



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

IOM input to the HLPF 2020 – Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways: Realizing the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development

Introduction

Well-managed migration can be both a development strategy and a development outcome. With over 272 million international migrants¹ and over 70.8 million forcibly displaced people across the globe in 2019² – and many more people on the move within countries – how we choose to address migration and displacement will be a decisive factor in our achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

During the Decade of Action, several global trends will continue to shape the complex interactions between migration and sustainable development, reinforcing the importance of integrating migration into SDG implementation. These include:

- 1. Significant ongoing inequality:** Inequalities will continue to influence people's decisions to move but will also be impacted by migration. Increasingly exclusionary migration policies can exacerbate inequalities by preventing migrants' access to basic services, such as healthcare, and rights protections. At the same time, well-managed migration can reduce social, economic, political and cultural inequalities faced by individuals and communities.
- 2. The climate crisis:** By 2050, environmental and climatic change could force more than 143 million people to move.³ While some will be displaced by climate-induced disasters, others will be affected by slow-onset environmental processes such as growing desertification and coastal erosion. For communities vulnerable to these changes, planned migration can offer a vital lifeline - a means of adapting to environmental and climatic change through alleviating pressures at home while contributing to sustainable development in communities of destination.⁴
- 3. Ongoing conflict and violence:** The number of people forcibly displaced within countries and across borders as a result of persecution, conflict, or generalized violence has grown by over 50 per cent in the last 10 years to 70.8 million by the end of 2018.⁵ Increasingly complex humanitarian crises impacting forced displacement and migration will create policy challenges at the global,

¹ UN DESA, 2019

² UNHCR 2018, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018

<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5d08d7ee7/unhcr-global-trends-2018.html>

³ World Bank 2018, Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration,

https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/29461/WBG_ClimateChange_Final.pdf?sequence=18&isAllowed=y

⁴ See for example the Colombian Temporary and Circular Labour Migration Scheme

⁵ UNHCR 2018, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018

national and local level. Major migration and displacement events have and will continue to impact the development scenarios of countries and regions across the globe in the next years.⁶

4. **Shifting demographics:** Much of the world's population is aging. Some countries and regions – in particular those in the global North – face challenges in covering the costs of an aging population combined with fewer people entering the labour market. In Africa there is a growing youth population which increases pressure on the labour markets. In sub-Saharan Africa over 10 million jobs would need to be created annually to absorb new entries into the labour market. In this context, migration can play a key role in ensuring that worker demand and supply are matched.⁷
5. **Rapid urbanization:** The share of the world's population living in urban areas is expected to increase from 55 per cent in 2018 to 60 per cent in 2030,⁸ in part as a result of internal and international migration to urban areas. This can place pressure on infrastructure, jobs and basic services, and can present challenges to social cohesion. With effective interventions to enable migrant integration and leverage diversity, migration can contribute to broad-based urban development.
6. **Impact of digital technologies:** Digitalisation and other technological changes will continue to shape globalisation, bringing societies and communities all over the globe closer together, and facilitating global mobility. This will create new challenges, but also many opportunities to allow migrants and transnational communities to contribute to development processes in their countries of origin and destination. Technological progress also presents new opportunities to improve knowledge on various aspects of migration.⁹

While Target 10.7 of the SDGs directly focusses on well-managed migration policies, migration and migrants are relevant to the implementation of all SDGs. The Migration and Sustainable Development Nexus, as described in IOM's Strategic Vision and its institutional strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development (M&SD), recognises that development can encourage migration, but that migration can also be a consequence of development deficiencies and crises. Regardless of the motivations for movement, when migration is well governed, it can contribute to positive development outcomes. Excluding migrants from sustainable development policies, however, will not only risk leaving people behind, but also impede the achievement of many of the SDGs.¹⁰ By guaranteeing rights and reducing vulnerabilities of migrants as part of wider community development strategies, combined with leveraging the enormous development potential of migration, we can promote transformative pathways towards sustainable development and accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, UN Member States have increased their efforts to ensure that migration is considered in sustainable development planning and implementation, but much work remains to be done. At the global level, the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) has been an important milestone to bring together the large majority of UN members states around a common understanding of

