



Swiss Working Paper on Migration in the Post-2015 Agenda¹

“Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family.” – H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General²

Context

Migration has always been a strategy for individuals and their families to overcome poverty, escape conflicts, react to economic and environmental shocks and strive for a more prosperous future. The non-inclusion of migration in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may have been understandable given the circumstances at the time – lack of clear evidence and data on migration as a factor for development, and a challenge to define clear-cut goals due to the complexity of the topic. Today the international community has come a long way in formulating a coherent migration and development narrative, in assembling vast and growing knowledge on their interrelations, with a continuous need for gathering the evidence, and exemplifying how migration have also contributed to the achievement of all 8 MDGs. Omitting migration in the new sustainable development agenda Post-2015 would be negligent and exclude one of the key defining global phenomena shaping the twenty-first century.

The recognition of migration as a global factor for sustainable development at the highest level has been the culmination of a process of many years where Switzerland has played a key-role. The efforts of the Global Forum on Migration and Development since 2007 in elaborating the inter-linkages between migration and development; the Global Thematic Consultation on Population Dynamics resulting in the *Dhaka Declaration* (March 2013); the ‘exploratory’ sessions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals; the adoption of the Political Declaration of the 2013 UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and its call to integrate migration in the Post-2015 development agenda (October 2013); the adoption of the resolution on “IOM’s role in the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda” at the 103rd Session of the IOM Council (November 2013); the Recommendations of the Global Experts Meeting on Migration in the Post-2015 Development Agenda (April 2014); in the interventions of the informal working group on Migration and Post-2015 led by the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Sir Peter Sutherland; and in specific focused group discussions organized by the European Commission, UN and other international organizations and civil society partners, are some of the areas where Switzerland has played an important role in advocating for the integration of migration in the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Why should migration be included in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda?

The success and sustainability of development strategies require that countries proactively address, rather than merely react to migration. How migration unfolds over the next decades, and whether it compounds developmental challenges or helps facilitate solutions, depends on whether effective policies are put in place that are rights based, evidence informed and gender responsive. Migration can be an important enabler for social and economic development and allows people to respond to changes in social, economic and environmental conditions. The UN Secretary General in his report “A life of dignity for all”³ called “for transformative and mutually reinforcing actions that apply to all countries”. “Enhance the positive contribution of migrants” for development is listed as one of those actions.

The litmus-test for the impact of the processes mentioned in the context and the continued Swiss engagement will be the ability to have migration included in the Post-2015 agenda. Amongst the most compelling arguments are:

Migration is first and foremost about people, their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Migration is a human experience and the cumulative outcome of individual choices and opportunities, or lack thereof. By acknowledging the pinnacle role of the rights of migrants, we not only ensure the appropriate focus on human rights as essential pillars for development but also avoid that migrants are viewed only as economic commodities to address labour market gaps or demographic needs rather than individuals entitled to the full enjoyment of their human rights. Accordingly, when discussing migration and development we should consider both economic development which leads to

¹ This is a working paper and will be constantly updated as the Post-2015 process evolves.

² Secretary-General’s remarks on the occasion of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

³ A/68/202 – A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (26 July 2013).

economic growth as well as human development, which focuses on expanding individual capabilities and choices through health, education, a decent standard of living and work.

Migration affects and is affected by gender roles, relations and inequalities. Today almost half of the migrants in the world are women. Gender equality has helped in the empowerment of women as contributors to their families and to the communities in both the countries of origin and destination. Also, as a result of migration in the family, women have assumed roles that break gender stereotypes within societies. However, poor immigration policies may also push unskilled and low-skilled female workers into precarious situations. Gender roles, relations and inequalities, sex-segregated labour markets and gendered policies affect male and female migrants differently. Measures (including specific targets) to address the social, economic benefits of migration should include gender-sensitive migration policies and practices which enable women as well as men to take up opportunities that safe and regular migration may offer, and which will foster the positive impacts of migration for economic and social development. It should take into consideration the protection and empowerment of female migrants and family members left behind, the prevention and combating of gender-based violence in migration contexts (such as verbal, physical or sexual abuse or human trafficking and domestic work), and access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Migration matters for human development and poverty reduction. Evidence from various regions of the world highlights the fact that remittances contribute to the reduction of poverty and stimulate economic development. Migration has a positive impact on education (e.g. higher girl's schools attendance due to remittances⁴) and on health (for instance, in Nicaragua and Guatemala, data shows that remittances improve children's health, particularly in low income families⁵). But migration is also about transfer of knowledge and technology, about filling critical gaps in labour markets and responding to demographic changes in our societies, it is about stimulating trade and investments – essentially it is a phenomenon that has the potential of transforming lives in a sustainable, positive way in countries of origin and destination alike. An important aspect of Swiss foreign migration and development policy is to recognize the advantages of migration to further the development policy objectives of Switzerland and partner countries and empower migrants to become drivers of development.

