

Keeping migration in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

*Ambassadorial Breakfast
Key messages
12 February 2015, UN HQ, New York*

On the 12th of February 2015, the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh, Permanent Mission of Sweden and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), convened an Ambassadorial level breakfast and discussion titled *Keeping migration in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*.¹ The following is a summary of the key messages arising from this event.

Migration has made some important inroads in the Post-2015 discussions, reflecting a significant shift in the migration narrative

- The question of migration and its role in development was largely absent from the MDGs.
- Starting from that low-point, the efforts of delegations and other stakeholders in New York and elsewhere have been instrumental in highlighting that migration is an important factor in development.
- In the discussions to date, migration has achieved a visible place in the post-2015 agenda, featuring quite nicely, and sometimes unexpectedly, throughout the agenda.
- Migration being included in the OWG outcome in many ways reflects a broader shift in the narrative on migration.
- The migration and development discourse does not have a very long history, and has tended to appear and disappear from political discussions.
- For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, there was a lot of excitement about migration being part of the development process. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development was one of the first major conferences involving migration.
- After that time it was largely dumped from the political discourse. However, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), and the two High-level Dialogues on International Migration and Development have given renewed momentum to the migration and development narrative. The appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development and the establishment of the Global Migration Group, have also been important moments.
- As a result, the paradigm has already shifted, and a new narrative is emerging.
- Throughout much of the past three years, the key question was how to *include* migration in P2015. Now we are talking about how to *keep* migration, and how we can deliver on relevant targets and indicators.

Governments must remain vigilant in highlighting the links between migration and development

- Despite these very positive gains, many challenges remain. Of particular concern is that there is still a long way to go until the Post-2015 Agenda is adopted, and yet time is not on our side. We have until June.
- At the same time, the international environment is deteriorating to some extent, and in ways that creates pressure for governments to implement populist responses to migration. Recent anti-migrant sentiment arising from the Charlie Hebdo incident in Paris is one example. The ongoing challenge of addressing migrant deaths at sea is

¹ Panelists included: Ambassador Abdul Momen, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; H.E. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary, Government of Bangladesh; H.E. Eva Åkerman Börje, Ambassador, Swedish Ministry of Justice; Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General, International Organization for Migration; and Mr. Magnus Lennartsson, Minister, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations.

another. The positive contribution of migration to development is therefore being overshadowed by a negative environment.

- Migration is in the agenda, but the discussions are not over. Keeping migration in the discussions will remain a challenge. But this depends on Member States.
- Governments must remain vigilant in promoting the links between migration and development, not just in the inter-governmental negotiations but also in their policies.
- It is clear that migration stakeholders need to connect discussions in Geneva with those in NY. Innovative forms of collaboration are needed to keep the positive discussions going. The migration scene is prone to some unusual alliances which need to be enhanced.
- Bilateral cooperation is also important. For example, post offices in Moldova and Italy have agreed to work together to make remittance transfers between the two countries more affordable.
- International organizations – including those in the Global Migration Group – and the broader migration community also have a role to play to support sympathetic Member States.
- There is a need, for example, for better evidence and more complete data on migration. IOM is seeking to provide a forum for discussion on migration and to provide this evidence. The Organization is establishing a data center in Berlin to bring together data for policy making.
- Agencies will also have an important role in supporting countries to report on progress towards the SDGs.
- Bringing in the regional forums would also benefit the Post-2015 discussions. Establishing such a forum in the Caribbean, for example, is a priority for the Bahamas. Under the Turkish chairmanship of the GFMD meanwhile, there have been a range of discussions on how that forum can contribute to P2015 follow-up.

Effective implementation will be the litmus test of success

- The discourse over the past 10-20 years has focused on how governments need to manage the migration process. We have done reasonably well here, but we could do better. In this respect, delivery and implementation will be key. If the P2015 agenda doesn't work, then we will be dealing with a whole different ball game, particularly in the area of migration.
- This raises questions about the policies and programmes that best reduce the social, economic and environmental costs of migration, while enhancing its benefits for migrants and societies. There are many ideas on the table in this respect.
- The Stockholm meeting of the GFMD for example, outlined a number of recommendations – endorsed by some 140 states – to focus on two essential elements for enhancing the development impact of migration, namely by promoting and protecting migrants' rights, and highlighting migration as an enabler for development.
- A recent meeting of the GFMD under the Turkish chair similarly focused on several quite specific issues such as: lowering remittance and recruitment costs, promoting skills recognition and portability of social security benefits.
- Other issues that should be addressed through effective policies include promoting ethical recruitment; ensuring that refugees and IDPs receive effective durable solutions; enhancing financial literacy for migrants; ensuring that migrants are fully integrated into their societies; and promoting circular migration.
- We have all come to realise that migration is one of the defining phenomenon of our time. We must now focus on what we need to do in the future. In that respect, we need to continue to collaborate to ensure that the essential elements are included.