

IOM's contribution for the High Level Political Forum 2018 “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”

Background

The IOM Council, currently consisting of 169 Member States, governed by the IOM Constitution, has requested the IOM Director General through Council resolution no. 1270 to “continue to engage in the ongoing consultations of the Post-2015 UN development agenda process in order to inform and support Member States upon request in their participation on this matter, in particular with discussions related to migration and development”. Furthermore, on 19 September 2016, IOM formally joined the UN family formalizing IOM's long-term and close cooperation with the UN system on development issues. IOM's new status as a member of the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and the UN Development System (UNDS) is also a reflection of IOM's commitment as part of the UN system to assist Member States achieve the ambitious goals and targets set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is all the more important in a year when states are negotiating a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, that has the potential of being a key vehicle to achieve the migration-related aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and most particularly those that relate to the theme of this year's High Level Political Forum: “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”, including 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 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and 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.

1. An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level:

Human mobility is a fact of life and its good governance is crucial to achieving the shared prosperity for all that is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Migration has a largely positive impact on individuals and societies, and as such has been recognized globally as a positive contributor to development. In the right circumstances, migrants can play an important role as agents of sustainable development.

Migrants and displaced persons are too often ‘left behind’ when policies, laws and programmes fail to consider migrants’ needs and how migration and development are inextricably linked. Being a migrant or a displaced person automatically puts such persons into a different category from regular citizens. This differentiation can create a form of systemic inequality whereby



access to services, justice, and employment is limited for many migrants. That in turn undermines their capacity to pull themselves out of poverty, support their families and reach their full potential as integral members of a cohesive and developing society.

Although states have a sovereign prerogative to determine the conditions of entry and stay to their territories, the settings adopted can have a significant impact on the development outcomes migration produces. For example, the more migrants' rights and access to basic essential services are restricted, the more these systemic disadvantages become prohibitive of development.

This is particularly the case in the context of forced and/or irregular migration, which in and of itself increases migrants' vulnerability to violence, abuse, exploitation, environmental hazards and rights violations. The estimated number of migrants who have died during their journeys – some 7,495 deaths were reported worldwide in 2016 – is another indication of the need to address the specific vulnerability of migrants. The lack of sufficient legal pathways to regular migration results in migrants choosing irregular and unsafe migration routes, often with the help of smugglers, creating the potential for significant rights violations in transit, at destination, and during or following return.

Many of the vulnerabilities that impact migrants have been included in SDGs targets such as 5.2 (eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation), 16.2 (end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children), and 8.7 (take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery). The Agenda also pledges that states will cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration with full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants.

While the central reference to migration is found in target 10.7 (orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration through planned and well-managed migration policies), cross-cutting migration, environment and climate change issues are addressed under several other SDGs. Environmental considerations are central to the realization of the 2030 Agenda: they are cross-cutting and integrated in all 17 goals, in particular, SDG 6 on water, SDG 7 on clean energy SDG 13 on climate action and SDG 15 on land. Given the multiplicity of migration drivers such as economic, social, political and environmental drivers and the many impacts of migration on other policy areas such as development, health, security, urbanization or the environment, IOM works across the whole array of SDGs.

2. The identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges:

a) Improving migration data

The quality, accuracy, timeliness and comparability of migration data remains weak in many countries. Too often, governments do not have the resources to generate, collect and analyse high quality migration data that is crucial for designing appropriate migration policies to



effectively manage migration (as prescribed by SDG target 10.7). IOM's 2017 report to the HLPF highlighted that data on migrant stocks and flows seldom provides sufficient detail on the development circumstances of migrants and their families, including their access to health, education, and social protection.

Moreover, due to the clandestine nature of irregular migration, most official data systems fail to capture the number of migrants who are in an irregular situation, or their living and working conditions. However, data of this nature is key to ensuring that migrants are not left behind.

