotion of migration as a voluntary adaptation mechanism rather than a reactive and forced response to disaster. It would furthermore be useful to track the effectiveness of systems of assistance during migration crises and, in particular, the effectiveness of response and preparation measures to assist migrants in vulnerable situations.[27]

Regarding *education* relevant will be to track the share of remittances goes towards education, and educational enrolment of both internal and international migrants. Regarding *health* tracking the share of remittances used for medical expenses, the emigration rate of health professionals, and possible discrepancies between migrant and native populations regarding access to health services will be important. In relation to *decent work* it is suggested to monitor the development of migrant recruitment integrity systems, migrants' freedom to change employers, migrant access to complaint mechanisms, and the effectiveness of programmes to reduce the risk of brain drain in key professional labour market sectors.

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Conclusion

Migration is integral to the important development questions that are currently being considered by the international community. Migration is a global megatrend: 1 billion of the world's 7 billion people are migrants, while the actual number of people directly affected by migration is even larger – family members, businesses, labour market sectors and national economies depend on migrants; billions stand to gain from an improved approach to the governance of migration. In order to respond to this reality, the post-2015 UN development agenda needs to incorporate migration into development goals, targets and indicators. Migration would be a leading candidate for, and a key component of, a future global partnership goal, and could also be included in progress indicators for a number of development goals, such as poverty alleviation, disaster risk reduction, education, health and decent work. IOM believes that the proposed targets, indicators and measurements of migrant well-being provide a strong foundation for an effective post-2015 UN development agenda that takes into account human mobility in the globalized world of the 21st century.

Against this backdrop, IOM urges all States – origin, destination and transit countries alike – to opt for a *high-road scenario on human mobility* in their deliberations on the post-2015 UN development agenda; in particular, to incorporate migration into their development policies, to reduce remittance transfer costs, to make legal migration processes more accessible, simpler, more flexible and more transparent, and to protect the rights of all migrants, particularly the most vulnerable.

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[1] United Nations Development Programme, *The Millennium Development Goals: Eight Goals for 2015*. Available from www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html (accessed 10 May 2013).

[2] United Nations, "Keeping the promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals", Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/65/1, 19 October 2010. Available from www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/1 (accessed 10 May 2013).

[3] This process began in 2012 with the United Nations elaborating a series of preliminary suggestions for the way forward and launching a broad-based consultation process at global, regional and national levels, including an on-line discussion forum. In July 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed a High-level Panel, co-chaired by three heads of state, to receive input from the United Nations system consultations – including 11 thematic consultations (one of which was on population dynamics and included migration) and almost 100 national consultations – and to prepare a report for the United Nations Secretary-General, who is due to report to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2013 on his vision for post-2015. Available from www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/process.shtml (accessed 10 May 2013).

[4] This process began in January 2013 with the creation of a 30-member Open Working Group (with the 30 seats currently shared by 70 governments) tasked with preparing a proposal on the sustainable development goals that are to follow on from the Millennium Development Goals. The creation of this group was called for at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (Rio+20). Available from http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549 (accessed 10 May 2013).

[5] Notably with regard to combating trafficking and smuggling in human beings, ensuring respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, and enhancing humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons (United Nations, "United Nations Millennium Declaration", Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/55/2, 8 September 2000).

[6] International Organization for Migration, *The Millennium Development Goals and Migration*, IOM Migration Research Series, No. 20 (Geneva, 2005).

[7] UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, Report to the Secretary-General (New York, 2012)

[8] *Project Syndicate*, "Migration is Development", 15 March 2013 Available from www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/migrants-and-the-post-2015-global-development-agenda-by-peter-sutherland#mhAjRhOc3DOaoHfw.99 (accessed 10 May 2013).

[9] United Nations, *The Future We Want*, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/66/288, 11 September 2012, paras. 248–249. Available from www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E (accessed 10 May 2013).

[10] *Dhaka Declaration of the Global Leadership Meeting on Population Dynamics in the Context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 13 March 2013*. Available from www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/Dhaka-Declaration.pdf (accessed 10 May 2013).

