



**Summary remarks**  
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**A. Overall assessment**

Migration and development are interrelated, their dynamics affect each other and human mobility is a key dimension of all aspects of human development.

The Global Compact for Migration (GCM) represents a unique opportunity to put the nexus between migration and development on the global policy agenda. Two years from the agreement of the SDGs, and one year from the New York Declaration, the GCM can contribute to real progress and concrete change.

**B. Convergence and variations**

On 24 and 25 July, delegations from Member States and other stakeholders gathered for the Fourth Thematic Consultation on the GCM focusing on 'Contributions of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits'. The discussions pointed to a number of common points and priorities:

- Migration brings *mutual benefits* and positive development outcomes, not just in economic terms, but also social and cultural (the so-called win-win or triple-win). These benefits accrue to migrants, and to countries of origin and destination. It is this mutuality and reciprocity between migrants and all those involved in the development process that has the potential to make return and circular migration a realistic prospect.
- The *SDGs and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* provide the policy framework to progress the global agenda on development and migration, as well as the necessary political 'traction' in different member states and in the multilateral system.
- *Remittances* are a key investment and can contribute to development outcomes, both financial and social. However, on their own they do not, and cannot, achieve development. They also do not make Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) any less important or strategic. Obstacles to fully realise the developmental potential of remittances still exist. While it is key to focus on reducing transaction costs to 3% (although, *how* is an important question), it is also essential to reform the regulatory systems that prevent the full impact of remittances to be realised. Mobile money, for example, holds a lot of potential to cut costs and reach a greater number of households and communities, but is severely limited by existing regulations in different countries.
- The role of *diaspora* is also key: as innovators, knowledge transferrers, investors, and consumers sustaining a sort of 'nostalgia trade' focusing on products and services of countries of origin, and as engines of integration with social networks and human capital at its heart. In short, the diaspora brings people, individuals, experiences and knowledge at the centre of the migration process.
- We need better and more timely *data* on migration and development, specifically improving approaches and quality of censuses in different countries, as well as gender disaggregated data.
- The specific *drivers of migration* and the development challenges of different countries must be considered in global policies aimed at maximising the positive benefits of migration and development.



- The respect and protection of *migrants' human rights* must guide the priorities and actions in the GCM.

There was also a certain amount of variation in the contribution from different participants:

- There are different views as to whether migration leads to '*brain drain*' and/or '*brain gain*' in low and middle income countries of origin: this is because it largely depends on specific countries and/or sectors. Generalising on this is not helpful.
- There was some reference to the challenges of *irregular pathways to migration* and the consequences these have on people's lives, livelihoods and development prospects. However, the extent to which development policies and ODA could, or should, be directed to addressing these challenges was not explored in great detail.
- *Policy coherence* was invoked several times. However, how development and migration policies can align, complement each other and other key national and international policies (for example, to ensure greater integration in countries of destination and transit) will require further consultation. It will be important to build on existing experiences of fostering greater coherence between development and other policies in different settings.
- While it is clear that *economic policies, employment creation and livelihood opportunities* are all key to realise the potential of migration for development, it was also acknowledged that these vary significantly in different countries and that these local market and policy conditions can affect the capacity of countries to absorb and integrate migrant workers.
- The extent to which the GCM should be underpinned and delivered through international agreements and cooperation was also discussed, with some MS emphasising the importance of bilateral, country or region specific and bottom up arrangements.

### **C. The way forward**

Based on the thematic consultations, and with the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underway, it is possible to formulate some initial propositions to be considered by the GCM.

#### *What to avoid*

Firstly, it will be important to learn the lessons from several years of development practice and policy formulation, as well as from the evidence on the nature of the migration and development nexus. Development is not the holy grail or silver bullet to address all migration challenges. On its own, it cannot ensure that all opportunities are seized. However, development can be part of a comprehensive strategy to better manage migration and make the most of its economic and social benefits. It is also important to recognise the core principles and objectives of development policies, such as reducing poverty and inequality, and to ensure that migration priorities are not seen as interfering (or worse competing) with those.

There is a risk that looking at migration from a development lens may reinforce or replicate unhelpful dichotomies of donor vs recipient and origin vs destination country. Instead, the SDGs are an opportunity to frame development and migration relationships between countries as reciprocal and mutual under a global framework. Development happens along migration journeys, with opportunities



and challenges also emerging in so-called ‘transit countries’ where development programmes and interventions can also make a difference.

Finally, it is necessary to contrast the emerging narrative in some countries – mostly responding to domestic political pressures – that development aid can be effective at reducing or deterring irregular migration: the evidence suggests that this is not a realistic objective which risks damaging public support.

#### *Recommendations for the GCM*

- *Be grounded in the SDGs.* The SDGs provide a holistic and comprehensive framework to ground the migration and development nexus in the GCM. It should not solely focus on the specific targets on migration and remittances, but rather consider the role of human mobility to achieve *all* the Goals. Furthermore, the SDGs offer a framework and a ‘menu of opportunities’ to select concrete priorities to focus actions on such as; (1) gender equality (with a focus on women’s economic empowerment); (2) migrants access and contribution to basic services (including health, education and social protection); and (3) cities/urbanisation.
- *Be globally inspired, but locally-led.* While the framework and aspirations are global and grounded in international cooperation, actions need to be locally-led and rooted in specific contexts, countries, regions and markets where specific development opportunities and challenges exist.
- *Be smart, and innovative.* How to do development is as important as what to do. The focus should be on building coalitions and partnerships - between countries and cities, with development organisations and actors and with the private sector. It should identify and work to realistic, and politically viable, objectives which adapt to specific needs and opportunities. It will be important to avoid blueprint approaches and unrealistic promises.

#### *A new vocabulary for the GCM*

The need for a fresh narrative that goes beyond the negative connotations and perceptions that are present in both migration and development debates was identified. A new vocabulary could help achieve this, especially to avoid replicating common misconceptions which are pervasive in aid and migration debates. The GCM could focus on three key terms, the ‘3Is’: *investment, innovation and inclusion*:

- Investment: beyond aid or remittances alone, focus on investing in future societies for all, in line with the ‘leave no one behind’ imperative. This includes harnessing the potential of diaspora, civil society innovators and entrepreneurs as well as private sectors and civil society.

Innovation: build and expand on the initiatives that already exist, especially at local and country levels: diaspora bonds, global skills partnerships, extending rights for citizens on the move, financial inclusion through digital technology/mobile money, training and skills matching/investment etc.

- Inclusion: it is key for development and migration policies to be inclusive and not targeted at specific groups alone. They also need to be explicitly aimed at expanding rights and opportunities. In practice, there is a need to broaden access to services, ensure portability of benefits and expand access to inclusive finance.