To help address these issues, IOM, UNDESA and OECD held the first International Forum on Migration Data in 2017 to improve existing data collection and better understand global migration trends, drivers and impacts to support policy evaluation. In cooperation with many other agencies, IOM has also established a *Global Migration Data Portal* (<http://migrationdataportal.org>) to make sense of and collate existing global migration data .

b) Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus

In a large number of countries where IOM works, the organization implements projects that often consist of both humanitarian and development components. IOM's experience is that the two types of responses often need to go hand in hand. Unfortunately, the humanitarian and development community have too often worked in silos in the past. In recent years, there has been an increasing call at the global level for further cooperation, for instance in the Grand Bargain discussion. The issue of sustainable and resilient communities is a perfect example of where joint work from the humanitarian and development communities can greatly accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

3. Valuable lessons learned on transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

a) Understanding and addressing the drivers of migration

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants recognizes the importance of addressing conflict, disasters, and climate change as drivers of large-scale, unmanaged migration. Identifying and effectively addressing these complex drivers requires more attention to context-specific and multi-dimensional conflict and risk analysis to inform timely and effective interventions. Land and property are very much at the heart of sustainable livelihoods. For many communities, protection of land rights, access, tenure security and fair and balance dispute resolution mechanisms and adjudication are a critical priority.

Fundamental to IOM's approach is that crises and fragility are both a cause and consequence of forced and irregular out-migration from rural areas. Displacement and irregular migration can only be resolved if crises and fragility are effectively addressed. This approach necessitates working before, during and after crisis by adopting longer-term perspectives and 'staying the course'. Further, strengthening the resilience and implementing measures to sustain peace are incorporated into our commitment to addressing the humanitarian-development nexus.

Timely and reliable data is also critical for predictability in the early identification of risks and for tailoring appropriate response and recovery interventions, ensuring inclusion of migrants and displaced populations in crises response and recovery actions as well as for evidence-based policy making to safeguard their fundamental human rights.

Apart from crisis related drivers for migration, it is similarly important to deepen the understanding on drivers of migration in the context of sustainable development. The Sutherland Report of 2017, as well as the SG report “Making Migration Work for All” have highlighted the need to understand and estimate drivers for migration, in order to make sure that migration is not an act of desperation, but an informed and voluntary choice. In fragile and crisis contexts, but also in development contexts, migration drivers and decision-making are shaped by constantly evolving social, economic, political, security and environmental factors that define the landscape of risk and opportunity for potential migrants, including the displaced. More human development has been shown to also increase migration, for which development strategies need to take into account mobility, both internally and internationally, as a constant variable. Migration out of necessity is often linked to irregular migration, but can entail different steps previous to this decision. As such, also internal migration and its relation to unplanned urban growth needs be explored in further detail to determine the drivers for both primary and secondary migration movements.

As part of IOM’s commitment to seek viable prevention and progressive solutions to complex migration and displacement challenges, community stabilization and development initiatives are designed to promote local capacity and comprehensive development strategies in order to mitigate or prevent the recurrence of displacement and irregular migration.

b) Ensuring policy coherence in migration and development

Migration is a complex phenomenon that affects and is affected by all areas of governance from housing to health and from access to justice to education and employment. It is therefore necessary to move away from the traditional approach focused mainly on how migrants can contribute to their countries of origin, and start looking at how migration affects and is affected by all areas of governance. Good migration governance therefore necessitates a whole-of-government approach that considers how other policies like housing, health or agriculture affect and are affected by migration and what sectors and actors are involved.

Such a whole-of-government approach means ensuring policy coherence between migration governance and all other policy areas such as transport, urban policies, health etc as outlined above. A tried and tested mechanism to achieve such policy coherence has been to integrate migration as a parameter across different policy areas in cooperation with all sectors and levels of government.

This is best achieved when there is support and coordination between the local and national levels. This allows for local and regional authorities to feed their expertise and knowledge into national policy making for more responsive and pertinent national policies that can, in turn, be successfully implemented at the local level.

As an example, IOM and UNDP have been working towards such an approach through the ‘Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies’ programme financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The programme therefore supports



governments to mainstream migration into their national development planning and other sectoral policies from a multi stakeholder and whole of government approach. Depending on the contexts of each country this has involved cross-sectoral approaches or targeting specific sectors such as environment and climate change, health and employment. Such mainstreaming mechanisms involve a large focus on knowledge sharing, capacity building, setting up institutional working groups and coordination mechanisms and more. What this then effectively translates into is enhanced policy coherence across all relevant sectors with the aim to ensure more equal access to services.

c) Recognizing migration as resilience strategy and migrants as actors of resilience

Migration, whether forced or voluntary, tends to be used as a livelihood or coping strategy that has the potential to greatly reduce the exposure and vulnerability of families and communities. Ensuring regular pathways for such movement can reduce the vulnerabilities migrants face and ensure their migratory journey is as beneficial as possible for all involved. Indeed, it provides households with an opportunity to multiply and diversify their incomes, secure resources in the face of hazards - including those posed by climate change - and generally enhance their resilience.

