



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAO inputs to the SRSR Report towards the GC/M

As called for in resolution [71/280](#), in January 2018 the Secretary-General will issue a Report as an input to the zero draft of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GC/M). The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSR) on International Migration coordinates inputs of the United Nations system to this Report. The present FAO contribution provides inputs on how to better integrate Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) in migration policy interventions. It is meant to raise awareness on the interlinkages between migration and ARD, and stress the importance of taking ARD dimensions into consideration when drafting the GC/M.

The adoption of the GC/M represents a unique opportunity to adopt and implement a **comprehensive, cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary policy approach to migration, which must put policy coherence at the forefront and in particular take into account the interrelationships between migration and Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD)**. Moreover, the scale and complexity of contemporary migration calls for global action and for a strengthened linkage between humanitarian and development interventions, including joint programme design, new partnerships and multi-year planning.

FAO is committed to the objective of achieving a safe, orderly and regular migration, and stands ready to support the process towards the adoption of GC/M by offering its technical expertise and country experience. FAO works on migration along the humanitarian-development spectrum in order to:

- provide rural people with the option of remaining in their communities of origin when it is safe and when they want to, by promoting employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, improving life and working conditions in rural areas, providing direct livelihood support, building resilience, as well as mitigating and preventing conflict stressors linked to natural resources;
- support migrants and host communities to increase socio-economic inclusion and enhance social cohesion; and
- harness the potential of migrants and displaced persons for the development of rural communities in their origin and host countries.

FAO's efforts are directed, on the one hand, at providing direct livelihood support to rural populations¹, the forcibly displaced and host communities; and on the other hand at building capacities of national governments to integrate migration concerns in sectoral policies and programmes.

Migration and ARD

By 2050, over half of the population in the least developed countries will still live in rural areas. Three-quarters of the extreme poor base their livelihoods on agriculture or other rural activities². In Africa alone,

¹ This includes the provision of agricultural and livestock inputs and services, technical assistance, and cash transfers.

² FAO. Migration, Agriculture, and Rural Development. 2016. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6064e.pdf>

10 to 12 million youth enter the workforce each year³. Rural areas are generally characterized by a lack of access to basic services (social protection, financial services, formal education and skills training, health services), which perpetuates and further increases rural poverty and food insecurity. As a result, rural areas face the challenges of hunger, malnutrition, unemployment and underemployment, as well as a limited ability to cope with environmental degradation and the negative effects of climate change. The remoteness of rural areas and the absence of infrastructure further hinder the ability of rural people to acquire farm inputs and deliver agricultural produce to buyers. These are among the main reasons that push people to migrate from rural areas in developing countries. Migration is both a cause and a consequence of rural development. Migration is part of the process of rural transformation, for which rural people move as the relative size of agricultural workforce shrinks in favour of other economic sectors. Migration contributes to rural development, including through migrants' remittances, as well as by spreading ideas and knowledge and channeling resources and investments to rural areas.

Rural migration patterns and dynamics are often complicated and intertwined. Many rural migrants move first within their countries and subsequently migrate across borders. Seasonal migration is also a structural feature of agricultural economies. Through seasonal migration, rural people can find employment during the agricultural lean season, reduce unemployment and such patterns can lead to increase wages in their communities of origin. From a gender perspective, male migration from rural areas can lead to an increase in women's workload, but women left behind may also be empowered taking on greater productive and decision-making roles. Female migration can contribute to women's empowerment thanks to access to paid employment outside the family and relaxation of often rigid gender norms in their rural communities of origin.

Rural migration can have both positive and negative consequences on agricultural and rural development. In countries of origin, it can result in the shortage of skilled agricultural labour and in a loss of young workforce, with negative effects on farm productivity. Nonetheless, seasonal migration can also improve the efficiency of rural labour, allowing workers during the agricultural lean season to find employment in nearby towns and other areas⁴. More generally, rural migration affects the functioning of rural labour markets which are typically highly fragmented, even by location and crop⁵. For instance, even if migrant workers may have the same level of skills and experience as local workers, they are often treated differently by agricultural employers, in order to push wages downwards or curb power relations. Still, it is important to look at demand-side factors which affect rural wages and how those are in turn influenced by migratory patterns, including local labour shortages, which may be induced by sudden or significant out-migration, local power relations, and the dynamism of the agricultural sector in terms of labour demand and investments. In transit and receiving countries, large scale influxes of migrants, refugees and IDPs can put pressure on the quality of public services, labour markets and natural resources. Migration itself can contribute to agriculture and rural development. In the context of missing or poorly functioning financial markets in rural areas, remittances can relax liquidity constraints, provide insurance in case of crises and shocks and foster investments in rural economic activities with job creation potential. Migrants, refugees and IDPs can contribute to the development of host communities by filling labour shortages and promoting

