

Background note on migration in the post-2015 development agenda: a stocktaking exercise for the GFMD Thematic Meeting¹

Introduction

The declarationⁱ from the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development acknowledged the important contribution of migration in realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and recognized that human mobility is a key factor for sustainable development, which should be adequately considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. Noting that the MDGs had no reference to migrants or migration, this recognition was a step forward for the migration and development agenda.ⁱⁱ

As reinforced by the Secretary-General of the United Nationsⁱⁱⁱ, much of the progress in the area of migration and development can be attributed to the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the trust that the Forum has generated.

It was therefore natural for the GFMD to take on the task of furthering the international thinking and dialogue on how migration could be included in the post-2015 development agenda. At the 7th Summit Meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in May 2014, there was a consensus that migration must be included in the post-2015 development agenda. Two main principles were laid down for this:

1. Migration is first and foremost about human beings and the protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, irrespective of their migration status, needs to be included in the post-2015 development agenda.
2. There is consensus that migrants and migration should be recognized as enablers of development and should be included as such.

The GFMD Forum Meeting further resulted in recommendations that migrants and migration related aspects should be: 1) included in the narrative of the agenda; 2) clustered and included within a Means of Implementation/Global Partnerships focus area; 3) included as targets under the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Poverty Eradication; Education; Health and Population Dynamics; Economic growth and Decent work for all; Promoting Equality; and 4) that targets and indicators are disaggregated to account for development outcomes of migrants and their families.

Since then, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations have delivered their respective reports on the post-2015 agenda. Below is an account of how these two reports address migration. This is followed by an analysis of similarities and differences between the two reports; and an

¹ Background paper provided by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on International Migration

overview of how the recommendations of the GFMD have been accommodated; and suggested areas for possible thematic follow-up action.

Open Working Group Report on Sustainable Development Goals

The report from the Open Working Group is by many said to be the main basis for the intergovernmental negotiations.^{iv} This report includes migration both as part of the narrative and as targets under different goals as set out below.

Narrative

The introduction of the report provides a narrative of what the post-2015 development agenda should seek to achieve and sets the stage in terms of earlier international commitments. In this context it establishes that people are at the centre of sustainable development and that there should be no discrimination of any kind, including based on migratory status. A number of international commitments are recognized, including the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the key actions for further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development as well as the commitment to migration and development reaffirmed in the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

In order to monitor implementation of the SDGs, the narrative establishes the importance of improving the availability of and access to data and statistics disaggregated by migratory status among other categories, in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

Sustainable Development Goals

The motto “leave no one behind”, which was coined by the *High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 Development Agenda*, shines through the report and has become a common catch cry of the discussions. Importantly, a number of goals^v and targets explicitly contain the words “for all”, which the drafters have explained to mean that they are applicable to all people, without distinction of any kind such as age, sex, disability, culture, race, ethnicity, origin, migratory status, religion, economic or other status. Similarly, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants has suggested that words “for all” should be interpreted to mean that all migrants, regardless of status, are to be covered by these goals.^{vi} Please refer to Annex 1 for a full list of proposed SDGs.

Explicit migration references are made under *Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*; *Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries*; and *Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*. These targets are as follows:

- 8.8 protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious situations
- 10.7 facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

- 10.c by 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%
- 17.18 by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Beyond this, a number of *migration-related targets* can be found as follows:

- *Disaster*-related targets (implicitly covering displacement) under Goal 1^{vii}; Goal 11^{viii}; and Goal 13^{ix}
- Ensuring *access to critical skills* (incl. implicitly avoiding brain drain) under Goal 3^x and Goal 4^{xi}
- Eliminating *trafficking* under Goal 5^{xii} and Goal 16^{xiii}
- Providing legal *identity* for all including *birth registrations* under Goal 16^{xiv}
- Facilitating (mobility through) *trade in services* under Goal 17^{xv}
- Alternative sources of financing under goal 17^{xvi}
- Enhancing *policy coherence* for development under Goal 17^{xvii}

United Nations Secretary-General's Synthesis Report

The Synthesis Report on the post-2015 Agenda by the United Nations Secretary-General is set up slightly different, with different sections making out a narrative; essential elements of goals; means of implementation; measurement and monitoring; as well as partnerships needed for the agenda.