⁶ IOM, World Migration Report 2020, p.4

⁷ Elaboration based on Eurostat data on IOM GMDAC's Migration Data Portal <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-forecasting>

⁸ UN, 2018, Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration: Report of the Secretary-General. <https://undocs.org/E/CN.9/2018/2>

⁹ See IOM GMDAC's Migration Data Portal <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/big-data>

¹⁰ See ODI's Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development series, <https://www.odi.org/projects/2849-migration-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>

migration in all of its dimensions and identify key policies and measures to ensure accelerated action and transformative pathways to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Many member states have already applied inclusive approaches that aim to leave no one behind. However, more member states need to apply a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to enhance the benefits of migration for development and leave no one behind.

Key policies and measures to ensure accelerated action and transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action, and selected recommendations for accelerated progress

As outlined in the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is at risk. Currently no country is on track to meet all the targets of the SDGs. For this reason, it is crucial to identify innovative and transformative pathways to accelerate action for achieving the Goals.

Good migration governance to harness the development potential of migration

Ensuring that migration is integrated coherently across all policy domains can represent a transformative pathway to accelerate action on sustainable development. Good migration governance does not rely on targeted migration policies alone but requires a proactive approach that cuts across sectoral development planning.¹¹ Both development and migration-specific interventions should be better designed, coordinated and evaluated to maximize the benefits of the Migration and Sustainable Development Nexus. To do this, a robust evidence base is needed on the relationship between migration and sustainable development in different contexts.

In an analysis of migration governance arrangements in place across 49 countries between 2015 and 2019, IOM found that migration still tends to remain a specific policy silo and that governments have yet to establish or apply holistic approaches to migration governance and policies.¹² Many governments provide access to social services and protection, family reunification and employment for immigrants, but are lacking a coherent and comprehensive migration strategy in line with national development priorities, thereby creating gaps in their policy frameworks and limiting their capacity to respond to changes in demographic and migration trends. When prioritizing policies for one migration group over another, valuable synergies for coherent policy planning remain untapped. Without a common understanding of government institutions of the particular needs and opportunities of migration in different policy sectors, migrants will be further left behind and development potential will remain unused.

The GCM provides an important framework through which governments and other stakeholders can strengthen migration governance. It recognizes that no state can address migration alone, and that national migration policies are more likely to succeed through international cooperation with a whole-of-society and a whole-of-government approach and when grounded in respect for human rights and the rule of law. Importantly, its 23 objectives address migration from a 360-degree perspective, underscoring its relevance to numerous areas of sustainable development and highlighting the need for accurate and disaggregated data to undertake action. In the context of the Decade of Action, the GCM's objectives and commitments therefore offer clear means for governments to make progress on the 2030 Agenda. With

¹¹ World Migration Report 2020., p.8

¹² https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mgi_a_global_perspective.pdf, p.35

sufficient funding and focus, several of the GCM's commitments could also contribute to significant acceleration across multiple SDGs. However, although the GCM reaffirms the need to mainstream migration into other policy domains across the board, further action is needed in order to make that outcome a reality.

IOM's Migration Governance Framework (MIGOF) highlights three building blocks to progress towards good migration governance that will need to be considered to ensure migration can be an accelerator for sustainable development:

1. Adherence to international standards and fulfillment of migrants' rights

This includes ensuring compliance with international standards and respect of migrants' rights to leave no one behind in sustainable development processes.

2. Formulating policy using evidence and a whole-of-government approach

This includes establishing inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, combined with capacity development and knowledge management strategies that involve national and local level actors and apply a whole-of government and whole-of-society approach.

It also aims at improving the availability of accurate and reliable migration data, in line with objective 1 of the GCM, to strengthen the evidence base for policymakers.

3. Engagement with partners to address migration and related issues

By promoting international cooperation and partnerships across different thematic development and migration sectors countries can better consider and address migration dynamics in sustainable development planning.

