

Second retreat on
Migration Indicators for the
Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda

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New York, 17 October 2014

Global Migration Group Working Group on Data and Research
(Co-chairs: DESA and IOM)

In collaboration with:

KNOMAD/World Bank and the SRSR for Migration

REPORT OF THE MEETING

Introduction

In July 2014, the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals proposed a set of goals and targets to serve as the basis for incorporating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda. The outcome document of the OWG contained several targets which are of direct relevance to international migration, migrants and mobility.

The objective of the one-day technical retreat was to conduct an in-depth analysis of the measurability of the targets proposed by the OWG and to evaluate potential indicators for their monitoring. At the retreat, agency representatives with expertise in each target area, as well as on cross-cutting issues such as human rights, discussed the progress made in developing migration related indicators and presented proposals for measuring migration relevant targets.

The co-chairs recalled that the first GMG indicator retreat, held in January 2014, had emphasized the need to track progress toward a strong global partnership on migration and development; to assess the impact of migration as an enabler of development across several goals; and to include international migrants in disaggregating data on all relevant targets and indicators. There was agreement at the first retreat that indicators for remittance transfer costs were already available and being monitored. Moreover, work was well advanced on measuring progress towards finding durable solutions for refugees and human trafficking. Further, GMG agencies were developing indicators on skills recognition, portability of social security benefits, recruitment costs and diaspora contributions, as well as disaggregation of other indicators (in education, health,

¹ Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970), 12 August 2014

gender, etc.) by migratory status. This second retreat would review progress in these and other areas.

Status of the post-2015 agenda and indicator framework

The first session of the retreat reviewed status and timeline of negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, as well as considerations related to indicators. The General Assembly had adopted the outcome document agreed by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals in July as the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda, while recognizing that other inputs would also be considered. Modalities for further negotiations on the post-2015 agenda would be established by the end of 2014.

The Open Working Group document included targets for safe, legal and orderly migration (10.7), reducing remittance transfer costs (10.c), rights of migrant workers (8.8), eliminating trafficking of women and children (5.2 and 16.2), and addressing the “brain drain” through retention and training of health workers (3.c) among other areas of relevance to international migration, migrants and mobility. Currently, the Secretary-General was preparing a synthesis report that was expected to highlight gaps in the goal targets proposed in the report of the OWG, and to propose a broad framework for the post-2015 development agenda.

The representative of the SRSWG for migration observed that a strong technical foundation would enrich advocacy and shore up attention of migration related indicators in the further negotiations on the post-2015 framework.

IOM noted that the political discussions in the OWG had raised some important questions that need to be answered by migration advocates during: what is meant by ‘orderly, safe and regular migration’? How is that measured? How should forced displacement be reflected in the OWG text? Can migration be included as part of the new global partnership for development?

Regarding future monitoring of the development agenda, the representative of the Statistics Division reported that the United Nations Statistical Commission at its session in March 2015 would discuss and agree on the process and timeline for the development of an indicator framework. In preparation, an expert group meeting would be held in January 2015. The representative invited the GMG to contribute to this expert meeting by presenting the results of this second data retreat. The framework itself, including a set of indicators, would likely be agreed by the Statistical Commission in 2016. One lesson from the MDG monitoring framework was that while new indicators created an additional reporting burden, they could also attract additional funding to enhance national capacities.

Presentations and discussions covered the nature of indicators and the number of indicators that should be proposed. The representative of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) described her organization’s efforts to provide a framework of indicators for measuring sustainable development. She reminded the meeting that indicators should be considered as a management tool to help countries implement and monitor strategies and to allocate resources. Indicators could be also be used as a “report card” to measure progress toward a target and

² A/RES/68/309

ensuring accountability of governments and stakeholders. SDSN believed that the number of global indicators should be tightly limited to a list of about 100 "core" indicators, although a larger number of "tier 2" indicators could be offered for adaptation at regional and country level. The GMG working group on data and research

Costs of migration

ILO was working with KNOMAD support to measure costs of migration, a major element of which was recruitment costs. Surveys had been piloted in a few countries, but the work was at an early stage and could not yet establish a baseline for an indicator on migration costs. In particular, the surveys had found that bilateral agreements could significantly influence the costs of recruitment. Research and investment in survey methodologies would continue.

Refugees and internally displaced persons

A proposed target on durable solutions had been eliminated in the last rounds of the OWG negotiation. Advocacy work was continuing to ensure that displacement was sufficiently considered in the further elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. UNHCR in the meantime was prioritizing indicator disaggregation for refugees and IDPs in a number of areas, including access to education, ending discrimination against women and girls (in nationality laws), access to water, affordable reliable modern energy, and decent work. These indicators were closely linked to the UNHCR mandate provided by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and could be produced from UNHCR data. One limitation was that the much of the operational data was limited to refugee camps, with less coverage of urban refugees.

The number of refugees and displaced persons in protracted situations for whom a durable solution was found was considered a useful indicator for well-managed migration (10.7). Participants noted that indicators on displacement were also relevant to other goal areas such as inequality or sustainable cities.

Human rights of migrants

Work from a KNOMAD project on human rights indicators for migrants and their families was presented by the representative of UNICEF. The proposed framework contained a large number of indicators pertaining

Data sources

Given the paucity of data on migration data and on its impacts and challenges, in particular for development, a representative from DESA's Population Division drew attention to need to improve migration data, especially through household surveys. While adding migration questions/modules to existing household surveys (e.g., IFS, MICS, LSMS, DHS, etc.) was a cost-effective means, this approach had important methodological ramifications.

As part of a transformative agenda for the post-2015 era, it was suggested to develop a global migration survey programme.

Next steps

Meeting participants were asked to return completed templates for prioritized indicators within the next two weeks. The template addressed issues such as an operational definition, rationale for use of the indicator, method of computation, data sources and references, periodicity of measurement, gender and disaggregation issues, data limitations, and agencies involved in data collection, compilation or dissemination.

Participants were also asked to consider the costs of capacity building needed to support collection of the indicators. Links should be maintained with the SDSNs larger costing exercise.

DESA and IOM would draft a fact sheet on migration indicators for post-2015, prepare a proposal for a longer technical report, and liaise with UNSD and SDSN for follow-up action.

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