Narrative

The report speaks of an *unequal* (para 11) and *irreversibly interconnected world* (para 16), dependent on a high-performing, *mobile* and diverse workforce (para 154). In setting the scene, *a separate paragraph on migration* accounts for a more mobile world, with 232 million international migrants and highlights that this brings both opportunities and challenges (para 30). The importance of an inclusive and shared prosperity, where no one is left behind, is reiterated in the UNSG's report as well. Here, specific reference is made to including migrants, refugees and displaced persons (paras 10, 51, 68). Overall, the report can be seen as putting more emphasis on the protection of migrants and their rights than on the opportunities that migration brings. Nonetheless, it also frames migration as one of the global trends that are changing the world and that will have direct impacts on the SDGs. It should also be recalled that protection of the rights of migrants, whilst an important aim in its own right, is also an effective way of empowering migrants to contribute even more to sustainable development.

Goals

While the UNSG-report itself does not list goals, it suggests six essential elements for delivering on the SDGs. Migration explicitly appears under three of these: *Dignity* (inclusion of migrants, displaced persons and refugees); under *Prosperity* (migrants having decent

employment, social protection and access to financial services); and under *Justice* (support to internally displaced persons and to resilience of people and communities).

The three remaining ‘elements’ also contain issues that may be implicitly relevant to migration and migrants, such as universal access to healthcare under *People*; disaster risk and resilience, risks and impact of climate change under *Planet*; and *Partnership* which does not contain direct reference, but which links closely to means of implementation and collaboration at the global, regional, national and local levels.

Means of Implementation/Financing for Development

The UNSG-report also includes a chapter on ‘Mobilizing the Means to Implement Our Agenda’. *Reducing the costs of remittances* appears under financing (para 117) in this chapter.

In more general terms, the importance of mobilizing private resources is mentioned, e.g. by creating incentives structures to attract and enable investments as well as having associated investible pipelines.

The report mentions the importance of commitment to financing and *other* means of implementation, including those to be agreed in Addis Ababa (para 60). This would seem to support the generally held notion that means of implementation is not to be limited to the forthcoming Financing for Development outcome from Addis Ababa.

Monitoring

Monitoring and data are singled out as a separate chapter. Here, like in the OWG report, it is recommended that monitoring of implementation should rely on *data disaggregated for migratory status*, among other things, and that specific targets should be set for disadvantaged groups.

Targets and indicators:

The report welcomes Member States to seek input from the UN System for the technical review of targets and on levels for targets. It further suggests Member States to task the UN System to develop a draft set of indicators. Alternative measures of progress, including subjective wellbeing are called for.

Monitoring mechanisms:

The report emphasizes the need for a voluntary, state-led, participatory, evidence-based, and multi-tiered processes to monitor progress, including through thematic review at a global level at regular intervals. There is also mention of identifying regional trends, obstacles, commonalities, best practices and lessons learned and to generate solutions and mutual support. Annual global thematic reports are proposed.

Policy and institutional coherence and the ‘UN Fit for Purpose’

The report emphasizes policy and institutional coherence, suggesting that the agenda provides an opportunity to integrate the broader UN agenda (para 85) and could have a unifying effect on the UN (para 86). The emphasis on policy and institutional coherence is explicitly linked to the *UN Fit for Purpose* discussions and establishes that the post-2015 development agenda

increases the demand for this.^{xviii} It further establishes that the universal challenges addressed in the report demand “new heights of multilateral action”.

At a national level, the report also speaks of integrating goals into national development planning, policy, budgets, laws and institutions; as well as the need for integrated institutions.

Analysis

Comparison between the Open Working Group-report and the UNSG’s report

In relation to the OWG report, the UNSG’s report puts *more emphasis on challenges* than the OWG-report; e.g. by mentioning migration pressures among other challenges in the context of “a troubled world” with “societies under serious strain” (para 157).

Refugees and displaced persons are included in the UNSG’s report, whilst they were left out of the OWG-report.

There is no mention of *trafficking* in the UNSG’s report, whilst the OWG report had two targets related to trafficking. However, since the UNSG’s report does not go into targets, this should probably not be seen as toning down the severity of this trafficking or the likelihood of trafficking targets remaining in the final SDGs.

The UNSG’s report does not go into the importance of retention of health workers, scholarships for students from developing countries or increasing the supply of teachers in developing countries (which could all implicitly be related to brain drain).

Accommodation of GFMD-recommendations on migration in the post-2015 development agenda.

As seen from the summary of the OWG-report and the UNSG’s synthesis report above, the recommendations generated in the GFMD have had some traction. Migrants’ rights as well as the enabling effects of migration and migrants are recognized to a certain extent. Together the narratives cover key international commitments on migration and development as well as references to opportunities and challenges of migration. Some migration-related targets are included and there is a strong call for disaggregating reporting based on migratory status. The recommendation that has gained least traction seems to be the inclusion of migration under means of implementation. The OWG-report recognizes the importance of policy coherence for development, but the only explicit reference to migration under means of implementation is in relation to disaggregation of data and reporting. The UNSG’s report recognizes remittances under the means of implementation, but makes no reference to other aspects of drawing on migration for reaching the goals.

