

# MIGRATION DEFAULT IN POST 2015 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*Andrea Stocchiero (FOCSIV and CeSPI)*

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Human beings have become a significant force for environmental change within the Earth system. Humanity's impact on Migration or, better, human mobility, should be conceived as a **freedom of choice and a human right**. Every human person should enjoy freedom of movement and of establishment in agreement with local communities. But, the majority of migrations represent a choice constrained by diverse root causes and/or forced by dramatic events and processes. Poverty, inequalities, discriminations, lack of freedom and democracy, wars and social conflicts, natural disasters and climate change, are the **root causes** of migrations. In this sense migration is a cross-cutting issue, transversal in the diverse topics of the main three sustainable development dimensions (society, economy and environment) addressed by MDGs/SDGs. The sustainable development goals should make migration a freedom of choice, fighting the root causes.

On the other hand a fundamental political issue is how to overcome **nationalistic barriers**, fears of "invasion" and competition for jobs, racism and xenophobia, that limit the freedom of movement and the construction of a cosmopolitan world based on the effective implementation of human rights at transnational level. MDGs/SDGs processes represent a multilateral framework composed by nation-states that show important difficulties and constraints in managing the migration issue. The power of nation-states is founded on territorial sovereignty and it maintains a strong grip on migration policies balancing the security requisites with economic, social-and demographic needs. So far the political position of nation-states and public opinions is restrictive and impede the smooth adoption of positive transnational policies on the nexus between migration, mobility and development.

The international community acknowledges that migrations have both **positive and negative effects** on sustainable development, depending on contexts and processes. Policies should be aimed at maximizing positive effects, such as the multiplier effect of remittances on local consumption and investment, and minimizing negative impacts, such as brain and skill drain and dependency behavior in origin communities. The post 2015 MDGs/SDGs processes have recognized migration as a cross-cutting issue and put it as an **enabling factor** for sustainable development. Migrations contribute to local development, in countries of destination and origin, through labour and entrepreneurship, remittances, brain circulation and returns, trade and investments, innovations. Migrants are development actors in the labour markets, in people-to-people cooperation and in economic internationalization. They are social and inter-cultural agents that improve connections and interactions between territories and cities of destination and of origin. Diasporas have an important role in peace building and crisis management. But, they are **also vulnerable people** affected by slavery and forced labour, they are victims of human trafficking, they are asylum seekers, unaccompanied

minors and single mothers with children, divided families with left behinds. They are people who need urgently social protection at local and transnational level.

MDGs/SDGs should comprehend diverse migration dimensions whose improvements have important effects on development goals. At least four dimensions are needed.

**Improving mobility and international protection.** Regional cooperative agreements on human mobility, VISA facilitation and liberalization, are needed for increasing regular flows and their contribution to the labour market in decent jobs. The spreading of crisis requires more and more efforts to secure international protection to displaced people and asylum seekers.

**Improving inclusion.** Migrant's inclusion represent another fundamental dimension for sustainable human development, that covers the respect of human rights and access to regular labour market, education and health, economic integration and social protection, portability of social rights, family reunification.

**More empowerment.** The contribution of migrants to development depend on their empowerment at diverse levels: enhancement of their resources and capacities, skills and brains for local sustainable development in destination and origin countries; and at political level, through double citizenship, vote right, their access and capacity to be actors in political institutions and partnerships. And it implies the fight against xenophobia, racism and gender discrimination.

**Partnership, enforcement and monitoring.** New partnerships at transnational, national and local levels should be promoted to integrate migration in sustainable development policies. New transnational mobility regimes and new migration and cooperation schemes between territories and communities sharing sustainable development models should be established. Enforcement processes of these partnerships and monitoring mechanisms are essential elements for securing a concrete implementation of positive policies on development and migration.

**Specific targets** of great human and political relevance related to the migration issue could be integrated in post-2015 development goals, such as: elimination of trafficking in human beings, elimination of slavery and work exploitation of irregular migrants, elimination of xenophobia and racist crimes, increase social and economic inclusion of migrants and particularly of vulnerable groups, increase mobility through regular channels, reduce the cost of remittance transfers and of recruitment, ... Indicators on these targets are already developed and diffused. To this regard the Zero Draft on SDGs of the Open working group and the EC Communication on "A decent life for all: from vision to collective action", are seriously insufficient. But it is at political level that lies the most important challenge: create a strong positive social consensus towards migration in all the countries, and elaborate positive and coherent policies on the nexus between migration and sustainable human development. What is lacking in MDGs/SDGs framework is this **political and cultural dimension**.

## Key References

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