

## **The role migration plays in spurring development should be more widely recognised**

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Demography is an essential factor for development since the number, age and geographic distribution of a country's population all determine the demand for its land, water, food and jobs. According to the UN World Population Prospects, the world's population (today 7.3 billion) will reach 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050 if current trends continue. However, growth will be unevenly distributed: Africa will be the fastest-growing region through 2050, while Europe's population is expected to decline after 2020. More than half of the global population increase projected through 2050 will occur in only nine countries – India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, USA, Indonesia and Uganda. The relationship between population and development is hugely important, as well as hugely sensitive. The 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its Programme of Action, which was adopted by consensus by 179 governments, represented a milestone in its agreement that the well-being of individuals, rather than numerical population targets, should be the goal of the global population agenda. The Programme focuses on human rights, education, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights. In 2014 a UN report noted the progress made since the ICPD was adopted, as countries have integrated population issues into their national development strategies; this has led to reductions in mortality rates and increases in primary school completion rates, cooperation on migration issues and family planning efforts. Yet progress has been 'unequal and fragmented', hampered by new challenges. Discrimination and inequalities limit access to education and sexual and reproductive health services; gender equality has yet to be achieved. Rapid urbanisation, climate change and vast forced displacements are pressing challenges.

The world has also come to recognise the growth and complexity of international migration, with many calling for the protection of migrants' rights, irrespective of their legal status. The need to promote regular, safe and orderly international migration to harness the potential benefits of migration for individuals, their families and their countries of origin and destination has been highlighted by the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development – organised by the UN Secretary General in 2006 and 2013– and by the informal intergovernmental Global Forum on Migration and Development. These fora recognise a complex 'migration-

development nexus', which diverges significantly from the widespread view of development as a means to reduce – or even eliminate – migration.

The assumption that development will reduce migration is not supported by research; whilst development can help mitigate some of the causes of forced migration (such as conflict), empirical evidence supports a 'mobility transition theory', according to which emigration rises with economic development until countries reach an upper middle income country status (approximately USD 7 000-8 000 per capita), at which points it begins to decrease. For those who do migrate, their destination is not usually – as many assume – developed countries; in reality, there are slightly more migrants from developing countries living in the 'global south' (82.3 million) than in the 'global north' (81.9 million). For refugees, the ratio is more skewed: 86 % of refugees are hosted by developing countries.

Correcting such misconceptions requires recognising the positive role of migration and integrating human mobility in the global development framework. This is being done for the first time in the post-2015 agenda and the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include migration-related targets such as 'facilitat[ing] orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed policies'; reducing the transaction costs of migrants remittances to less than 3 % (remittances to developing countries were estimated at USD 435 billion in 2014 – more than three times official development aid); protecting migrant workers' rights (particularly those of migrant women); and increasing the availability of disaggregated data, including by migratory status, to improve our understanding of migration dynamics and the situation of migrants.

The EU has recognised that well-managed migration spurs development and should be included in the post-2015 agenda (Foreign Affairs Council, December 2014). The Union has also adapted its own policies, notably through the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), the overarching framework of the EU's external migration and asylum policy. The GAMM is implemented through bilateral policy dialogues and operational cooperation (including Mobility Partnerships), regional dialogues and capacity building projects. In 2012 and 2013 the Commission devoted over EUR 200 million to more than 90 migration-related projects in the developing world. The EU also has a dedicated budget for migration and asylum within the Development Cooperation Instrument that will provide EUR 357 million in 2014-2020 to maximise the development impact of people's mobility and to promote migration governance and the management of migratory flows, notably in south-south migration.

The European Parliament has spoken out on the migration-development nexus, including in its wide-ranging resolution on development and migration (2005/2244), which addresses integrating migration in EU development policy, dialogue with third countries, the role of remittances and diasporas, 'brain drain', circular migration and other issues. The Parliament has also called for ensuring that migrants' rights, particularly women's, be protected by the post-2015 development framework (2014/2143). A strategic report on 'the situation in the Mediterranean and need for a holistic EU approach to migration' (2015/2095) is also currently being drafted.

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