A more detailed account of how these recommendations have been matched is provided in Annex 2.

Potential role of the GFMD, in collaboration with the GMG, in the thematic follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda

The suggestion in the UNSG-report to look at voluntary, state-led, participatory, evidence-based, and multi-tiered process to monitor progress, including through thematic reviews at a global level at regular intervals, *could open up for the GFMD and GMG to collaborate on thematic reviews on migration-related matters.* The suggestion to identify regional trends, obstacles, commonalities, best practices and lessons learned and to generate solutions and mutual support could also be facilitated by encouraging more interaction with between the GFMD and the *Regional Consultative Processes.*

The fact that annual *global thematic reports are suggested in the UNSG-report could pave the way for the GMG or its members to engage with this. Consideration could be given to what role the GFMD could play in facilitating the generation of such reports.*

The references to UN Fit for Purpose and demands for new heights of multilateral action suggests there is *need for enhanced multilateral coordination and cooperation also in the field of migration.* This would seem to *lend support to building on the progress made in the GFMD and the on-going efforts to improve coordination and cooperation between the GFMD and the GMG as facilitated by the SRSG on International Migration.*

Annex 1. Proposed Sustainable Development Goals in the OWG Report

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Annex 2: Accommodation of GFMD recommendations on migration in the post-2015 development agenda in the OWG and UNSG Reports

GFMD Recommendations	OWG Report	UNSG's Synthesis Report	Comments
The protection of migrants' human rights and fundamental freedoms, irrespective of their migration status, needs to be included in the post-2015 development agenda.	No discrimination of any kind, including based on migratory status	The importance of an inclusive and shared prosperity where no one is left behind is reiterated in the UNSG's report, with specific reference is made to including migrants, refugees and displaced persons (paras 10, 51, 68)	
	A number of goals and targets explicitly mention that these are "for all" suggesting that all migrants, regardless of status, should be included	Dignity: to end poverty and fight inequalities (inclusion of migrants, displaced persons and refugees)	
	8.8 protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious situations	Prosperity: to grow a strong, inclusive, and transformative economy (migrants have decent employment, social protection and access to financial services)	
	10.7 facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	Justice: (support to internally displaced persons and to resilience of people and communities)	
	The importance of improving the availability of and access to data and statistics disaggregated by migratory status among other categories, in order to ensure that no one is left behind.	that monitoring of implementation should rely on data disaggregated for migratory status, among other things, and that specific targets should be set for disadvantaged groups.	
	Eliminating <i>trafficking</i> under Goal 5 and Goal 16	The importance of an inclusive and shared prosperity where no one is left behind, with specific reference made to including migrants, refugees and displaced persons.	
	Providing legal <i>identity</i> for all under Goal 16		
	Migrants and migration should be recognized and included as enablers of development.	10.7 facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	Efforts to ensure that a high-performing, mobile and diverse workforce is in place to support the 2015 agenda.
the commitment to migration and development reaffirmed in the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development		under Prosperity (migrants having decent employment, social protection and access to financial services)	
10.c by 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%		117. Efforts should be intensified to reduce costs on the transfer of remittances, in a manner that is respecting the rights of migrants. The commitment of G20 countries to reduce the global average cost of transferring remittances to five per cent is welcomed.	
expand the number of scholarships for developing countries ... to enrol in higher education ... in developed countries and other developing countries			
Facilitating (mobility through) trade in services under Goal 17			

