

DRAFT EU Statement

Fourth informal thematic session on "Contributions of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits"

24- 25 July 2017, New York

Introductory note:

These key messages for EU interventions are based on the EU Guidelines agreed in Brussels by CONUN on 4th May 2017;

According to the information provided by the PGA on 9 May, the fourth thematic session in NY on 24/25 July will be divided into four panels:

1. Contributions of migrants to all dimensions of sustainable development: the linkages between migration and development
2. Contributions of migrants and diaspora to all dimensions of sustainable development: enabling frameworks for contributions
3. Remittances and portability of earned benefits
4. Summary panel.

We therefore suggest preparing the following four interventions:

Panel 1: Contributions of migrants to all dimensions of sustainable development: the linkages between migration and development

1. Chair, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its MS.
2. We welcome this thematic session that covers the contributions of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits, and particularly this first session that is looking into the linkages between migration and development.
3. While we should ensure that human rights of migrants are respected and we wish to recall that each state has a sovereign right to determine whom to admit to its territory, subject to that state's international obligations, we are convinced that well-managed migration can be beneficial for development, as acknowledged in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda . In this context we recall the commitments made in that framework (target 10.7) to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well managed migration policies.
4. Increasing coherence between migration and development policy is important to ensure that development assistance helps countries harness the positive impact of migration on development and manage migration more effectively, in full respect of the human rights of migrants. This is valid for all the countries along the migratory route - origin, transit and destination countries alike.
5. In this regard, migration should be mainstreamed into sectoral policies in a co-ordinated manner and amongst all relevant stakeholders, in particular national and local governments, donors, international organisations, development agencies, in order to further strengthen the positive nexus between migration and development.
6. One of the most obvious links between migration and development is the contribution of remittances to development, which will be discussed more in detail in the third panel. However, despite the fact that the global amount of remittances sent by migrants is far larger than the official development aid, we should not forget the role of direct investments and ODA contributions for developing countries' quest to create jobs and reduce poverty. These instruments, together with the necessary internal reforms and a peaceful environment, are crucial in preventing migration by need and promoting migration by choice.

Panel 2: Contributions of migrants and diaspora to all dimensions of sustainable development: enabling frameworks for contributions

1. The EU and its MS believe that diaspora have a very important role to play and we should promote ways to facilitate and enhance it.
2. Diasporas can play a role in favour of better social integration of legally staying migrants in countries of transit and destination. Solidarity and entrepreneurial initiatives by diaspora and in particular by the younger generations can provide opportunities in terms of development, job creation and growth both in their countries of residence and origin. The EU has been supporting the facilitation of economic, social and cultural investments of the diaspora in countries of origin by creating the necessary frameworks to promote and facilitate such investments.
3. In this respect we encourage governments to improve the knowledge of, outreach and services available to their diasporas, and to raise awareness of diaspora representatives in order to encourage them to engage more efficiently towards local economic and social development in countries of origin.
4. We should also recognize the role of diaspora representatives can play in increasing awareness by potential migrants of the possible risks of embarking on perilous journeys as well as on available legal pathways for migration, as appropriate. Diaspora representatives can also effectively contribute to trade as well as technology and knowledge transfers in a number of sectors that are key for development of countries of origin, including education, health, and financial inclusion.
5. To enable diaspora to play such a role, and more in general to facilitate the integration of migrants, we should promote, as appropriate, access of legally staying migrant workers to social security schemes in the countries of employment and protect the rights they accumulated in their country of origin as well as in the various destination countries in which they may have resided. Finally, we should not forget that in search of work, many migrants may have left children and families behind in countries of origin and therefore we need to facilitate measures that allow legally staying migrants to continue to support their children and maintain family ties.

Panel 3: Remittances and portability of earned benefits

1. The EU and its MS welcome this discussion on remittances and the portability of earned benefits.
2. Remittances have the potential to elevate people out of poverty and address their development needs and they can be an entry point for financial inclusion and financial literacy. Therefore, the EU and its MS recall the commitments made in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (target 10.c) to reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of sending migrant remittances and to eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 percent while we recognise the need to align G20 initiatives with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
3. In view of reducing the cost of sending remittances, in particular in developing countries, where the average cost for sending formal remittances is often the highest due to a lack or absence of fair competition between operators, competition and transparency between money transfer operators is needed. This could also be pursued by improving access to financial services and products, for migrants who are legally staying in host societies and their families and promoting the use of technology, such as mobile phones, e-banking, mobile banking, as a way to transfer remittances in a cheaper, faster and more convenient manner.
4. We need to recognize that partnerships should be fostered between all relevant actors (national authorities, international organisations, private sector, diaspora organisations, civil society) in order to establish an enabling environment and favourable national and international regulatory frameworks for remittances transfers, and to encourage direct investments and ODA contributions to developing countries in order to create jobs and to reduce poverty, thus preventing migration by need and promoting migration by choice.
5. Strengthening, as appropriate, the capacity of social security institutions and improve administrative arrangements is a necessary condition for guaranteeing social rights and obligations of legally staying migrants. Social security schemes should also encompass co-operation in access to and portability of earned benefits. Portability of earned benefits for legally staying migrants in accordance with national law, including in the framework of bilateral or multilateral agreements should therefore be promoted. The EU encourages the development of bilateral and multilateral social security agreements with a view to ensuring equality of treatment for legally staying migrants in terms of social security and facilitating the portability of earned benefits in accordance with national law.

Panel 4: Summary panel

1. The EU and its MS welcome that this fourth preparatory thematic session is devoted to the contributions of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits, and thank the moderators and panellists for their valuable contributions.
2. From today's discussions, there is no question of the positive link among sound migration policies and sustainable development and of the opportunities that migration can bring in terms of contribution to development, as acknowledged in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. In this context commitments made in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well managed migration policies need to be implemented.
3. The contributions of migrants and diaspora to sustainable development in their countries of origin and destination has been acknowledged. Diasporas can play a role in favour of better social integration of legally staying migrants in countries of transit and destination. In this context we support the facilitation of economic, social and cultural investments of the diaspora in countries of origin, and promote those investments as important contribution for development in countries of origin by creating the necessary framework to facilitate such investments and providing relevant incentives.
4. We should further support the reduction of the cost of sending remittances, in particular in developing countries, where the average cost for sending formal remittances is often the highest. Remittances transferred by international migrants are one of the most tangible economic contributions of migrants to achieving the sustainable development goals in their country of origin, therefore the EU and its MS recall the commitments made in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and to eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 percent.
5. Finally, we would like to always be clear that the relationship between development and migration is to foster migration by choice not by force, in a safe, regular and orderly environment.