In the context of migration crisis response, but also in pre-crisis and fragile settings, resilience-strengthening can be a strategy to promote agency, coping and self-reliance abilities, and to create opportunities for vulnerable people to make free and well-informed choices. Resilience-building approaches empower affected people to improve their conditions while reducing vulnerability to future shocks and stresses.

Therefore, the value of orderly and humane migration for both migrants and communities of origin must be recognized and effective policies need to be put in place that harness migration as a resilience and adaptation strategy for populations at risk.

d) Understanding and addressing the migration-environment nexus

IOM seeks to promote stronger coherence between policies and practices related to migration, the environment and climate change through: (a) the integration of human mobility considerations in climate change, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction policies and strategies; and (b) the inclusion of environmental and climate change concerns in migration policies and management. IOM has continued to expand its work on migration, environment and climate change at global, regional and national levels by supporting policy development and dialogue, including a high-level panel at IOM's 2017 Council, building capacities of policymakers, and through a number of new projects and initiatives.

Recognizing that a healthy environment is intrinsically linked to the well-being and resilience of migrants and host communities, IOM made an institutional commitment in 2017 to mainstream environmental sustainability at the strategic, programmatic and facility levels and launched its institutional programme on environmental sustainability. Through this work, IOM aims to systematically address the environmental impacts of migration management and governance. The Organization also directly contributes to SDG 6 on water, SDG 7 on clean

energy and SDG 15 on land with policy work, innovative partnerships and operational activities.

The main lessons learnt may be summarized as follows:

- The movement of people is and will continue to be affected by natural disasters and environmental degradation. Climate change is expected to have major impacts on human mobility both within countries and across borders.
- Environmental migration may take many complex forms; forced and voluntary, temporary and permanent, internal and international.
- The concept of “vulnerability” needs to be put at the centre of current and future responses to environmental migration. The most vulnerable may be those who are unable to or do not move (trapped populations).
- Environmental migration should not be understood as a wholly negative or positive outcome – migration can amplify existing vulnerabilities but can also allow people to build resilience.
- Environmental sustainability should be considered in migration governance and management in order to achieve durable solutions.

e) Promoting partnerships

A final lesson learned is on the importance of partnerships, which is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. No single stakeholder can achieve the SDGs alone. This is particularly true with regard to the migration aspects of the 2030 Agenda and especially if policy coherence in migration and development is to be achieved across all relevant governance sectors. Multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance approaches are crucial to ensure that all necessary actors are involved in efforts to ensure the SDGs, including migrants themselves and their associations.

IOM works with and supports its UN partner agencies in their migration related endeavours in order to pool resources and enhance efficiency, including through its work within UN country teams and in some countries, within specific inter-agency working groups on migration. This has included IOM and UNDP releasing a joint Guidance note for UNCTs on how to Mainstream Migration into UNDAFs. IOM is also currently working with UNDP to develop training material to support this. Moreover, IOM actively contributes to inter-agency global programmes to support both national and local governments apply a whole-of-government approach to their migration and development efforts. This includes the UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative led by UNDP in partnerships with IOM, ITC-ILO, UNHCR, UN Women and UNFPA as well as the IOM-UNDP Programme on Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies. From the experience of these programmes, IOM is also developing a guide for national and local governments on how to implement the migration related aspects of the 2030 Agenda which is being coordinated among the UN agencies of the GMG’s Working Group on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning.

In 2018, IOM and FAO are co-Chairing the Global Migration Group, an interagency group including of 22 UN agencies working on migration issues. During this co-chairmanship, the work of the UN on the nexus between migration and sustainable, resilient societies is a particular focus.

IOM also engages stakeholders from civil society, private sector and academia in its work to support states in achieving migration-related SDGs.

To address the challenges of the migration, environment and climate change nexus, IOM continued to strengthen its collaboration with relevant entities, including with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Organization also established new partnerships to advance understanding on the water-migration and clean energy-migration nexus.

4. Emerging issues likely to affect building sustainable and resilient societies;

a) The development of a Global Compact on Migration

One key development in the sphere of migration expected in the coming months is the culmination in July 2018, of intergovernmental negotiations on a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and its subsequent adoption at an Intergovernmental Conference to be held in Morocco in December 2018. The Global Compact for migration is expected to provide a comprehensive global framework for the governance of international migration and outline shared objectives and actionable commitments to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration. According to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which provided for the development of the Global Compact for Migration, it should be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is important to ensure that all actions taken to implement the Global Compact commitments contribute to making societies more sustainable and resilient, with the overarching goal of leaving no one behind.

b) Role of local authorities in migration governance

The role local authorities play in migration governance is an emerging issue. Although it is widely recognized that the vast majority of migrants settle in cities, and despite the critical, central role municipal governments play in international migration, cities are still under-represented in the design, implementation and monitoring of global policy frameworks. This is especially the case with respect to migration policy, which has traditionally been considered a matter solely for national governments, despite its implications for cities and local authorities.