Key entry points for migration as an accelerator to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Among the six entry points identified in the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report, three are intrinsically linked to migration. Governments will need to consider these links in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Entry point: Human well-being and capabilities

Improving human well-being is a fundamental objective of sustainable development. It is also a critical means and outcome of broader social, economic and environmental development. If migrants are empowered to pursue their aspirations and apply their capabilities, they can improve their own development outcomes, as well as those of their families and communities. Ensuring the well-being of migrants and their families and communities', thus enabling them to leverage their capabilities, is therefore essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda. To do so, development frameworks need to be holistic, consider diverse societies and promote the inclusion of migrants at all levels and in all policy sectors. Improved migrant well-being and empowerment can promote social cohesion across communities and

drive development processes, whilst the absence of holistic policy frameworks may be costly for both migrants and receiving societies.¹³

Entry point: Sustainable and just economies

Migration can contribute to and have an important impact on shaping more sustainable and just economies in countries of origin, transit, destination, and return. The contributions of migration are not measurable in monetary terms alone, but also encompass knowledge, support, networks, values and skills that migrants transfer between societies.¹⁴ As students, workers, and entrepreneurs - as well as consumers, savers, taxpayers and family members - migrants can contribute considerably to sustainable development processes in sociocultural, civic-political and economic domains.¹⁵ Migration can therefore be a powerful strategy for human development and poverty reduction that can further promote sustainable and just economies through innovation, skills, knowledge and remittances in both countries of origin and destination, opening new markets and economic opportunities and filling labour market gaps to increase productivity.¹⁶ As 75% of globally recorded remittances go to low- and middle-income countries, there is also considerable potential for transnational communities to contribute to fair and sustainable economic growth and productive development in countries of origin.¹⁷ When actively promoted through access to rights and opportunities, migration also has the potential to reduce inequalities within and among countries and thereby impact sustainable development outcomes globally.¹⁸ In order to do so, regular migration pathways are important, combined with the recognition of labour rights and the integration of labour migration in productive development policies. Economic inclusion and empowerment through access to financial services and education can also have a considerable impact to accelerate sustainable development outcomes on a wider level.

Entry point: Urban and peri-urban development

Migration is becoming increasingly urban. Most migrants, whether they move internally or internationally, settle in urban areas¹⁹ because that is where their human capital is most rewarded.²⁰ Migrants turn cities into hubs of diversity and innovation²¹ and make local authorities the first responders to their needs.²² Cities find themselves at the forefront of managing the positive and negative impacts of migration in their

¹³ IOM 2020, WMR 2020, Migration, Inclusion and Social Cohesion: Challenges, Recent Developments and Opportunities, p.206

¹⁴ IOM 2020, WMR 2020, Reflections on Migrants' Contributions in an Era of Increasing Disruption and Disinformation, p.164

¹⁵ OECD/ILO 2018, How Immigrants Contribute to Developing Countries' Economies

¹⁶ IOM 2019, MSD strategy, p.6.

¹⁷ UNDESA 2020, World Social Report, Chapter 5

¹⁸ UNDESA 2020, World Social Report, Chapter 5: International Migration: A Force for Equality, Under the Right Conditions, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/02/World-Social-Report-2020-Chapter-5.pdf>

¹⁹ IOM, World Migration Report, Geneva, 2018

²⁰ IOM, World Migration Report, Geneva, 2018

²¹ UN HABITAT, *Access to adequate housing: The Pathway to Migrants' Inclusion in Cities*, Policy Brief within the context of the 5th Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development in Marrakesh, 2018.

²² UNGA, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/Res/71/1), New York, 2016 (Available here https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1)

territories as well as the promotion of inclusive, safe and sustainable urban environments.²³ However, this can only be achieved with the right policies in place. Recent studies show that migrants are disproportionately represented among the urban poor, particularly in many informal settlements.²⁴ Urban migrants tend to lack opportunities and resources to sufficiently enjoy the benefits of urban life and have limited access to basic necessities including decent housing, education and health care.²⁵ This can be further aggravated with large influxes of displaced persons to urban settings which can further overstretch their ability to provide land, housing, utilities and services to a growing population and exposes migrants and displaced persons to environmental hazards and disaster risk.¹ Responding to the urbanization of migration and displacement requires looking beyond urban planning and migration policies and understanding how this intersects with wider sectoral policies and planning, from disaster-risk reduction and resilience to health and education. Only by doing this can sustainable urban development be achieved as outlined in the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11. Decentralised levels of governance are uniquely placed to connect local realities with national development priorities and can thus play an important role in accelerating development outcomes for both migrants and host societies.²⁶ Supporting local authorities to better prepare for and respond to displacement situations can mitigate the impact of urban displacement becoming an impediment for sustainable development on the local level and can empower both migrants and displaced persons to contribute to development processes.²⁷

