



## **UN General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2013**

### **GMG Position Paper<sup>1</sup> “International Migration and Development”**

*Introduction: Enhancing the benefits of international migration for the development of migrants and countries*

1. The Global Migration Group (GMG)<sup>2</sup> promotes the protection and fulfilment of the human and labour rights of all migrants and their families regardless of their status. This is both an end in itself and a fundamental precondition to making international migration a safe, productive and enriching experience for migrants and their families as well as for countries of origin, transit and destination.
2. International migration is a defining feature of the 21st century, profoundly affecting not only the lives of those who move but also the societies and economies of countries of origin, destination and transit. Moreover, in an interconnected world, migration can no longer be reduced to a “South-North” issue. Instead, countries at all levels of growth and development have an interest in the links between international migration and development. A growing number of countries recognize the relevance of labour mobility at all skill levels and of migrants’ contribution to rejuvenating workforces, rendering traditional sectors economically viable, supporting social security schemes, satisfying labour shortages in emerging industries and services, creating jobs by increasing domestic demand for goods and services and opening new enterprises and trade markets. Demographic trends, shifting labour market needs and environmental degradation and climate change will present challenges to a growing range of countries, with direct and indirect implications for migration. These realities accentuate the need to work together to achieve rights-based governance of international migration premised on the protection of the human and labour rights of all migrants, including the most vulnerable, such as children, adolescents, youth and women.
3. Migration is driven by a complex range of often inter-connected motivations including the search for jobs, better salaries and living conditions, and other development opportunities,

---

<sup>1</sup> This position paper expands on and complements the GMG Statement to the HLD. It consists of an introduction, followed by proposed key elements, actions and targets for future migration governance drawn from a set of recommendations and outcomes on migration commissioned by the Secretary-General’s Chief Executive’s Board, and lastly sets out some possible targets for progress organized under each of the four HLD Round Table themes. The GMG paper on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda is also relevant and complementary. Both are available on the GMG website: <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/>

<sup>2</sup> The GMG is the main inter-agency coordinating mechanism on migration and consists of 15 UN entities and the International Organization for Migration (IOM): ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNODC, UN Regional Commissions, UN Women, World Bank, and WHO. See <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org>

freedom from discrimination, poverty and human rights violations, conflict and environmental degradation, but it also drives economic and social growth and development in countries of origin and destination. The GMG believes that, given the right policy frameworks and protections for migrants, international migration has the potential to enhance all dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental, including the human development of migrants themselves. Overlooking migration and migrants in the development debate risks missing out on important development opportunities, while also neglecting the considerable risks and vulnerabilities that may be associated with migration, particularly for migrants themselves. In striving for inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and development, development gains must not come at the expense of the human rights and well-being of migrants and their families. Instead, the GMG would stress that all migrants, regardless of their status, should be included in the new development agenda, both as rights-holders and as partners in development. The GMG would like to see migration become part of a renewed global partnership for development after 2015. As spelled out in *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, the report by the UN Task Team on the post-2015 UN development agenda, “the dynamism of migrants and their economic and other contributions to both their countries of origin and host countries need to be more fully harnessed, above all by recognizing migrants as positive agents of innovation with human rights”.

4. Migrants are a heterogeneous group including men, women and children of all ages, with differences in the degree and nature of vulnerability depending, in particular, on the circumstances of their migration and their legal status. Migration also has a significant impact on families, gender roles and women’s empowerment. Therefore, in addition to protecting, respecting and fulfilling the human and labour rights of all migrants as the overarching imperative, non-discrimination, gender equality, attention to differences in age and health (including the situation of migrants living with disability), respect for cultural diversity, and a focus on the most vulnerable, including children, adolescents, youth and women, must form integral parts of migration governance. In this context, demographic trends have not gone unnoticed in migration dynamics: youth are increasingly migrating in search of survival and security, opportunities and improved standards of living, education, family unity or protection from discrimination and abuse. Child, adolescent and youth migration engenders a range of consequences for policymaking, in particular in fulfilling their human rights in countries of origin, transit and destination and in ensuring equitable access in law and in practice to education, health care and other social services.

#### *Key elements, actions and targets for future migration governance*

5. In 2012/2013, the GMG contributed to a set of proposed recommendations and outcomes on migration, coordinated by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at the request of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), together with several entities of the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP),<sup>3</sup> the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for International Migration and Development, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and the NGO Committee on Migration. The CEB has recently published a book entitled *International Migration and Development: Contributions and Recommendations of the International System* which captures the work and experience of each of the 28 entities that contributed to the proposed recommendations and outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> FAO, ICAO, IFAD, IMO, UNEP, UN Habitat, WIPO and WMO.

<sup>4</sup> The publication is available on the GMG website: <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/en/migration-and-governance>.