GFMD Recommendations		OWG Report	UNSG's Synthesis Report	Comments
Migration included in:	The Narrative	No discrimination of any kind, including based on migratory status	An irreversibly interconnected world	
		Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development	Dependent on a high-performing, mobile and diverse workforce	
		The key actions for further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development	A separate paragraph on migration accounting for the migration situation in the world.	
		The commitment to migration and development reaffirmed in the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development	The importance of an inclusive and shared prosperity where no one is left behind, with specific reference made to including migrants, refugees and displaced persons.	
		The importance of improving the availability of and access to data and statistics disaggregated by migratory status among other categories, in order to ensure that no one is left behind.		
	Clustered and included within a MoI/Global Partnership focus area	17.18 by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.	117. Efforts should be intensified to reduce costs on the transfer of remittances, in a manner that is respecting the rights of migrants. The commitment of G20 countries to reduce the global average cost of transferring remittances to five per cent is welcomed.	Limited coverage. Only disaggregation of data and reducing the costs of remittances. No clustering of broader enabling elements of migration.
	Poverty eradication	N/A		
	Education	4.b By 2020 expand by x% globally the number of scholarships for developing countries in particular LDCs, SIDS and African countries to enrol in higher education, including vocational training, ICT, technical, engineering and scientific programmes in developed countries and other developing countries; and 4.c by 2030 increase by x% the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially LDCs and SIDS	N/A	
	Health and population dynamics	3.c increase substantially health financing and the recruitment, development and training and retention of the health work force in developing countries, especially in LDCs and SIDS	N/A	
	Economic growth and decent work	8.8 protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious situations	Prosperity: to grow a strong, inclusive, and transformative economy (migrants have decent employment, social protection and access to financial services)	
Promoting equality	10.7 facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	N/A		
	10.c by 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%			
Targets and indicators are disaggregated to account for development outcomes of migrants and their families	17.18 by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.	that monitoring of implementation should rely on data disaggregated for migratory status, among other things, and that specific targets should be set for disadvantaged groups.		

A number of targets were suggested, including, but not limited to, the following areas:			
Protecting human rights of migrants and preventing labour exploitation, discrimination and xenophobia;	Protect labour rights of migrants under 8.8	N/A	Limited to labour rights. Nothing on broader discrimination issues and xenophobia
Reducing the costs of recruitment and remittances' and enhancing financial inclusion of migrants;	Reducing cost of remittances under 10.c	117. Efforts should be intensified to reduce costs on the transfer of remittances, in a manner that is respecting the rights of migrants. The commitment of G20 countries to reduce the global average cost of transferring remittances to five per cent is welcomed.	Limited to remittance costs and financial inclusion. Nothing on recruitment costs.
		Prosperity (migrants having decent employment, social protection and access to financial services)	
Enhancing access to, and portability of, social security	N/A	N/A	
Facilitating mobility and the portability of skills, e.g. through bilateral and multilateral agreements.	N/A	N/A	

Endnotes

ⁱ General Assembly, Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, A/68/L.5, 1 October 2013.

ⁱⁱ It should nonetheless be recalled that the Millennium Declaration, the political statement that preceded the MDGs made explicit reference to the protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families; measures to eliminate racism and xenophobia; as well as to assistance to refugees and displaced persons.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=7175>

^{iv} While the GA resolution A/68/L.61 *decided* “that the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals contained in the report shall be the basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda”, it also *recognized* “fully that other inputs may also be considered in this intergovernmental negotiation process”. This could leave room for the GFMD and other actors/platforms to generate input of relevance for the negotiations.

^v Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all; Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all; Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

^{vi} For a detailed account of the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations on how to mainstream the human rights of migrants within key sustainable development goals, targets and indicators, please see his report A/69/302 available at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/SRMigrants/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx#ga>

^{vii} 1.5 “...build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters”

^{viii} 11.5 “...reduce the number of deaths and the number of affected people ... caused by disasters...”; 11.b “increase ... the number of cities and human settlements ... [with] policies and plans towards ... mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement ... holistic disaster risk management at all levels”; 11.c “support least developed countries ... for resilient buildings...”

^{ix} 13.1 “strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to ... disasters in all countries”; 13.3 “improve... mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning”

^x 3.c increase substantially health financing and the recruitment, development and training and retention of the health work force in developing countries, especially in LDCs and SIDS

^{xi} 4.b By 2020 expand by x% globally the number of scholarships for developing countries in particular LDCs, SIDS and African countries to enrol in higher education, including vocational training, ICT, technical, engineering and scientific programmes in developed countries and other developing countries; and 4.c by 2030 increase by x% the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially LDCs and SIDS

^{xii} 5.2 eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

^{xiii} 16.2 end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children

^{xiv} 16.9 by 2030 provide legal identity for all including birth registration

^{xv} 17.10 promote a universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the WTO including through the conclusion of negotiations within its Doha Development Agenda.

^{xvi} 17.3 mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources

^{xvii} 17.14 enhance policy coherence for sustainable development

^{xviii} Qualities that are mentioned in relation to ‘UN Fit for Purpose’ include an organization that is committed to working together globally and at country level, relevant, innovative, agile, inclusive, coordinated and results-oriented; guided by HR and international norms, integrates its normative frameworks with its operational activities and responds to differentiated needs of countries; provides specialized advice; ensures an integrated approach, across disciplines; and forges partnerships. (Para 152)