[11] IOM has been active in discussions in Africa: Angola, Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania; Europe and Central Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Turkey; Asia−Pacific: Bangladesh, Viet Nam; Central and Latin America: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, Guatemala; and in regional economic commissions: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE); United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA).

[12] United Nations, *The Future We Want*, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/66/288, 11 September 2012, para. 144. Available from www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E (accessed 10 May 2013).

[13] *Dhaka Declaration of the Global Leadership Meeting on Population Dynamics in the Context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 13 March 2013*. Available from www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/Dhaka-Declaration.pdf (accessed 10 May 2013).

[14] Government Offices of Sweden, *The Swedish Chairmanship of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) 2013–2014: Swedish Participation in the UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in Autumn 2011*, Ministry of Justice Program Document (Stockholm, 2013). Available from www.gfmd.org/en/news/208-sweden-national-launch (accessed 10 May 2013).

[15] World Bank, "Migration and Development Brief 20", 19 April 2013. Available from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1288990760745/MigrationDevelopmentBrief20.pdf (accessed 10 May 2013).

[16] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (New York, 2009), p. 24.

[17] A. Castaldo, P. Deshingkar and A. McKay, *Internal Migration, Remittances and Poverty: Evidence from Ghana and India*, Migrating out of Poverty, Research Programme Consortium, Research paper 7 (Brighton, University of Sussex, 2012), p. 4.

[18] D. Ratha, *Leveraging Remittances for Development*, World Bank Development Prospects Group (Washington, DC, 2005).

[19] International Organization for Migration, *Migration and Social Change*, International Dialogue on Migration, No. 17 (Geneva, 2011). Available from http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/RedBook17.pdf (accessed 10 May 2013). Also: A. Venturini, F. Montobbio and C. Fassio, *Are Migrants Spurring Innovation?*, MPC Research Report 2012/11 (San Domenico di Fiesole, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, 2012).

[20] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Economic and Social Survey 2012: In Search of New Development Finance*, Document E/2012/50/Rev.1 ST/ESA/341 (New York, 2012), pp. 71−72 (Box III.3).

[21] M. Clemens, *Economics and Emigration: Trillion-Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk?*, Working Paper 264 (Washington, DC, Center for Global Development, 2011).

[22] United Kingdom, Government Office for Science, *Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change: Future Challenges and Opportunities*, Final Project Report (London, 2011), p. 78.

[23] IOM is aware of the challenges to consider in the collection of data for comparable worldwide statistics related to migration and migrant well-being, especially where institutional capacity is weak, and it understands that these challenges need to be taken into account when choosing a system of goals, targets and indicators for the post-2015 UN development agenda.

[24] The current MDG 8 indicators for partnerships are trade, aid efficiency, the special situation of land-locked and island states, private sector engagement, and transfer of technology.

[25] A recent communiqué, *Meeting of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda in Bali, Indonesia, 27 March 2013*, cited migration among the cross-cutting issues to use to revitalize global governance and partnerships: "…using a full array of technical exchange, trade, migration, investment and other instruments to strengthen societies and protect human rights". Available from www.beyond2015.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Communique%20Bali.doc.pdf (accessed 10 May 2013). Also: UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN development Agenda (UNTT), *A Renewed Global Partnership for Development* (New York, 2013). Available from www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/glob_dev_rep_2013.pdf (accessed 10 May 2013). Also: Overseas Development Institute (ODI), German Development Institute (DIE) and European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), *European Report on Development 2013: Post-2015: Global Action for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future* (Brussels, 2013). Available from www.erd-report.eu/erd/report_2012/documents/FullReportEN.pdf (accessed 10 May 2013).

[26] This text is based upon suggestions made in a concept note and background paper prepared for an Expert Policy Dialogue on Migration in the Post-2015 Development Agenda organised in Stockholm on 26 February 2013 for members of the High-level panel on the post-2015 UN development agenda blogg.ud.se/utvecklingspolitik/files/2013/03/Report-from-HLP-Expert-Policy-Dialogue-26-feb-2013.pdf

[27] International Organization for Migration, *IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework*, IOM Council, 101st Session, Geneva, November 2012, MC/2355.