Migration is about social equality. The long term growth and development of a country is not sustainable if, first and foremost, the issue of social inequalities is not adequately addressed. Many migrants who travel, live and work in unequal, discriminatory and marginalised conditions are often bypassed by development. A Post-2015 agenda that stays true to the motto of the High-level Panel⁶ to “leave no one behind” needs to pay specific attention to the outcomes of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including oftentimes vulnerable migrants, refugees, and displaced persons.

Migration also has a negative side which needs to be addressed. There is no denial that migration also has negative side effects – from ‘brain drain’ and ‘brain waste’ to human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Receiving societies may encounter challenges in ensuring social cohesion and effective integration policies. Furthermore, migration may generate social costs and conflict with limited natural resources thus requiring a proactive management by governments. Migrants are also often the most vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. Equally, racism and xenophobia continue to be realities around the globe. The psycho-social effects on families left behind as a result of migration has a detrimental effect on development as a whole. Activities which are not in compliance with the legislation or regulation of the destination country should be addressed through legal channels with access to justice for all migrants. Countries of origin and destination should work together, to support migrants residing in the destination country without authorisation in facilitating the return to their countries of origin and foster programmes that provide reintegration assistance in case of voluntary return.

Migration matters for more than just the 3% of the global population. Today an estimated 234 million people are international migrants – or roughly 3% of the global population.⁷ Migration is however also a relevant factor for the estimated 750 million⁸ people which have moved within national borders. In many cases, internal migration has been an important cause for movement across international borders whether they may be through natural disasters, conflicts or even in facilitating the movement of labour migrants across borders. In any case, if we add the many millions of family members benefitting directly from relatives who have moved, especially from those abroad, and the much bigger number of people benefitting from goods and services provided by migrants, it is fair to assume that migration impacts the lives of the majority of people around the world.

⁴ Acosta, P. ‘School Attendance, Child Labour, and Remittances from International Migration in El Salvador’, *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 47 (6) 2011.

⁵ Acosta, P., Fajnzylber, P. and Humberto Lopez, J. ‘The Impact of Remittances on Poverty and Human Capital: Evidence from Latin American Household Surveys’, *World Bank Policy Research Working Papers*, 4247, 2007.

⁶ http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf.

⁷ <http://esa.un.org/unmigration/>.

⁸ UNDP (2009)

Migration is a global phenomenon. National development is shaped by, amongst other things, megatrends in the area of population dynamics. These include the continued growth of the world population and increase in absolute numbers of people migrating, which have implications for all countries. Migration is simply a fact of our lives. It is a reality as people continue to migrate from poor, middle-income, and rich countries. Migration channels extend from the north to south, south to north, south to south, and north to north. Migration is thus an epitome of a global phenomenon which has to be addressed in a global agenda firmly rooted in the realities of local communities.

How can migration be included in the Post-2015 agenda? – The Targets

Switzerland recognizes that global economic and social gains linked to migration require increased attention to have their potential realized through three guiding pillars:

1. Ensuring safe and regular migration, notably by protecting the rights of migrants;
2. Reducing the economic and social costs of migration; and
3. Facilitating migrants' contribution to development.

In accordance with the above principles, this working paper develops a number of possible targets for the post-2015 framework that would trigger actions increasing the development impacts of migration. Such targets should be included transversally in the relevant possible future sustainable development goals, for instance possible goals related to employment, health, education, good governance, partnerships, peaceful societies, enabling environment, etc.

