

# **CONTRIBUTIONS OF MIGRANTS AND DIASPORAS TO ALL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING REMITTANCES AND PORTABILITY OF EARNED BENEFITS**

Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

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## ***SOME THOUGHTS ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT***

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At the outset, I want to emphasize gladly the fact that the global commitments of the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants from 2016 are fully compatible with the provisions of the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families from 1990. We are sure that *The Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* will be a significant step forward on the way to rights-based approaches towards global migration movements.

I want in the following highlight some thoughts in relation to migration-development nexus.

One of the essential issues within the ever continuing debate on international migration has been the contribution to development, mainly in the countries of origin. The economic, social and cultural impacts of migration on development are usually not recognized or underestimated. The complexity and multidimensional characteristics of the present international migration have been underscored while little attention has been given to the importance of development matters. Issues like national security, identity and sovereignty have become more substantial in the last decades, so that the development aspect of migration has been lowered on the international migration agenda.

It goes without saying that the major beneficiaries of migrants' multifaceted contributions are the receiving countries. The main driving power of migrants to move is actually to achieve safe and better living conditions as well as the convenience of their family members, who are left

behind. So, the remittances transferred to the close relatives of migrants play an indispensable advantage for these people on the move.

Remittances undoubtedly serve as a crucial factor in maintaining the balance of payments and they could pave the path to some extent in the battle against poverty. Despite many regressive dynamics such as loss of skilled labour force, absence of young active workers, growing dependence on remittances, inflation, disintegration of family structures, rise of social inequalities, the economic aspect of migration is still central to many sending countries.

Receiving countries on the other hand, also benefit –maybe even more - from migration. Traditional receiving countries take the advantage of mainly labour intensive foreign workforce and in the light of the increasing depopulation or aging of their societies, it is a valuable contribution of migration to production and consummation in these countries. Receiving countries' societies profit also from the multi-culturalism, which the new-comers supplement to the host societies' cultural richness.

Beyond the economic aspects, social transformation and human development are conceptions that have to be dealt with within the framework of migration-development nexus. Social transformation is *a shift in social relationships so profound that it affects virtually all forms of social interaction, and all individuals and communities simultaneously. It is a step change that goes beyond the normal processes of change that are always at work.* Women migrants' contribution to social change in this regard is highly essential too. Migrants, who gain educational and professional abilities as well as new socio-cultural behaviours in the working countries, may contribute to improvements in their home countries.

In addition to these aspects of development within the context of international migration, its evolution has newly given rise to a complex and dynamic fabric of transnational relationships and the emergence of new social actors. This novel social context sets a double challenge for the public policies of both sending and receiving countries. It is now indispensable to recognize the participation of transnational communities in development patterns from a transnational perspective.

Transnationalism can be defined as *the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.* Networks of transnational communities enhance *multiple ties and interactions*, linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states. Ideas, feelings socio-cultural messages and behavioural patterns flow across boundaries. Transnational connectivity as a process and its

meaning for development should be re-assessed and analysed under changing circumstances, conditions and approaches in the context of global migration. The Global Compact is a good opportunity to rethink on the benefits of transnationalism with its core impacts on development for individuals, economies and societies, free from all kinds of prejudices and state-centric restrictions.

Furthermore, transnational communities, while keeping their ethnic and cultural identities, encourage young and highly-skilled new generation migrants to move to the country of origin of their grand-parents or parents to reside and work, at least for a limited period of time. These trans-migrants may be a significant contribution to the development of the economies of the sending countries, if appropriate measures are taken by the governments and relevant agencies. This group of highly-skilled professionals with migration background creates socio-economic and socio-cultural new spaces that could enhance development as well as building bridges between the sending and receiving countries. Brain circulation between receiving and sending countries must be evaluated as an indispensable developmental aspect

In the view of the above mentioned opinions, I want to highlight one last point within the framework of migration and development. This is *migrant empowerment* in the receiving countries. This aspect has to be re-considered primarily among other components of migration phenomenon. Many migrants are dynamic entrepreneurs, who could contribute to economic development, mainly in the settlement country, if they are provided with necessary opportunities and chances to improve themselves. They may be drivers of new economic initiatives; they may be employers, and also mediators in many aspects between the sending and receiving countries, and governments are asked to recognize the need for and give rise to new measures of migrant empowerment in their countries.