



RESPONSE TO THE SRSG'S ISSUE BRIEF #4

Contribution of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits

IN PREPARATION FOR THE FOURTH THEMATIC CONSULTATION ON
THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON MIGRATION
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The NGO Committee on Migration calls on States to endorse and implement the action commitments proposed in the SRSG's Issue Brief #4 on the contributions of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits. We strongly support the brief's call to maximize the impact of migration on development, enable cost-effective remittances and financial inclusion, increase the portability of entitlements and earned benefits, and enhance capacity building and development through gender and age sensitive research and data. We urge member-states to consider and implement these important principles to facilitate the inclusion of migrants and maximize sustainable development goals in host and origin communities.

As the SRSG notes, migrant remittances represent a tremendous force for the cultivation of positive economic and social outcomes in origin countries. Still, remittances are not a substitute for States' duties to ensure social protection. Furthermore, while remittances have lifted millions of people out of poverty, remittances alone will never be sufficient to lift *nations* out of poverty if local and national governments do not remove certain policy barriers that have historically hindered development and excluded large segments of the population from the benefits of development that have been secured. We urge Member States to move forward with the SRSG's suggestion to promote an environment for **cost-effective remittance transfers**. Of the many conditions required for such an environment, we particularly stress the need for **gender-responsive financial education and the full financial inclusion of women**. We underscore this priority, noting that, despite significant social barriers and legal obstacles that have financially marginalized women in every society, migrant women have been found to remit funds to their home countries with greater frequency and reliability, and to remit a larger percentage of their income, than their male counterparts. Additionally, we highlight the finding that remitted funds are more likely to be put toward critical components of the Sustainable Development Agenda, such as food, healthcare, and education, in countries of origin when women are the senders and/or recipients of remittances.*

Our committee strongly emphasizes the SRSG's declaration that migrants contribute not only to economic development in their home and host societies, but also to their social and cultural wealth and development. As catalysts for philanthropy, investments, innovations, and cultural exchange in and between their countries of origin and destination, migrants serve as

bridge-builders among States, ethnic groups, religious communities, cultures, and worldviews. For example, migrants coming from especially climate vulnerable regions or agricultural societies also bring to their countries of destination significant knowledge and skills related to environmental sustainability. Their perspectives and expertise in this area have the capacity to build critical awareness and practical change requisite to achieve the SDGs, especially Goals 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Echoing point #2 of civil society's [5-year Action Plan for Collaboration](#)^{**}, we strongly urge Member States to not only acknowledge the economic benefits of migration but also to **engage members of the diaspora and migration associations as entrepreneurs, social investors, policy advocates, educators, and partners in the design and implementation of social and environmental policies** that fully leverage their contributions to the realization of SDG 16, peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

We emphatically recommend that Member States develop **national plans, and to enable their local authorities to design and implement local plans**, that foster the social and economic inclusion of migrants within their societies. Such plans should include **access to labor markets, education systems, healthcare systems, and justice systems**. We fully endorse the SRSG's declaration that migrant workers should be able to access social security entitlements and benefits after paying into the national systems that provide these protections. We emphasize the *5-year Action Plan's* point #8, which urges States to ensure mechanisms are in place to guarantee labor rights for migrant workers, including the rights to equal pay and working conditions regardless of migration status, to form and organize in trade unions, to ensure portability of pensions, and to have paths to citizenship for migrant workers and their families. Only when such conditions are in place will cities be able to fulfill their role as "vanguards of cultural pluralism" and the full social and economic development benefits of migration be realized for both host and home countries.

The NGO Committee on Migration and its civil society partners reiterate our unwavering commitment to collaborate with UN Member States and the international community to build upon the monumental strides envisioned by the SDGs and the NY Declaration. We offer our partnership in the critical endeavor to create an effective, human rights-based, gender- and age-sensitive, actionable and accountable mechanism to protect the rights of migrants and their families worldwide, and to enhance sustainable development in communities of origin, transit, and destination.

*Fleury, A. (2016). [Understanding Women and Migration: A Literature Review](#). KNOWMAD Working Paper 8. Washington, DC: The World Bank/Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOWMAD).

^{**}[5-Year Action Plan for Collaboration](#) submitted by the High-Level Dialogue Civil Society Steering Committee of over 100 civil society organizations for the 2013 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development