Accelerators of Action for Migration and Sustainable Development

IOM has identified **Ten Accelerators** to **make migration work for sustainable development**. If systematically operationalised, these will catalyze progress towards the Goals. Underlying all of these, it will be critical to improve data, research and analysis as a basis for setting targets and tracking progress:

1. **Ensure human rights are protected across borders:** Ensuring the portability of rights of migrants – including through social protection – is a critical enabler of sustainable development. Not only will this enhance migrants’ agency as development actors, but it will also limit their exposure to the risks of being exploited and falling below the poverty line. It will also assist governments to protect the most vulnerable populations. This is in line with GCM objectives 15, 16 and 22.
2. **Identify and address factors which lead people to migrate in an unsafe manner:** Migration works best when people make informed decisions to move through regular channels.²⁸ Too often, people move through unsafe, irregular means, often with limited capacity to plan. This increases their vulnerabilities and decreases human development. By understanding why people move, as well as monitoring and addressing risks as part of wider development planning, governments can

²³ Marrakesh Mayors Declaration: Cities working together for migrants and refugees, adopted at the 5th Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development

²⁴ UNGA, Policy Paper 10: Housing policies, Developed by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) A/CONF.226/PC.3/23, Surabaya, Indonesia, 2016.

²⁵ UNGA, Policy Paper 1: Right to the city and cities for all, Developed by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) A/CONF.226/PC.3/14, Surabaya, Indonesia, 2016.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 15.

²⁷ IOM 2019, Internal Displacement in Urban and Rural Areas, accessible under: <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/internal-displacement-urban-and-rural-areas>

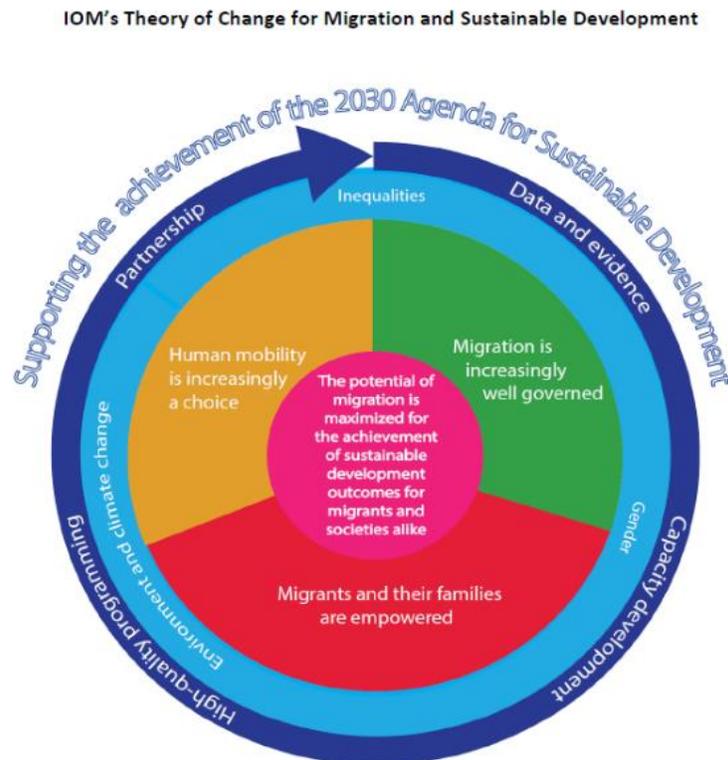
²⁸ UNSG 2018, A/72/643 - Making Migration Work for All, p.3

reduce unsafe migration and enable mobility to become a choice. As well as improving sustainable development conditions in countries of origin, this can also maximise the development outcomes of migration in countries of destination, thereby working as a transnational accelerator of sustainable development. This is in line with GCM objective 2.