³ AfDB. Jobs for Youth in Africa: Catalyzing Youth Opportunity across Africa. 2016. Available at https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Images/high_5s/Job_youth_Africa_Job_youth_Africa.pdf

⁴ Suttie and Vargas-Lundius. Migration and Transformative Pathways. 2016. Available at <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/5eb19611-d4b5-49b0-97ed-81688cf1c6a7>

⁵ Oya. 2010. Rural Labour Markets in Africa: The Unreported Source of Inequality and Poverty. SOAS. Available at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/cdpr/publications/dv/file63653.pdf>

the diffusion of knowledge. Moreover, diaspora organizations and return migrants can help rural areas through capital investments, skills and technology transfers, know-how and social networks.

Overarching goals of the GC/M

FAO suggests the following overarching goals of the GC/M:

- **Provide people with sustainable alternatives to migration, in order for them to have an option of staying in their homeland.** FAO advocates the need for reducing the adverse factors that motivate people to migrate under unsafe, desperate and dangerous conditions. One pathway is by increasing investments in food security, agricultural and rural development. Migration should be a choice and not a necessity. Safe, orderly and regular migration will maximize the beneficial impact for migrants as well as the countries and communities of origin, transit and destination.
- **Harness the benefits of migration for the economic development of origin, transit and destination countries.** Policies and programmes on migration need to enhance its positive and minimize the negative consequences. Pre-departure trainings and information campaigns should be conducted in origin areas, especially in rural areas, to provide would-be migrants with relevant information on their destination country. Tailored social protection interventions should be implemented in rural areas of origin, including to support those who stay behind. The transfer of remittances to rural areas should be made safe, easier and more affordable, for example by promoting mobile money transfers. Finally, diaspora involvement in their origin countries should be harnessed as an incentive for attracting investments and skills transfers.
- **Foster policy coherence and coordination throughout different policy sectors, including migration, ARD, development, employment, social protection, environment, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation.** As the causes and consequences of migration are multiple and intertwined, there is need for multi-sectoral policy interventions responding to both humanitarian and development concerns. Agricultural and rural stakeholders have traditionally been sidelined in the global discussions over migration which have put relatively more focus on international migratory movements and the priorities of destination countries in the developed world. The GC/M should commit countries to promote greater institutional coordination and coherence among sectoral policies, and to better address the needs and priorities of developing countries.
- **Set a framework for global action on migration which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and foster collaboration at the global, regional and national level.** Individual countries cannot solve the migration challenge on their own. Nonetheless, frameworks for inter-State cooperation on migration at the regional and global levels remain limited or nascent. So far, migration has been dealt with on a bilateral basis, with receiving countries playing the leading role. New ways of collaborating for achieving collective outcomes should be put in place and strengthened. Furthermore, it is important to set framework for the follow-up and review of implementation of the GC/M, and align it with the framework of indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Opportunities and challenges

The GC/M provides the opportunity to change the dominant political narrative and to better reflect the priorities of developing countries; and hence it is also an opportunity to raise awareness about the agricultural and rural development dimensions of migration. The GC/M represents a unique opportunity to bring agricultural and rural development at the forefront of the migration debate.

The main challenge associated with the GC/M is to ensure and monitor its implementation once adopted. It is essential that member states collaborate with each other and with other national stakeholders, as well as international organizations, private sector and civil society. It is essential to also enhance mechanisms for sharing data and information, as well as best practices and lessons learned. The framework for the follow-up and review of implementation of the GC/M should be aligned to the [indicator framework of the 2030 Agenda](#), which reviews the progress made towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Actionable commitments and means of implementation

FAO has identified six actionable commitments which it deems essential to be included in the GC/M:

