



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

**Statement by
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At the UN Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda

**Interactive dialogue 2: “Tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls
and leaving no one behind”**

**New York, UN GA Hall
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Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I’d like to make three points today to highlight migration’s key role in addressing inequality. Two points on the relationship between migration and inequality, and lastly, concrete suggestions on what can be done to improve positive development outcomes. For easy digestion, and memory, I have grouped all three points under the letter “O” -- Origins, Outcomes and Opportunities.

I. Origins

First, migration is important to inequality because too often migration is a result of inequality. Migration is driven, at least in part, by income and wealth inequalities, lack of opportunities and difficulties that befall an individual or an entire nation or region. Here, I would recall that there are more forced migrants today than at any other time since World War Two -- 60 million in which 20 million are refugees and 40 million IDPs.

In a globalized world, migration can also be a result of inequality in the work place, that is, differences in labour market conditions and requirements – between the skills and jobs needed in one place, and those available in another.

The reality we must face is that as long as inequalities and significant skills gaps in labour markets exist, people will migrate. In Europe, we are currently seeing with our own eyes the extreme risks migrants are willing to take. More generally, as we have long said, migration is the world's oldest poverty eradication strategy. This will continue to be the case, no matter what barriers governments erect to try to prevent migrants from entering.

II. Outcomes

Second, the migration process itself can result in various vulnerabilities. Many new arrivals struggle to find their feet as a result of no or limited access to health and education, or to social safety nets.

Often, this is driven or compounded by discrimination and xenophobia, or by a disregard for migrants' fundamental human rights and freedoms. Many migrants in a vulnerable situation become the victims of abuse and exploitation, or of human trafficking.

Given migrants vulnerability all along the migration route and even after arrival, IOM is delighted that migration has been included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development -- and in particular that migration has been incorporated as part of Goal 10 on inequalities which includes a target on facilitating orderly and safe migration through well-managed migration policies.

III. Opportunities

This leads to my third point, namely concrete measures we can all take to strengthen migration as a force for lowering inequalities; and how, therefore we can achieve the ambitious goals of the new agenda.

For IOM, the answer lies in what we call a “high road migration scenario” . This could encompass many different policy interventions, but is focused on best practice measures to leverage the opportunities that migration offers. To improve migrant and host population wellbeing through safe, orderly, dignified and humane migration – the very core of target 10.7.

It could include measures to:

- Lower the physical and financial cost of the migration process, including lowering the cost of remittance transfers;
- Promote portability of social security benefits and rights;
- Enhance recognition of skills and educational qualifications;
- Provide migrants access to health and education services;
- De-criminalize irregular migrants;
- Tackle discrimination and xenophobia through public education and information campaigns;
- Provide additional legal avenues for people to migrate.

These are just a few examples of what governments can do to address the challenges migrants and host communities face. There are many more.

IOM stands ready to assist governments to develop and implement such policies to achieve the 2030 Agenda and to build a world free of poverty. One such

measure is a Migration Governance Index that IOM is developing to help monitor and build capacity in planning and implementing governments' migration policies. IOM has a unique capacity, a global footprint of 450 Offices, 65 years of experience and a newly opened Global Migration Data Center – to support Member States to monitor and implement the new agenda.

We are here to help you. Together we can make a difference.