1) Ensuring safe and regular migration

The Secretary-General's report "A life of dignity for all" explicitly acknowledges the widespread discrimination and human rights violations that migrants are meted with through the migration cycle. Protecting migrants and providing them with safe and regular channels of migration is also closely linked to the development potential of human mobility. A protected migrant will be better suited to fully engage in his or her host country thereby contributing more to the development of receiving and origin societies. Possible targets could be subsumed under the following points.

a. Enhance global cooperation and partnership to facilitate orderly, safe, regular migration and mobility of people

The contribution of migrants to development could be enhanced and the costs and vulnerabilities be reduced if all the stakeholders – including governments, private sector, UN and other international organisations, civil society organisations, social partners, academic institutions – planned for and acted upon the opportunities and challenges that migration brings by implementing evidence-based migration policies. The international community should therefore aspire to a cooperative partnership aiming to facilitate international migration that is safe for migrants, operates within the laws of states, is less costly both in human and financial terms, and is more productive for stakeholders: migrants, their families, their employers, and their countries and communities of origin and destination.

b. Access to justice for all migrants is guaranteed

Safe, orderly and regular migration would be a priority for guaranteeing access to justice for all migrants. However, migrants, irrespective of their status, also have the right to be heard by courts and tribunals according to article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. All practices discriminating against this principle, which includes financial barriers, language, lack of accessible information, threats and legal recognition before the courts have to end.

c. Attain healthy lives for all including migrants

Many migrants, particularly those in an irregular status, often face insurmountable barriers to healthcare. A firewall between healthcare services and immigration services should allow unhindered access to adequate, affordable, accessible and quality healthcare, including mental healthcare, without legal consequences and eliminate discriminatory practices and barriers. We need to ensure the development of national health legislations and policies, to achieve sustainable Universal Health Coverage – including financial risk protection, access to essential health care services, and access to safe, effective and affordable essential medicines and vaccines – and its implementation for all, including poor and vulnerable migrants. It will also be important to substantially increase the recruitment, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in LDCs.

d. Provide quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all including migrants

Education policies should be inclusive keeping in mind, the vulnerable populations like migrants, and free compulsory basic education should be generalized. Migrant children need to have unhampered access to equitable and unhindered access to quality primary and secondary education at all levels leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. This is also important to ensure equal access to basic education and relevant knowledge, which may include skills development, and recognition of qualifications, as it is essential for the social integration and economic future of all migrants without gender discrimination. We need to ensure that education policies take into consideration special requirements of vulnerable groups, including migrants, like language training. By 2030, it will also be

important to increase the supply and retention of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, and ensure safe, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

e. Protect the rights and ensure safe and secure working environments of all migrant workers

Globalization of the economy is inducing increasing mobility of labour force, especially unskilled women, which represent an additional challenge when it comes to the implementation of the decent work agenda. Special attention to migrant workers including family members, representing 90% of the people on the move, is therefore needed.⁹ A number of migrants are working in jobs that are dangerous and demeaning. It is therefore important to promote full and productive employment, decent jobs, non-discrimination in the work place and the protection of the rights of all migrant workers, in compliance with international human rights norms and labour standards. We should finally strive to fully implement nationally-appropriate social protection measures, including floors and the ability of migrant workers to join unions.

f. Combat Trafficking in Persons and reduce by 2030 the number of victims by x%

Human trafficking is an unspeakable violation of the most fundamental human rights of women, children and men. There are about 21 million people in trafficked situations including for sexual exploitation as well as bonded and forced labour.¹⁰ The political and legal framework to combat trafficking at the international and regional level exists. However, it is important to focus on the implementation at the national level. Governments and other stakeholders should be called upon to prevent trafficking, protect the victims, punish the perpetrators and join forces in partnerships.

g. By 2030 reduce the number of refugees and IDPs in protracted situations by x%

Protracted displacement situations affecting millions of people (10.4 million refugees¹¹ and 28.8 million IDPs¹² in the beginning of 2013 and end of 2012, respectively) have moved beyond the initial emergency context without finding durable solutions. The vast majority of refugees seek protection in countries located in their region of origin. In many cases, however, these countries lack sufficient capacities to afford effective protection. The solutions of local integration, safe return and admission by their country of origin or resettlement is thus no longer only a question of humanitarian relief but requires a multipronged approach.

