

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

Denmark aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

In adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we recognized the positive contribution of regular migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Today we are here to further explore this important link between migration and sustainable development in the context of the Global Compact on Migration.

[One thing is clear: Remittances represent one of the most concrete contributions of migrants to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in countries of origin and to create a better future for their families at home. Each year, about 200 million migrants worldwide transfer remittances to their families in developing countries - totaling an amount of almost USD 450 billion, which is more than three times the size of official development aid].

Studies show that most of these resources [60 %] are spent by families in countries of origin on food, health care, better educational opportunities and improved housing and sanitation. In other words, remittances are

critical private contributions to help developing countries in overcoming poverty, meeting immediate needs and creating new opportunities at home.

In order to leverage the contribution of remittances to development as much as possible, the Global Compact should promote faster, cheaper and safer transfers of remittances through legal channels, including through a reduction in transaction costs.

While recognizing the development benefits of safe, orderly and regular migration, *irregular migration*, on the other hand, presents complex challenges to transit and destination countries as well as to the individual irregular migrant whose human rights are often not protected. Trafficked women is a blatant case in point. Remittance flows from irregular migration is not a sustainable path for financing development. One of the key goals of the Global Compact on Migration should therefore be to address the root causes of irregular migration and to put a clear emphasis on the sovereign right of each Member State to decide who can access its territory.

To address root causes, the Global Compact must promote investments in long term development efforts in order to create new and lasting opportunities for especially young people in their home countries.

As part of our new Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian action, Denmark has placed migration at the very forefront

of our development cooperation – working actively to support our partner countries in addressing the root causes of irregular migration.

[In close partnerships with national governments, civil society and the private sector, migration aspects are systematically integrated into relevant country programmes. Each country programme is designed in a flexible manner – taking into account different country situations – and ensuring targeted efforts to promote sustainable development in countries of origin.]

Moreover, at national level, Denmark supports a diaspora programme run by the Danish Refugee Council, which - through funding and technical assistance to diaspora-led initiatives in countries of origin- has clearly shown the potential of diaspora groups as agents of humanitarian assistance and development. In particular, knowledge of the local context has proven to be an added-value in diaspora-led projects.

We welcome the discussion today and look forward to a continued dialogue in developing the Global Compact on Migration.

Thank you.