In 2016, a month after the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, UN Member States adopted the New Urban Agenda (NUA) at the Habitat III Conference in Quito (Ecuador). This was the first time that a UN framework fully integrated migration in the strategic planning and management of cities and urban systems. Its adoption was a significant recognition of the role of local governments not only in the management of migration at the local level but also in realizing the urban dimensions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including, but not limited to, Sustainable Development Goal 11. With this in mind, further policy coherence among the various levels of governments could help create more resilient and sustainable societies.

5. Areas where political guidance by the High-Level Political Forum is required

Once the future implementation, follow-up and review mechanism of the Global Compact on Migration is agreed upon, it would be important to create synergies with the HLPF. The two mechanisms should be well coordinated, enabling one process to effectively inform the other.

6. Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in establishing sustainable and resilient societies

Several concrete policy recommendations should be adopted to address the migration dimensions of sustainable and resilient societies, including:

- i. Creating more options and legal pathways to regular migration to reduce the number of migrants choosing irregular and unsafe migration routes.
- ii. Improving the quality, accuracy, timeliness and comparability of migration data, with a particular focus on migrants who are in an irregular situation, as well as on their living and working conditions.
- iii. Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, especially in project implementation, to make responses to crisis more comprehensive and sustainable.
- iv. Understanding and addressing the drivers of migration, both in the context of crisis and of sustainable development, with more attention to context-specific and multi-dimensional interventions.
- v. Ensuring a whole-of-government approach and policy coherence between migration governance, development and all other policy areas such as transport, urban policies, health etc., by integrating migration as a parameter across different policy areas in cooperation with all sectors and levels of government.
- vi. Recognizing migration as resilience strategy and migrants as actors of resilience.
- vii. Understanding and addressing the migration-environment nexus: environmental sustainability should be considered in migration governance and management in order to achieve durable solutions.
- viii. Promoting partnerships: multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance approaches are crucial to ensure that all necessary actors are involved in efforts to ensure the SDGs, including local authorities, migrants themselves and their associations, pooling resources and enhancing efficiency.

One cross-cutting theme that needs to be specifically highlighted is the need for more evidence-based migration policies that promote sustainable, resilient, and inclusive societies. With the aim of helping countries assess their migration policy structures, IOM, in collaboration with the Economist Intelligence Unit, has developed the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI). The MGI is a tool for governments to assess the comprehensiveness of their migration policies and to help them identify gaps and priorities to build institutional capacity and programmes on migration. The MGI's more than ninety questions build on the six dimensions of good migration governance, as articulated in IOM's Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), the first and so far only internationally adopted definition for "well-managed migration



policies”. This exercise is in line with IOM’s joint with UNDESA on SDG indicator 10.7.2 on the “number of countries that have implement well-managed migration policies”.

IOM would encourage governments at the national level, but also local authorities, to conduct assessments of the migration laws, policies or strategies in place, to identify good practices that can be shared, but also gaps that would need to be addressed. IOM stands ready to work with its partners to support governments in this regard.

Related readings:

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

2014 IOM Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change. IOM, Geneva.

2015 Contributions to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). IOM, Geneva.

2015 RESOLUTION No. 1310 (Adopted on 24 November 2015 by the IOM Council at its 106th Session) on the Migration Governance Framework

<https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/106/C-106-RES-1310%20MIGOF.pdf>

2017 Migration in the 2030 Agenda. IOM, Geneva.

2017 “Measuring Migration Governance” is the third issue of the series Data Bulletin: Informing a Global Compact for Migration. <https://gmdac.iom.int/data-bulletin-measuring-migration-governance>

2018 Human Mobility in the UNFCCC. Environmental Migration Portal. IOM. Available from: <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/human-mobility-unfccc>

Ionesco, D., D. Mokhnacheva and F. Gemenne

2016 *Atlas of Environmental Migration*. Routledge, London and New York.

Mach, E.

2017 Water and migration: How far would you go for water? Caritas in Veritate Foundation Working Paper (n.p.). Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/water-and-migration-how-far-would-you-go-water>