2) Reducing economic and social costs of migration

Human mobility has a cost that is both economic and social in nature. The reduction of these costs, through the measures outlined below, will increase the development impact of migration.

a. The recruitment cost for migrants are reduced to a maximum of 10% of the annual salary

Migrants in many regions of the world are faced paying up to 18 months' salary to cover the recruitment fees.¹³ This is an unacceptable extortion of money by misusing the vulnerability of particularly poor and low-skilled migrants. Ensuring that salaries are not diverted into the pockets of recruiters but remain in the hands of migrants will unlock billions of dollars for the migrants themselves. It should furthermore become standard practice that employers are covering the recruitment fees, charged by agents, of their employees.

b. All global recruitments of migrants are done based on fair standards

Recruitment procedures are not only costly they also entail often forms of debt bondage, exploitation and unfair treatment. Internationally acceptable minimal standards should be developed and implemented and used as a benchmark for such a target. It is therefore important to ensure ethical, transparent, responsible engagement of intermediaries at both ends through establishing effective governmental regulatory monitoring frameworks.

c. Reducing costs of visa and resident permits

Costs for visas and resident permits should not be higher than the actual administrative cost of the procedure. This would effectively contribute at lowering the costs of migration and increase the development impact thereof.

d. Enhance the portability of social benefits for all migrants

Enhancing the portability of social benefits is one way to maximize the positive benefits of migration. This includes facilitating the portability of wages of migrants, and other benefits including in the form of financial assets such as pension funds and bonds. The portability of social benefits, including health-care benefits once the migrant has returned to his or her country of origin, can also be attributed to effective implementation of bilateral agreements between origin and destination countries.

⁹ www.ilo.org.

¹⁰ ditto.

¹¹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c11.html>.

¹² Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/global-overview-2012>.

¹³ www.worldbank.org.

e. Create enabling conditions to promote the transfer and recognition of skills, qualifications and diplomas addressing the increasing effect of brain waste

Promoting skills portability (i.e. recognition of university or vocational training degrees, job-certificates etc.) and matching of skills and jobs as well as labour supply and demand between countries using modern technologies such as web-information portals (e.g. EURES), will facilitate the integration of migrant workers in the local labour force and will increase the share of migrants who are working at the skill level that is most relevant to their training. This reduces the damaging “brain waste” and increases the economic benefits of labour mobility for both the countries of origin and destination.

3) Facilitating migrants contribution to development

Migrants are often rather entrepreneurial people. However, framework conditions may hamper their active involvement in the development of both host and origin societies. Evidence based and development-oriented policies can greatly contribute to increase the development impact of migration.

a. Reduce the transfer costs of remittances to 2% or lower by 2030

By ensuring that costs of remittances are reduced, including regulatory and administrative costs, migrants will be more willing to remit money to their countries of origin through formal banking and money transfer channels. The G20 countries’ pledge to reduce remittance costs (5x5 initiative – reducing remittances fees from 10 % to 5% in 5 years would put an extra USD 16 billion into the hands of the migrants’ families each year) is yet to be reached. The money that migrants save from lowering remittance costs, including through the use of new technologies, can be put to better use in availing services in education, health and other needs in their countries of origin while respecting at all time the private nature of these funds.

b. All migrants have access to financial services and products

Most important is the access to financial services in countries of origin and destination. Instruments such as diaspora bonds or microcredit investment and insurance initiatives will give migrants the opportunity to invest in their home countries. It is therefore important to promote financial inclusion of migrants, such as providing access to a banking account, and provide incentives to trade with, and to save and invest in origin and destination countries and promote a strategy to enable, engage and empower migrant diaspora and their entrepreneurship.

c. Include migration in national development planning and strategies

Migration issues need to be more systematically included in sectorial policies or, more generally, in regional, national or local development strategies and their effective implementation. Mainstreaming migration and mobility into development strategies are addressed by taking a broad view of development, taking into consideration both social as well as economic dimensions. Policymakers dealing with issues such as migration, labour market, education and health, need to have access to more up-to-date, precise and detailed information regarding migration flow to ensure coherent policy development.

d. Migration policies in countries of origin should include the development contribution of migrants

In the past years, the discussions on migration and development have identified a number of factors which support the capacities of migrants to voluntarily contribute to the development of their country of origin. These include double citizenship, access to land, access to investment opportunities, political participation, clear, easy accessible and transparent policies and procedures. Employment and investment opportunities and adequate measures for reintegration for migrants who return to their countries of origin should also be put in place.

e. Integration policies in countries of destination are put in place

Policies which support the successful integration of migrants are among the key elements to facilitate the migrant’s contribution to development, not only in terms of an economic impact but to also ensure social cohesion. A successful integration, which also requires the willingness of the migrant to be integrated, will therefore enhance the possibilities of the migrant to engage economically and socially in his or her host society.