1. **Collect migration data (disaggregated by sex and age) to better understand migration drivers, dynamics, and consequences, and to monitor the migration-related SDGs.** Currently, there are major knowledge gaps regarding the determinants, dynamics and consequences of migration. It is thus essential to systematically collect comprehensive sex- and age-disaggregated data, by strengthening all available data sources (including population censuses, labour force and household surveys and administrative sources) and institutionalizing migration data in statistical frameworks at country level. The data collected and processes should also be made available to policy and decision-makers to inform policies and actions. This requires Member States to closely cooperate among themselves and with other stakeholders, for instance by setting up platforms for data sharing. Investments should target the institutional capacity-building of developing countries, including LDCs and SIDS, to collect and analyze such data. International organizations could provide technical assistance to Member States in data collection, analysis, storage and dissemination.
2. **Generate and enhance the use of evidence for policy formulation and programme design, including in monitoring and evaluation.** Efforts should be directed at developing indicators to allow for effective monitoring and evaluation of migration policies and programmes, and the progress towards the achievement of migration-related commitments of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). Member States and UN agencies should also review best practices and lessons learned and create international repositories of analysis on migration data and evidence. Conceptual and comparative research should be promoted on selected aspects of migration policies, including the relationships between migration and agricultural and rural development policies and programmes. Other aspects for which further analysis should be promoted are the portability of earned benefits and more secure, faster and affordable ways to transfer remittances. The evidence generated should be shared through national, regional and global platforms (e.g. the GMG).
3. **Foster policy coherence among key policy sectors including migration, ARD, employment, social protection, environment, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.** A preliminary step to foster policy coherence is to promote and facilitate policy dialogue and coordination across key sectors and among different stakeholders, including governments, the private sector (e.g. employers in destination countries), civil society (e.g. producer and youth organizations) and displaced people. Possible interventions include establishing inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms and national platforms that involve all relevant national ministries and sub-national authorities working on migration. Capacity-development activities should target national stakeholders, including agriculture and rural development ministries, for them to mainstream migration and rural youth employment issues in sectoral policies, strategies and programmes, such as those related to rural poverty, agriculture, rural transformation, employment and social protection.

4. **Create and improve livelihood opportunities in the countries of origin, through policies, actions and investments tailored to the specific needs of communities and individuals, with a particular focus on women and youth.** Policy and programme interventions aimed at developing rural areas should improve their financial inclusion, by ensuring access to financial services and to financial education; provide formal and non-formal education (including vocational training and extension services) to rural people, especially women and youth; promote access and inclusive management of natural resources (particularly, land and water); extend social protection coverage and ensure the affordability and quality of social protection services in rural areas; target investments in rural infrastructure and agricultural technologies. Particularly, investments should be targeted in agro-processing and business sectors linked to agriculture, in order to promote rural employment and entrepreneurship. As youth are more prone to migrate in search of better employment prospects, migration policies should be coordinated with initiatives to increase the involvement of youth in the agricultural sector. Promoting rural youth employment and agro-entrepreneurship is key to generate viable options for people to stay in rural areas. Efforts should be directed at scaling-up on-farm and off-farm jobs which have good career prospects⁶, and supporting capacities of young entrepreneurs to develop viable business plans along the selected agricultural value chains. Such support includes analyzing and responding to their financing needs and providing them with technical training, coaching and business mentoring.
5. **Enhance opportunities for safe, orderly and regular labour mobility and temporary migration.** Seasonal employment schemes linked to agricultural calendars could be developed, with a focus on the rights of agricultural migrant workers (including decent work standards) and the portability of social benefits. Furthermore, would-migrants should be provided with pre-departure training in order to inform them of their rights, the risks and opportunities associated with migration, the labour market conditions in the receiving country and the related required skills. It is important to ensure that such training is also conducted in rural areas, as migrants working in the agricultural sector of destination countries are often at a high risk of exploitation.
6. **Encourage the productive investment of migrants' remittances and diaspora funds for the development of communities of origin, and support migrants who return.** The creation of an enabling environment for remittance transfers to rural areas involves reducing remittances' transaction costs⁷. It also requires improving the access to safe, reliable and affordable remittances' services in rural areas, and increasing financial literacy among rural people. Governments should promote channels for the investment of remittances and diaspora funds in employment-intensive activities in rural areas⁸, by providing information and related incentives. Efforts should be directed as well to support migrant returnees in developing agro-entrepreneurial activities in and participating in the economic development of their communities of origin.

⁶ Value chains that have higher potential for decent rural employment generation and entrepreneurship usually require a certain level of technology and know-how and have relatively short production cycles. Off-farm agricultural activities include pre- and post-harvest value addition, such as input supply, mechanization and extension services, storage, wholesaling, processing, distribution, and retailing.

⁷ As stated by Sustainable Development Goal 10.c and Addis Ababa Action Agenda paragraph 40.

⁸ See Goal no. 1