6. Based on the recommendations and outcomes,<sup>5</sup> the GMG calls attention to the following key elements, priority areas for action and proposals for concrete targets to give effect to a shared vision of future migration governance.
7. Elements for future migration governance:
- Facilitating greater mobility, recognizing that migration and mobility are both necessary and inevitable in the 21st century.
  - Aspiring to make migration a genuine choice, not a desperate necessity.
  - Prioritising the protection of migrants and their human rights – including labour rights, access to asylum, health and decent work, considerations of social protection and well-being, and the rights of all children in the context of migration – in rights-based and gender-sensitive policies and practices.
  - Focusing on the human development potential of migration, including the potential to improve the lives of individuals and families, as well as migration's contribution to the economic growth and development of countries.
  - Harmonizing migration policies and development goals.
  - Engaging with communities in addressing public perceptions of migrants and migration to counter anti-migrant sentiment, xenophobia and discrimination and raise awareness of migrants' overwhelmingly positive contributions to societies of origin and destination.
  - Recognizing that forced and voluntary forms of migration are not always easily distinguishable and ensuring protection and assistance for the most vulnerable.
  - Committing to cooperation with all partners involved in and affected by migration, while recognizing the sovereign prerogative of States to determine the entry and stay of non-nationals on their territories, within the limits set by States' international legal obligations.
  - Finding balanced measures to combat harmful forms and effects of migration, including trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, while protecting human rights.
8. Based on these guiding elements, the GMG proposes five priority areas for action, with an illustrative, non-exhaustive list of possible concrete measures for each:
9. First, the HLD should place the human rights of all migrants high on the agenda of policymakers and reaffirm the relevance of migration to human development, in destination and origin countries.  
Select actions:
- Promote the ratification of all core international human rights and labour rights instruments and their effective implementation with respect to migrants, taking account of age, gender, family consideration and specific vulnerabilities.
  - Call for national action plans to promote awareness of migration realities and to combat xenophobia and discrimination against migrants.
  - Implement existing frameworks to enhance access to social protection and social services by migrants, regardless of their migration status.
10. Second, the HLD should promote evidence-based policymaking on migration and thus greater investment in data, research, needs assessments, evaluations and capacity development with respect to migration and its outcomes for individuals and societies.  
Select actions:
- Aim for more systematic and nuanced data collection and analysis on migration.

---

<sup>5</sup> For the full text, see the report of the 25th Session of the High-level Committee on Programmes <http://unsceb.org/content/report-25th-session-march-2013-paris>

- Conduct more standardized and rigorous assessments and evaluations of the impact of migration and development initiatives.
  - Promote institutions and initiatives to further research and capacity in the area of migration, with a focus on South-South migration.
11. Third, the HLD should call on countries of origin and destination to continue or initiate the mainstreaming of migration into national development planning, poverty reduction strategies, and sectoral policies and plans. As a matter of priority, the HLD should ensure that migration receives due attention in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.
- Select actions:
- Recognize the role of migration in enabling development in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through inserting human mobility in goals and targets related to global partnerships for development. Migration should also be inserted within targets where issues regarding mobility could have a significant impact on their realization, which is the case for instance on poverty reduction, healthy lives and stable societies.
  - Create greater coherence amongst policies on migration, development, employment, labour market, social protection, health, gender and education in order to increase the development outcomes of migration and mitigate the vulnerabilities of migrants.
  - Achieve a reduction in the up-front costs of migration and in the transfer costs and transaction times of remittances, as well as broaden the geographical coverage of reliable financial services, especially to rural areas.
12. Fourth, the HLD should reaffirm commitment to existing cooperation mechanisms; strengthen their impact; and strive for greater involvement of stakeholders at all levels, including non-governmental partners.
- Select actions:
- Strengthen the GMG, particularly at field level, and utilize its collective expertise in supporting States and other stakeholders in the effective implementation of international legal obligations as they relate to migration, as well as recommendations of the GFMD.
  - Support the GFMD and regional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation on migration.
  - Consider establishing a Permanent Forum on Migration and Development to bring the perspectives of migrants and larger civil society to national policy processes and global debates on migration.
13. Fifth, the HLD should highlight critical issues, trends and dynamics that – while not necessarily new in and of themselves – will shape migration globally and locally and, in particular, the migration-development nexus. The HLD should underline the need for data and research, capacity development and proactive policy approaches in these areas.
- Select issues:
- The situation of stranded migrants and migrants caught in crises in their destination or transit countries.
  - The linkages between migration, environmental degradation and climate change.
  - The impact of migration on urbanization and the needs and vulnerabilities of urban migrants.
  - The increasing relevance of regional mobility and South-South migration.
14. The GMG would welcome and support concerted collaborative efforts by States, international organizations, regional institutions, local government, civil society and private sector stakeholders, workers' and employers' organizations and media to make progress on the

suggested priority areas for action. Possible targets for progress under each of the four round table themes under discussion at the HLD could include:

*Round table 1 Assessing the effects of international migration on sustainable development and identifying relevant priorities in view of the preparations of the post-2015 development framework*

- Inclusion of migration as part of a new global partnership for inclusive development in the post-2015 development agenda – in an expanded and revitalized MDG 8.
- Incorporation of migration in targets or indicators where it is directly relevant to the achievement of other development goals in the post-2015 development agenda.
- Inclusion of the labour and human rights and well-being of migrants through appropriately disaggregated indicators in the post-2015 development agenda, including a focus on the most vulnerable.
- Enhanced availability of comparable and empirical age and sex-disaggregated data on migration (and, where available, data disaggregated by legal status, national or ethnic origin, religion and level of vulnerability, including persons with disabilities) and a greater number of assessments and evaluations of migration and development initiatives.
- Integration of migration in programmes on education for sustainable development.
- Enhanced participation of migrant communities and civil society organizations in consultations and relevant decision-making processes.

*Round table 2 Measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants, with particular reference to women and children, to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and to ensure orderly, regular and safe migration*

- Increased number of ratifications and effective implementation of all relevant international and regional human and labour rights instruments.
- Increased number of countries that have effectively implemented the 2012 recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on *The Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration*.
- Increased comprehensive coverage of national responses to both trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants that incorporate specific action regarding prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership.
- Increased number of specific provisions on children in migration laws, policies and programmes, and of childhood policies that take into account the rights, specific condition and needs of all children in the context of migration in countries of origin, transit and destination.
- Enhanced access to regular and safe migration channels in recognition of actual labour market needs, and for family reunification.
- Increased effective access by migrants and their families to legal redress mechanisms.
- Increased access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, education, housing, water, sanitation, cultural life and social security, including for irregular migrants, through amongst others increased establishment of firewalls between public service providers and immigration authorities.
- Reduced recourse to immigration detention for all migrants, and elimination of detention for children and adolescents. Where absolutely necessary, immigration-related detention restricted to a measure of last resort, by court order with due process of law, and for the shortest period of time possible. Increased use of alternatives to immigration detention
- Reduced number of deportations, in particular of parents with children or adolescents in countries of destination.

- Elimination of hate crimes and violence against and abuse and exploitation of migrants and increased number of national action plans to combat xenophobia, discrimination and violence against and abuse and exploitation of migrants, including gender-based violence.
- Increased number of national human rights institutions with mandates and dedicated departments for migrants, which are sensitized for gender issues, established in countries of origin, transit and destination.
- Increased access to protection, assistance and decent work, with a focus on the most vulnerable among those affected by migration in countries of origin, transit and destination, such as children, adolescents, youth, and women, especially migrant women domestic workers.
- Establishment of a set of cooperation mechanisms and guidelines to ensure appropriate assistance for migrants caught in situations of acute crisis.
- Increased number of measures addressed at empowering migrants to participate in decision-making processes that affect them, with a particular focus on youth and grassroots organisations.

*Round table 3 Strengthening partnerships and cooperation on international migration and mechanisms to effectively integrate migration into development policies, and promoting coherence at all levels*

- Greater number of national inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, including ministries of labour/employment, social protection/social security, trade/investment, foreign affairs, finance, interior, health, women, among others.
- Greater range of ministries participating in GFMD and Regional Consultative Processes on migration.
- Greater number of non-governmental actors participating in GFMD and Regional Consultative Processes on migration, including workers', employers', human rights', women's and other relevant organizations.
- Enhanced participation of migrant and civil society perspectives in national policy processes and global debates on migration.
- Greater number of institutions and initiatives to further research and capacity in the area of migration, with a focus on South-South migration.
- Greater coherence between migration policies and action on trade and investment, urbanization, environmental degradation and climate change.
- Enhanced and more inclusive discussion of rights-based migration governance at the international level, including consideration of more regular discussions within the United Nations.

*Round table 4 International and regional labour mobility and its impact on development*

- Increased number of employers and recruitment agencies that adopt and implement equitable and safe recruitment practices and respect human and labour rights of all migrant workers, particularly the low-skilled, in the workplace and in the process of labour mobility.
- Reduced up-front recruitment costs.
- Reduced transfer costs for remittances.
- Establishment of mechanisms, including bilaterally and at regional level, to facilitate portability of social security benefits and recognition of foreign qualifications and credentials and skills.
- Improved information for and preparation of migrant workers in countries of origin and more effective matching of migrant workers of all skills levels with employers at destination.

- Enhanced coherence and harmonization of migration policies with development strategies and other policy areas such as employment, trade, investment, social protection, education and vocational training.
- Greater participation of social partners, as well as other non-State actors, in the formulation and implementation of labour migration policies at the international and regional level, including in the context of regional integration processes.