3. **Leverage digitalization to enhance migrants' wellbeing and facilitate their contributions to sustainable development:** As recognised in several GCM objectives (4, 14, 18, 19, 21), technological innovations can play an important role in accelerating development outcomes through migration. By using technology to respond to the challenges of migrants, their well-being can be improved, and their capabilities enhanced when moving across borders. Innovative border management can allow facilitated movements for cross-border workers. The digitalization of services, such as health, education and social protection, or the recognition and development of skills throughout the migration continuum, can allow for migrants to better contribute to development processes in both countries of origin and destination, including during return and reintegration.
4. **Expand safe and regular migration pathways in the circular economy:** Safe and regular pathways, such as skills-based mobility, will be an important instrument to ensure that countries have the right capacities in place to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, in particular to enable green growth and carbon neutrality. South-South partnerships will be key for this work to increase the positive development impact of migration and promote sustainable and just economies across different regions. This is in line with GCM objectives 6, 15, 18.
5. **Empower diaspora groups, migrants and displaced persons as development actors, in particular through financial inclusion in line with sustainable and productive investment strategies:** Migrants and displaced populations can be a key motor for innovation and entrepreneurship when equipped with the right tools. This requires ensuring equal access to financing and financial education in both places of origin and destination, as well as connecting diaspora groups with sustainable development strategies. This is in line with GCM objectives 19, 20.
6. **Protect migrant workers along global supply chains and throughout recruitment processes:** The exploitation of migrant workers violates their human rights and increases global inequalities, thereby undermining sustainable development. This is in line with GCM objective 6.
7. **Empower local governments to make migration decisions and integrate migration into urban development planning and disaster risk preparedness and response:** This will be an important accelerator for action on urban and peri-urban development, recognizing global trends as described in the entry point above.
8. **Harness the positive role of diversity:** Sustainable development can be best achieved by socially cohesive communities based on common principles and values. The recognition of different needs with equal opportunities in diverse and inclusive societies can accelerate development.
9. **Include migrants, displaced populations and transnational communities in local decision-making structures:** By participating in local development processes, migrants can be active contributors and accelerate sustainable development goals together with wider communities. Without facilitating participation of migrants, governments cannot tap into their knowledge and skills to accelerate action for sustainable development.
10. **Proactively change negative perceptions of migration:** Unless public perceptions and political discourse about migration change, with proactive use of evidence to inform policy and practice, none of the above will be possible. This is in line with GCM Objective 17.

IOM's contribution to accelerated action and transformative pathways

IOM is working closely with member states to support the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, including through the monitoring of indicator 10.7.2 in partnership with UNDESA and OECD. It is stepping up efforts to ensure migration policies and programmes lead to transformative pathways for sustainable development, as well as to strengthen data and the overall evidence base on migration and sustainable development to support this. In particular, IOM's institutional strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development is a core part of the organization's efforts to support member states and the UN system in accelerating action to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The focus of the Strategy is to maximize the potential of migration to achieve sustainable development outcomes for migrants and societies alike, recognizing that migration, when it is well-managed, can be both a development strategy and a development outcome.



Three outcomes will shape this work:

- Human mobility is increasingly a choice.
- Migrants and their families are empowered as development actors.
- Migration is increasingly well governed.

In addition, the strategy accounts for three cross-cutting issues: (i) inequalities; (ii) environment and climate change; and (iii) gender, understanding that systematically addressing these issues is critical to sustainable development.

The Strategy directly responds to recent changes in both the global governance of migration and the UN Development system to foster increased collaboration in support of the 2030 Agenda. Within this context, IOM bears a unique responsibility to leverage these opportunities with its partners. As coordinator and secretariat of the recently established UN Network on Migration, IOM plays a central role in shaping global discussions on migration and sustainable development, including through a more robust evidence-base and enhanced knowledge management. The Strategy serves as an important tool to respond to current realities, promoting increased collaboration across the UN development system and ensuring that UN system activities maximize the development potential of migration.

The Strategy grounds IOM's approach and priority interventions in efforts to leverage migration for sustainable development. To deliver on this, IOM is building on its evidence-base, deepening partnerships across the UN system and beyond, strengthening the capacity of IOM staff and our partners and delivering effective programming. The institution-wide implementation plan will also consider the above-mentioned entry points to support the acceleration of action for achieving the 2030 Agenda. IOM will regularly update its member states on progress and achievements throughout the Strategy's implementation.
